**PRACTICE OF PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION:**

**ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LEGACY PROJECT**

**IN LUSIKISIKI, EASTERN CAPE**

by

**ANDILE BONGEKA MAPHUMULO**

submitted in accordance with the requirements for

the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS: COMMUNICATION SCIENCE**

in the subject

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at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NOVEMBER 2022

**DECLARATION**

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Degree: Master of Arts: Communication Science

Exact wording of the title of the dissertation as appearing on the electronic copy submitted for examination:

Practice of Participatory Communication: Asset Based Community Development Legacy Project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape.

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 Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

*(The dissertation will not be examined unless this statement has been submitted.)*

_____          30 November 2022

SIGNATURE                                DATE

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**DEDICATION**

To my perfect Maphumulo family, My Mother, Celani Maphumulo, Sisters Philisiwe Maphumulo and Sithandiwe Maphumulo family, and my niece Lerato Sthandwa Maphumulo.

To my Madonsela family, My fiancé Mfanafuthi Madonsela and our five months old daughter Sukoluhle Zimisozenkosi Madonsela.

To my late father, Mr. F.M. Maphumulo, **Mashimane, Zulu, Zikode wena Wase Ngoleleni,** may his soul rest in perfect peace.

# ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore the practice of participatory communication by the South African National Road Agency (SANRAL) on the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape (EC) Province. The study was conducted in fourteen villages that form part of package four where SANRAL is busy constructing a road. Zutari, formerly known as Aurecon, was appointed with Royal Mndawe Holdings (ROMH) as a consortium in order to provide professional services for the 17,6 km Section 20 stretch of the N2 Wild Coast Toll Highway between Msikaba Bridge and Lingeni Intersection. The research used a qualitative case study research approach, and is framed within participatory communication. The findings of the study were based on consideration of in-depth participant interviews, analysed using a systematic method, where interview transcripts were arranged and coded to categorise information accordingly. The study population consisted of people that have been fairly involved in the project, mainly the Project Liaison Committee Members (PLC). This group of stakeholders were more relevant to provide insights about how the practice of participatory communication has been practiced on an ongoing community development project. Similarly, development communication uses communication processes that aim to improve the lives of the citizens (Alemnew, 2017). Consequently, the study explored the practice of participatory communication in a setting in which a sustainable development model (ABCD) is being employed to catalyse SANRAL's post-construction legacy in the area. SANRAL adopted an ABCD model to drive its intended legacy programme. This study empowers development communication practitioners and informs development discourses alike. The findings revealed that genuine participation was practiced by SANRAL on the ABCD Project. Likewise, participatory communication is associated with a two-way flow of communication, allowing community members to become key drivers of their development, and not mere beneficiaries of development interventions in their area (Ako, 2017). Notably, the major communications practices were best described as a two-way participatory approach, aimed at facilitating socio-economic development on an ABCD community-based project. The study finds that participatory communication enables information sharing between people, as it creates a legitimate platform for the marginalised to be empowered during development devised with them in mind.

**KEY TERMS:**

Development communication; Communication; Asset-based community development; Participatory communication; Typologies of participation

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Greetings "Molweni" Participants:

My name is Andile Bongeka Maphumulo, and I am doing research under the supervision of Professors Takalani Mudzanani and Kevin Mearns, in the Department of Communication Sciences. I am working towards my Master of Arts in Communication Science at the University of South Africa. I have funding from Zutari as my employer. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled Practice of participatory communication: Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) legacy project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape.

The intent of the interview is to collect relevant information that will assist the researcher achieve objectives of the study. For the proposed study the purpose is to explore the practice of participatory development communication by The South African National Road Agency (SANRAL) on the ABCD Legacy Project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape. ABCD approach is a sustainable development approach that is aimed at identifying strengths within the community rather than deficiencies or problems within those communities. I am requesting that you share your insights and sincere thoughts about the ABCD Legacy Project, this is to ensure the success and truthfulness of this study under investigation. As stated on the consent form, your personal details as participants will not be shared with anyone. The researcher gives the participant assurance that all responses received will be treated as highly confidential. Information gathered will be utilised for the benefit of the study under investigation only.

## Section A: Participants' Demographic Information

### Demographic Information

Name of the village: _____     Age: _____     Gender: _____

Married: _____     Employed: _____

Education background: _____     How many people stay in your household? ____

What skills do they have? _____

## Section B: Interview Questions

### Context and overview of the study: SANRAL ABCD Legacy Project and Processes.

- What are your views regarding development in Lusikisiki especially your village (Dengane, Dimfi, Komkhulu, Lingeni etc)? Can you tell me more about the involvement of the community on ABCD Legacy Project?

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**ABCD**          Asset-based Community Development

**CBPR**          Community-based Participatory Research

**CC**            Community Champions

**N2**            National Road

**PLC**           Project Liaison Committee

**PLO**           Project Liaison Officer

**ROMH**          Royal Mndawe Holdings

**SANRAL**        South African National Roads Agency SOC Ltd

**UNISA**         University of South Africa

**FAO**           Food and Agriculture Organisation

**KENSUP**        Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme

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# 1     CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH PROBLEM

## 1.1     INTRODUCTION

Participatory communication focuses on a communication process that involves collaboration among communities, where they collectively exchange opinions for sustainable development (Martinez & Gonzalez, 2018; Fung, 2019; Abrol Bathla, 2021). Mmutle and De Beer (2021) suggest that participatory communication is an approach that applies appropriate communication methods with an intent of increased buy-in from stakeholders within development projects. Scholarly debates over a participatory approach often argue that, with lack of communication on projects, meaningful development is unlikely to take place (Waisbord, 2014; Mat Tazin & Yaakop, 2018; Molale, 2019). Accordingly, what makes participatory approaches stronger is that programmes become goal-orientated, while conforming to projects that encourage inclusivity. From this perspective, communities become empowered through development programmes that enable them to partake in dialogic and communication processes in decision-making. Notably, participatory projects ought to be effectively communicated with people, especially because they are often instituted for social change.

Hence this approach is considered intentional, since participatory projects require a great deal of planning, coordination, and implementation thereafter (Tufte, 2017). The study is of great importance within scholarly debates over the field of communication. Indeed, it is about time that corporates shape development with stakeholders to maximise intended impact. In this instance, SANRAL has taken the communities on board to shape their development in collaboration with them. This is a rare occurrence since their mandate is to build the road and nothing else. However, it remains critical to explore the extent to which the practice of participatory communication took place on the Legacy Project. Development is concerned with ensuring that society helms the programmes designed for their own environment. It should represent a continuous empowerment process of a community for sustainable development to be attained in that space (Ramodibe, 2014; Ifeduba & Balariwa, 2016; Alemnew 2017). Development goes beyond widely adopted solutions promoted by modernisation theory, towards an appreciation and active preservation of a given community's freedom in taking charge of their own lives. This ultimately encourages communities to have more control over themselves and their political destiny.

The following sections will consider the background of the study and later provide project description to paint a better scenario.

## 1.2     Context of the study

This section context of the study is explained through its purpose and background. This chapter will also discuss the relevance of this research to communication as a discipline.

### 1.2.1     Background of the study

When the world arose from the ashes of World War II, the second half of the twentieth century was widely earmarked as an era of development. The origins of participatory approaches within development sphere can be traced to early 1970s Latin American education movements (Mmutle, 2018; Molale, 2019). During this period, scholars started enquiring about top-down approaches utilised in the 1960s (Yoon, 1996; Agunga, 1997). Before then, developed countries were imposing the way in which development for their people should take shape.

Many a projected utopia has failed due to inadequate development efforts to bring about socially conscious development (Mmutle, 2018; John & Etika, 2019). Considering concrete experiences of how projects failed, they revisited their own dictatorship (Rahim, 1994). This has resulted in the view that involvement of communities on projects at the grassroot level enhance the adoption of those projects in an organic way. Nowadays, this emerging approach is regarded as a new paradigm that encourages people's participation in community development (Hardianto, 2013; Manyozo, 2016), however, is not without its own considerations.

The notion of public participation in development has gained momentum when it comes to the involvement and empowerment of communities on community projects. Participatory approaches to development are being standardised by a range of organisations on an international scale (Maia, 2010; Koningstein & Azadegan, 2018). It hardly requires emphasis that the incumbent top-down approach to development in South Africa has done more damage than good, and left people feeling despondent and surrounded by projects that are nothing more than expensive redundancies. Road construction projects such as SANRAL's N2 Wild Coast Toll Highway project have raised high hopes of employment within affected communities. Development companies have become increasingly cognisant of giving back and leaving long-lasting impact in those communities where they operate. The ABCD legacy project was born, considering a high rate of unemployment within Lusikisiki area. SANRAL envisaged a situation whereby communities quarrel over a limited number of jobs that the road will provide.

## 1.2.2    Project description

In general, community development may be approached through an asset-based or needs-based approach. 'ABCD', coined by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), was devised to defeat needs-based approach to something of great value, community empowerment, and development. Organisations tend to unintentionally emphasise what communities lack, instead of what they have (Nel, 2018). This deficiency approach creates dependency, according to which community members start deferring to external experts to resolve problems. SANRAL's approach had in mind to facilitate a process within the affected communities within package four of the N2 in Lusikisiki, where communities were made aware of their assets, as opposed to their needs. They wanted to invest beyond the road in a sustainable development manner. In 2019 an asset mapping analysis was done as a pilot within the fourteen villages to uncover resources, skills, and other assets that these communities possess. Workshops were conducted to co-create with the community possible projects that could be run by the community members themselves, using what they have, so as to avoid a situation where they fight for limited construction jobs during the actual road construction phase.

During the workshops, what was seen as a quick win solution by the community was for two business development support centres to be established to provide business support services for the community start-ups. Through these engagements, communication pertaining the road was shared with the communities. Numerous participants during and post workshops indicated the lack of forthcoming information regarding the project on the part of SANRAL. Manyozo (2012) and Arcidiacono, Grimaldi and Di Martino (2016) note that development builds consensus and employ two-way communication amongst stakeholders, leading to sustainable results. To ensure successful project delivery, SANRAL was required to facilitate a process through which participatory communication is practiced.

The overall intent will be to ensure that community entrepreneurs who offer authentic Amampondo cultural and other adventure experiences benefit in a concrete and lasting way after the N2 has been built through their area. It is important to note that this was a strategic move to cater for future influx of tourists, either for leisure travel or business. The Wild Coast is beautiful natural area, and the community is proud of their culture. It became easy for them to realise how much they could do to stay ready for these upcoming opportunities.

This project aims not only to empower communities, but also to open other avenues with regards to funding opportunities for community development projects. The project includes mitigation of risks linked to human behaviour. Seeds were planted and now, more than ever, the community is proud to have been part of their own sustainable development through participation. This is an ongoing project, which makes the setting even more interesting since the study is likely to assist in shaping future development in the area. As a researcher who has been on the ground, through my lens and from what I have been exposed to. SANRAL's project is one of the major projects in the area, and most of the community have high hopes for employment opportunities. For a long time, community development has been paying attention to what people need and their problems, ignoring what strengths there are within those groupings of individuals. The ABCD approach is aimed at returning power back to people, as per SANRAL's vision. It is against this background that this study intended to explore the extent to which the practice of participatory communication undertaken by SANRAL during its Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Legacy Project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape, as part of the N2 Wild Coast Toll Highway project. The Project took place between the Msikaba bridge and Lingeni intersection, where the fourteen villages are situated under two Chiefdoms of Chief Lambasi and Chief Vellem. As part of the Legacy Project, the community suggested two centres be established to benefit villages under each chief equally. The section below addresses the relevance of the study within communication discipline.

## 1.2.3 Relevance of the study within communication discipline

As indicated, scholars in the participatory paradigm have criticised a modernisation paradigm for not being participatory (Khatala, 2019). To improve results within community development initiatives, it is deemed proper to engage stakeholders. Two-way communication enables stakeholders to solicit their input in decision-making (Mefalopulos, 2008). Aruma (2018) asserts that every community development programme as a social development project involves active communication between various sets of individuals involved in such development project in the partaking societies. It is, therefore, appropriate to keep communication networks open between project participants for community development project to be successful. The results of the study could contribute towards participatory communication within a community development case study. The goal and objective of the study will be explained below:

## 1.3 Goal, objectives, and research questions

### 1.3.1 Goal of the study

The study seeks insight into the phenomenon of participatory communication of SANRAL, where "exploratory studies usually lead to insight and comprehension rather than the collection of replicable data" (Naidoo, 2012: 103).

The main aim of this research is to explore the practice of participatory communication for development by SANRAL, on the ABCD legacy project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape by:

- Exploring the perceptions of the community about the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy Project in Lusikisiki

- Evaluating the perceptions of SANRAL about the practice of participatory communication on the ABCD Legacy Project in Lusikisiki

- Identifying challenging factors that might prevent the practice of participatory communication in SANRAL's ABCD Legacy Project

## 1.4 Research questions

The main research question for the proposed study: To what extent is the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL perceived by the community on the ABCD legacy project in Lusikisiki?

Related sub-questions include:

- What is the perception of the community about the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy project in Lusikisiki?

- How does SANRAL perceive their practice of participatory communication practices on the ABCD legacy project in Lusikisiki?

- What are the challenges in practice of participatory communication in SANRAL's ABCD legacy project?

## 1.5 FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

This section will explain the background of the research problem.

### 1.5.1 Background and context of the research problem

This project is situated in the area in which SANRAL is constructing the N2 Wild Coast Toll Highway Section 20 between Lingeni Intersection and the Msikaba Bridge. After the asset mapping process, a detailed business plan highlighting specific projects was developed. It is uncertain as to whether all stakeholders were involved in the development of the said business plan and whether SANRAL is leaving a legacy which all stakeholders recognise as their own. This then raise the question pertaining current practice of participatory communication and methods that are being employed in terms of effectiveness. Authors such as Msibi and Penzhorn (2010) and Van de Fliert (2010) describe participatory communication as an interactive process flanked by various stakeholders. This means that communities should have a say in decisions affecting their development.

The reflection on the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL has not been addressed in order to examine whether or not it has been effective. The legacy project will be moving to (Phase Two), which is the implementation phase of a community project per village or a business centre per chief to support projects that the communities will be running. SANRAL will determine based on their vision as the organisation whether they will fund a project for each community, or two business centres that cater to all fourteen villages. This will also

be determined by the data that was collected through asset mapping. This study serves to determine how the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL has been experienced by the stakeholders on the legacy project. This could determine the outcome of the implementation of the ABCD Legacy Project for communities. The road construction involved a range of stakeholders, including the communities that form part of the fourteen villages. SANRAL wanted to drive a process in which the people have a say pertaining to development opportunities affecting their livelihoods. However, the questions that should be asked are:

- What is the perception of the community about the practice of participatory communication in the ABCD Legacy Project?
- What are their perceptions about the current communication methods being employed to communicate about the ABCD Legacy Project?

The proposed study is a one-of-a-kind effort. It could benefit current and future generations of developers, as the study explores the practice of participatory communication on an on-going community project. Therefore, future developers might be able to consider some of the challenges that hinder development. The prerequisite to an understanding of challenges linked to the practice of participatory communication could make this proposed study timely.

### 1.5.2  Crucial stakeholders driving the Legacy Project

There are also three crucial implementing partners on the ABCD Legacy Project, namely Zutari, AfricaIgnite and ROMH. Zutari, formerly known as Aurecon, was appointed with Royal Mndawe Holdings (ROMH) as a consortium to provide professional services for the N2 Wild Coast Toll Highway Section 20 between Msikaba Bridge and Lingeni Intersection (17,6 km), as part of leaving the legacy behind when the road construction is completed. SANRAL adopted an ABCD model to drive their intended legacy programme, led by Zutari. A rural development agency Africa! Ignite was then appointed by Zutari as tourism development experts that would provide support, since the road would be attracting more tourists in the area. So as to ensure representation of all fourteen villages affected by the road construction, SANRAL formulated a Project Liaison Committee (PLC). This structure serves a communication channel between the project implementing team and the community. There are representatives from all the villages. This served to ensure that information shared during meetings about the project reached the community on the ground. The research problem of the study will be discussed below.

## 1.6  RESEARCH PROBLEM

For quite some time, development programmes in developing countries have been influenced by a modernisation paradigm or a donor-driven approach (Protopsaltis, 2017; Khatala, 2019). The importance of involving the communities in programmes intended for their development did not receive attention (Rasmussen, Ronnberg & Tsatsaroni, 2015). Later, development agencies advocated for the importance of employing participatory communication and institutionalisation of public involvement (Bryant, 2015). Based on the current literature, numerous community development projects fail due to the lack of participatory communication during the development process. In South Africa, community development has also been slowed for this reason

(Naidoo, 2010; Servaes & Malikhao, 2016; Ali, 2017). These scholars argue for participatory communication during the development process, which they report is not honoured in practice. The purpose of this study is to explore to what extent the practice of participatory communication was adopted in SANRAL's ABCD Legacy Project in Lusikisiki, that is designated to address community needs after the fact of construction.

The commencement of the highway construction raised employment hopes for the unemployed population of Lusikisiki. During the asset mapping process, it became evident that there is limited to no communication between the Project Liaison Committee (PLC), SANRAL, and the community about the status of the project itself, and jobs related information linked to the road. Ali (2017) explains that the main reason for the failure of projects could be the deficiency of communication and people participation in community development. The aim of this study is to investigate project failure due to poor communication. To this end, the researcher proposes to use a qualitative approach as the research method and cross-sectional design as the time dimension for the proposed study. A qualitative methodology places emphasis on the understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Creswell, 2013). It is imperative to explore the practice of participatory communication, since there is a significant need to replace donor-driven approaches with community-based ones for those who are marginalised. The section below discusses the context and background of the research problem. The next section defines key terms for the study.

## 1.7 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

### 1.7.1 Participatory communication

This type of communication can be classified a dialogue-based approach which enables sharing of knowledge and opinions across various stakeholders therefore their empowerment is facilitated through this process (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Communication ensures that community members at various levels of development are involved, and this is arguably a central factor in the development space, which is not possible without sustainable development (Khatala, 2019). The definition of participatory communication is largely contextual, but there is no universal definition. According to Pawar (2010), participatory communication refers to the process of incorporating citizens, mostly in planning, and allowing them to raise their concerns.

### 1.7.2 Development

The term "development" was popularised by American scholars and policy makers between the 1940s and 1960s (Brown-Addo, 2012). Post-World War II development became a major issue within international entities. During the 1950s and 1960s, development was viewed as being equivalent to economic growth from economic and technological perspective (Netshitomboni, 2017). During that time, development was considered to be a process for the modernisation of non-industrialised countries to be westernised in terms of economic growth. According to Nag (2011) and Bastia (2014) development refers to enhanced liberty for people to be able to take charge of their environment, however it is not an easy process. This approach consists of participatory strategies to benefit the people either socially or politically (Baú, 2018).

### 1.7.3      Asset-based community development (ABCD)

It is common when investigating communities that the approach be from the deficiency perspective, which only paints the picture of problems that exists within those communities (Nel, 2015). The ABCD method inspires active citizenship and ensures responsibility from communities, so that they can become better positioned to build their own future. In concurrence Yeneabat & Butterfield (2012) Nel (2018) explain that ABCD is a set of strategies that involve mobilising relationships with the communities by also placing emphasis on the marginalised groups. The ABCD approach challenges the top-down approach, since it grounded on the belief that systems of social delivery emphasise dependency, which results in people being viewed as targets for intervention (Yeneabat & Butterfield, 2012).

### 1.7.4      Communication

According to Hybels and Weaver (2004), communication can be defined as the sharing ideas or other sentiments, and it does not only include spoken or written word, but also body language, which serves to ensure that the message is understood. Communication is further defined as a transfer of messages to be understood (Goetsch & Davis, 2010). The figure below shows the definition communication based on Goetsch & Davis (2010).
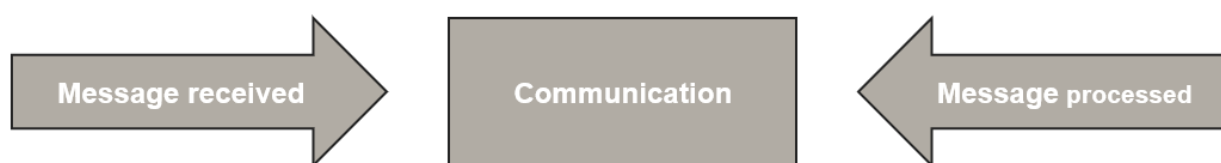


Figure 1: Communication model adapted from Goetsch and Davis (2010)

Figure 1 illustrates that communication is not just about sending messages, but the receiver should also be able to understand what is being communicated. Thus, communication is crucial when running community projects. Magano (2008) further outlined that communication is an aspect essential to running community-based projects. In addition, Ndou (2017) notes that effective communication leads to effective sustainable results, however, poor communication results in uncertainty.

### 1.7.5      Development communication

Quebral (2012) classifies development communication as an art of human communication linked to the transformation of the society's poverty to socio-economic empowerment and growth, which then results in a better quality of life while realising individual's potential. In addition, development includes intentional strategies designed to benefit the public in various forms, ranging from political to social needs (Wilkins & Enghels, 2013). At the heart of the concept of development, communication involves the need for an exchange of information to contribute to the resolution of a development problem and to improve the quality of life of a specific community (Calvet-Mir *et al.*, 2015). The next section will briefly explain how the literature review will be structured.

## 1.8 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1.8.1 Overview of development communication

Development is a broad concept that entails socio-economic, political, and human development. It should represent a continuous empowerment process in order for sustainable development to be attained (Ifeduba & Balariwa, 2016; Koningstein & Azadegan, 2018). In concurrent Mefalopulos (2008) and Servaes and Lie (2019) and Yusuf, Ismail, Mahamood (2021) note that development communication facilitates development through sharing of information to bring about change in a sustainable manner.

The World Bank explains development communication as an integration of strategic communication within development projects (Olo, 2014). History of communication could be traced back to the 1940s and became popular in the 1950s. This included recognition within the academics as well. Considering several approaches towards development different contexts emerged. In contrast, Manyozo (2012) suggested that development be explained according to six schools of thought, namely Bretton Woods, Latin America, Indian, African, Los Banos and Communication for Development and Social Change. It is important to note that these categorisations are linked to strategic communication. The African school places emphasis on participatory communication. This emerged in 1960s, for Africa three institutions an enormous part in the expansion of theory and practice of communication for development (Olo, 2014). These were early missionaries, universities in post-independent Africa and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for empowering communities to shape development processes From this perspective, today seems to involve the merging of the different communication for development trajectories. Participatory approaches increase participation within inception phase of community projects.

Likewise, development ought to be concerned with improving and developing the lives of people in a sustainable way, and this process should be facilitated in making decisions collectively, by which the strengths of the communities are emphasised (Schenck, Nel & Louw 2010; Brueggemann, 2014). Scholars have reported on many development projects that have failed due to little or no community involvement (Etika & John 2019). For the study, the assumption is that participatory communication could facilitate development, as it is grounded on the experiences obtained via observations during an asset mapping pilot project conducted in Lusikisiki during 2019. The study seeks to establish the gaps between the community development, participatory communication, and the way in which the latter affects community development.

## 1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROPOSED RESEARCH METHOD(S)

### 1.9.1 Research design

Research design is an overall strategy that a researcher selects to facilitate an integration of different components in a coherent way so as to be able to address the research problem effectively (Barbara, 2006). Similarly, Boru (2018) notes that a research design refers to the procedures for gathering, analysing, understanding, as well as providing report for the findings obtained, and is used to connect theoretical research problems with empirical research. In addition, Grey (2014) contends that the research design frames the procedure for the information needed, which methods will be used to generate and collect data, as well as how

the research question will be answered. Other scholars also explain that the design is associated with the researcher's ideas for the research question to be addressed (Sileyew, 2019). Research design refers to the way in which a researcher undertakes a research study. This plan entails techniques for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Research design differs according to paradigm, and constitutes the entire strategy selected by an academic in facilitating an integrated approach of different components in a comprehensible way (Atkinson & Delamont, 2010).

The research design for the study is an exploratory design. Bhattacherjee (2012) states that an exploratory design is applicable in instances where few studies have been conducted on a subject under investigation, and it is perceived as a "blueprint" to test hypothesis. There are no studies currently available on the practice of participatory communication during ABCD projects conducted by SANRAL. The advantage of this proposed research design is that it will allow the researcher to focus on acquiring new insights, and on the generation of new ideas on development of tentative hypothesis. Furthermore, new information that has never been discovered in this instance will be revealed, which proves crucial for future research studies. There are three possible forms of research design, namely exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. For this qualitative study, exploratory research design is applicable. Qualitative research design involves acquiring detailed understanding to gain context (McCombes, 2021). Hence, exploratory research design that will allow the researcher to explore information that has never been discovered previously. Exploratory research design is a methodology that is applicable in a study that has not been studied previously and is normally used in a qualitative research study (George, 2021). Exploratory studies explain and account for data that is descriptive in nature. This will enable the researcher to formulate a certain theory from the results of the study. The research method that will be employed for the study is explained below.

### 1.9.2 Research method(s)

The proposed study will employ qualitative research approach which will assist in collating detailed qualitative data on how people act in certain instances. Creswell (2013) states that the purpose of a qualitative research approach is to understand perspectives of participants. Furthermore, Babbie (2009) places emphasis on the fact that qualitative research seeks to discover and interpret observations or patterns of relationships in a non-numerical way. The research method is a strategy or technique employed in executing research (Goundar, 2012). The interviews to be utilised in the proposed study as the research paradigm attribute the existence of human life to social and interpersonal influences (Creswell 2013). Moreover, Rahman (2017) states that an understanding about human perception must be reciprocal and communicational ground between the participants and the research in co-constructing the meaning.

### 1.9.3 Worldview

Based on assumptions that shapes the study, theoretical framework and techniques used, where researchers make use of various paradigms (Du Plooy 2009; Khatala 2017). There are four research paradigms or worldviews that are common in the field of communication research, namely positivist, interpretivist, constructivist, and pragmatist (Bhattacherjee, 2012; Shannon-Baker, 2015). The most suitable worldview for this study is social constructivism. A qualitative study is associated with a social constructivist worldview. This paradigm believe that people may not experience the same human experiences. Meaning, unlike positivists,

ontologically the study under investigation does not recognise that only single reality exists. A perspective of this nature allows the researcher to capture experiences, insights, and knowledge of participants (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

### 1.9.4 Data collection techniques

Data collection is the process of selecting subjects and gathering data from these subjects (Given, 2008). This study makes use of interviews as a data collection tool. This method is helpful for the researcher to gather intensive information from the participants (Almalki, 2016). The interviews provide a deeper understanding of a social setting to explore the views of participants and gain more insights about a matter under investigation (Wilsons & Sapsford, 2006). Furthermore, a researcher designed an interview schedule with open-ended questions to ensure that the researcher probes specific questions to get comprehensive information that would be beneficial in answering the research question (Chadwick, Gill, Stewart & Treasure, 2008). Subsequently, both primary and secondary data are common for research studies. This data can be presented in many forms, as either words or figures. The study makes use of these data collection methods to reach useful conclusions and make recommendations. Primary data gets collected for a specific problem under investigation, where its advantage is that quality of data attained is first-hand experience therefore more reliable, however literature shows that it is sometimes a challenge to get this information due to limited sources or lack of participation (Muhammad, 2016). Primary data is attained through interviews from the participants that forms part of the 14 villages, and this is complemented by making use of secondary data in the form of a relevant literature review (Yin, 2018). Secondary data will also be used because it is less expensive and more easily accessible. Secondary research provides necessary methodological considerations to optimise data collection (Heaton, 2008; Johnston, 2012). Therefore, this method is crucial for the researcher to contribute to the broader scientific data.

### 1.9.5 Reliability and validity

Numerous qualitative scholars avoid reliability and validity terminologies and focus instead on terms like trustworthiness, consistency, confirmability when referring to the criteria of evaluating the merit of a qualitative study (Middleton, 2019). Some of the scholars for qualitative research studies have brought forward many tactics to ensure enhancement of truthfulness of research findings (Wilson, 2010). Accurate presentation of findings in research are crucial to ensuring that it demonstrates truthful information. In this study, data collection methods will be selected carefully, so as to improve credibility when it comes to content analysis (Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, Utriainen & Kyngas, 2014). The principles of trustworthiness and legitimacy will demonstrate quality in the proposed study. There are criteria that will be applied to assess the trustworthiness of this research study, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Hamed, 2016).

The criteria is unpacked below:

- **Credibility** refers to the degree to which the research signifies the "truth value" (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2006), where the study makes sense to participants themselves.

> - **Transferability** can be classified as a type of validity that uses findings from one research study for future studies (Schreiber, 2012). Thus, to establish transferability, the researcher uses thick description and variation when selecting participants to be considered (Chauke, 2015).
>
> - On the other hand, **dependability** is all about the reliability of the research and the way the findings are documented, enabling someone else to understand the concept and provide some critiques on the study (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2006). Research principles are crucial to measure the quality of a qualitative study.
>
> - So, to achieve **confirmability** in this study, the researcher will demonstrate that results and conclusions are represented in terms that other people can understand (Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams & Blackman, 2016). Moreover, confirmability will be established by means of reflexibility, where applicable.

To demonstrate trustworthiness in the research study, the researcher ensured an appropriate data collection tool was selected in order to answer the research question under investigation. The population and sampling methods for the study are explained below.

## 1.10    POPULATION AND SAMPLING METHODS

The section below will discuss the population and sampling methods to be employed for the study.

### 1.10.1    Target population

Target population refers to the collection of participants that meet the selected criteria to be part of the study based on the knowledge required to answer a research question (Khatala, 2019). According to Taylor (2012) and Allen (2017), a range of segments that have the same characteristics as per researcher's sampling criteria are selected to form part of the study. The researcher decides who should form part of the study, based on their understanding and involvement of the study under investigation (Given, 2008). Hence, for the proposed study, the target population will consist of various stakeholders between eighteen and sixty-five years of age, such as SANRAL officials and the community, in order to gain an understanding of their perception and explore their experience of the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL. The above-mentioned stakeholders will be selected because they are directly affected by the road construction therefore, they will be able to provide valuable insight in terms of how the process has been carried out.

### 1.10.2    Accessible population

Mandiwana (2019) defines accessible population as units of analysis, consisting of individuals to which the researcher has access. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) further explain that these units of analysis are grouped into various groupings called *strata*, which then have an impact on the selecting the sample, data collection method as well research results. For the proposed study, the accessible population will be the representatives of SANRAL; contractors / service providers; the traditional leaders and the community members. These participants will be those that are part of the N2 Wild Coast Highway Construction and the ABCD Legacy Project, which will exclude those who are part of the Highway Construction but not involved in the ABCD Legacy Project.

### 1.10.3    Unit of analysis

According to Kumar (2018) unit of analysis refers to the object that stands what is being examined in a study, or is the object being studied as a whole, within which most factors of connectedness and variation occur. The most important object of the research is the unit of analysis, which may include inter alia individuals, groups, artifacts, geographical units, and social interactions (Trochim, 2000). For the proposed study, the unit of analysis all the elements mentioned by Trochim (2000) as the research seeks to study the practice (social interactions) of participatory communication (of individual and groups) in the ABCD Legacy Project (object) in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape (geographical unit).

### 1.10.4    Population parameters/characteristics

Population parameters, also termed characteristics, are numerical terms when doing a summary of features for the entire population. Sampling figures are normally populated for specific target populations that social research tend to explore, so the parameters are all dependent on the population (Lavrakas, 2008). For the proposed exploratory study, the active involvement of various stakeholders is critical in an area like Lusikisiki, so as to ensure that the population is diverse to get multiple voices. It is common within the field of research that one becomes attentive in estimating specific parameters for a population to examine hypothesis (Eide & Allen, 2005). The 2011 Census Report by Statistics South Africa highlights that Lusikisiki consists of fourteen villages, which collectively constitute approximately four thousand and fifty people. Ninety-four percent of the population of Lusikisiki are black Africans. Accordingly, Damianakis and Woodford (2012) highlight the importance of ethical issues that may arise when a qualitative study is being conducted in small communities wherein relationships already exist amongst those community members. For the study, the population parameters are limited by age (from 18 to 65), location (the respective villages of Lusikisiki), and include both gender groups.

### 1.10.5    Sample method and ethical issues

This section will discuss the sample methods and ethical issues that will be undertaken by the study.

### 1.10.5.1    Probability as sample method

Sampling includes picking participants, behaviours, events, or other elements to conduct a study (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013). Sampling can be classified into two types, namely, probability and non-probability sampling. For this study, probability sampling is the relevant sampling as it limits bias and ensures that subgroups within the population are well represented. According to Fritz and Morgan (2010) and Wienclaw (2013), probability sampling is when the researcher selects a representative sample to tackle the intended outcomes of the entire population. Notably, this method enables the researcher to include participants based on their relevance to the issue under investigation. The sample group will be SANRAL officials, a project liaison committee (PLC), and community members from two tribal authorities, namely Chief Lambasi and Chief Vellem.

Additionally, Dudovskiy (2018) explains that sample size should be large enough to gather data to address research question. For the proposed study, saturation will be reached when the findings after the analysis have been done and a reflection of some consistency in terms of quality as well as quantitative density is attained.

Data saturation takes place when a research process has no new information that is being discovered during data analysis (Faulkner & Trotter, 2017).

### 1.10.5.2    Ethical issues

Like in any process, ethical matters should be addressed to avoid any harm to and to protect society (Coffelt, 2018). Ethics can be classified as a code of conduct that should be considered in research. These are morals that are subsequently accepted and offer rules about the correct conduct towards experimental subjects (Babbie, 2009). In this regard, participants were fully briefed about the purpose of the study and requested sign consent forms prior to their involvement, and they were allowed to withdraw from participating should they decide not to proceed. The proposed study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, and all applicable precautionary measures were taken into consideration. The data collection process started after an ethical clearance certificate had been obtained. The researcher attests to obtain ethical clearance from Unisa's Research Ethics Committee.

## 1.11    DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### 1.11.1    Data analysis

Data analysis refers to a fundamental component in a qualitative research study and creates a vital bridge to both collecting information while linking the findings with developed concepts, whereas data interpretation in quantitative research refers to the process of creative insights into what has been found by way of meaning (Sun, 2017). Furthermore, Patton (2002) stipulates that data analysis transforms data into findings by bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. Analysing qualitative data have different theoretical approaches depending on the objectives for which data were generated (McCurdy & Ross, 2017). Notably, interpreting the practice of participatory encounters in projects can be a disputed area, due to evidence or lack thereof. This may then lead to scholars having to have agreements or disagreements of outcomes when assessing impacts thereof (Brown, 2014). For this study, the analysis method that will be used will be thematic data analysis. Hawkins (2018) points out that a thematic analysis is an approach to analyse qualitative data, it is normally applied when texts transcripts for interviews are being analysed. Accordingly, for this study, data will be transcribed and translated in order to identify patterns of expressions that alert the researcher to be aware of similar or divergent themes as more data unfolds.

### 1.11.2    Data interpretation

The findings from the interviews are based on the research questions of the study as well as proposed guidelines for participatory communication in a community-based project, which will be outlined in Chapter 2. The following steps were used to interpret data: preparing and organising the data for analysis using interview transcription, documents scanning and categorising as well as arranging the data according to the sources of information, reading and understanding all the data analysing it. Therefore, data will be read various times before coding (Creswell, 2013). Coding in a qualitative study refers to organising of the raw data into conceptual categories to create concepts (Newman, 2007). Determining final themes assisted in analysis. Data display in a graphic format is used to portray information and provide space to organise data and show connections (Yin, 2016).

Additionally, a main goal for any diagramme is to provide ready access and convey a message about a specific topic (Lengler & Eppler, 2007). The data analysis method is narrative, so as to analyse content gathered via interviews, to respond to research questions (Caulifield, 2019). Participatory communication theory is used to reflect on similarities and differences on theoretical and practical experiences. The study makes use of other research to conform and disconfirm literature. The personal work plan and demarcation if the study will be explained below.

## 1.12    WORKPLAN AND DEMARCATION OF STUDY

| CHAPTER | DETAIL |
|---|---|
| Chapter 1: Introduction | Background of the study, research problem, research questions, research objectives, and delimitation of the study. |
| Chapter 2: Review of participatory communication within a community-based project | Review of theoretical approaches to participatory communication, its challenges, and other related research works in the field of participatory communication. |
| Chapter 3: Research methodology | The research methodology of the study on how it was carried out. |
| Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation of findings | Findings of the study are interpreted. |
| Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations | Lastly the conclusion and recommendations of the study are discussed. |

## 1.13    SUMMARY

This chapter presented an overview of how the study was conducted, which will be explained in further chapters. From the introduction, the research problem and research problem context, an overview of literature review based on what other authors have reported on regarding the practice of participatory communication in development is explained. An overview of the research design and methodology was explained. Demarcation of the study was explained.

# 2    CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1    INTRODUCTION

### 2.1.1    Development communication: shifting paradigms

To facilitate social and development communication in low-income communities in particular, development communication is key (Tacchi & Kiran, 2019). Notably, Otto and Fourie (2016) state that participatory communication has maintained its theoretical status for the past three decades as the normative approach within the sector of communication for development and social change (CFSC). The practical and theoretical foundations of development communication are built on mainly three paradigms, which are: the modernist, dependency paradigms, and the participatory.

Participatory paradigm provides mechanisms for people to express themselves and be able to participate in the public sphere (Senyo, 2018). This concept collaborates with stakeholders, which is then considered key to participation. Sylvester (2017) indicates that within this approach, true development is attained due to its two-way communication process. It takes into consideration stakeholders needs and involves them so as to shape ideal solutions in development. Otto and Fourie (2016) state that participatory communication enables individuals to participate at various stages within social change. In this setting different parties can exchange ideas and reach consensus. It is important to note that the above-mentioned paradigms are crucial in the field of development communication to position the study with appropriate theoretical framework, which intends to answer the main research object. The study wants to investigate the extent to which the perception of SANRAL about the practice of participatory communication on the ABCD Legacy Project in Lusikisiki was practiced. The theory that will be unpacked in the study is critical, as it will inform data analysis. The next section will unpack theorical approaches to participatory communication.

### 2.1.2    Theoretical approaches to participatory communication

Consequently, an alternative participatory paradigm emerged promoting robust grass-roots involvement in development processes and suggesting that communities create their own development approaches in order for them to attain their ideal development goals (Waisbord, 2018). This is applicable to the current study, supporting that participatory communication is a catalyst in community projects that speeds up development and it enables communities to co-create solutions together which creates legitimacy of projects (Cornwall & Pratt, 2011; Patil, 2014). Again, it encourages developers to afford the community an opportunity to become part of decision-making processes. It also encourages two-way communication and dialogue during participation in the community development space. Therefore, participatory development as the social change process becomes an option for community development and is widely accepted as paradigm within the field of communication (Servaes, 2008; Mcphail, 2009; Waisbord, 2018). Furthermore, participatory communication constitutes a type of communication that accentuates equality and enables people to be free, while having equivalent access to a means of articulating their viewpoints, feelings, and experiences (Servaes & Malikhao, 2016). However, the criticism of this approach is associated with power discrepancy within the role players in the participatory

process, and is labelled as the tyranny and a smart way of obtaining inputs from the community-on-community projects (Burger, 2017; Ndou, 2017). Notably, participatory communication has been adopted in the implementation of community projects, where assessment of its impact remains limited. This theory is regarded as the nucleus for sustainable development. At the centre of participatory communication is the goal of genuine participation, linked to dialogue and a bottom-up approach. The next section will briefly review research work in the field of participatory communication.

### 2.1.3      Review of other research work on the practice of participatory communication

A review of extant literature has revealed that studies focusing on participatory communication within the context of an ongoing ABCD project have yet to be explored. However, databases such as the University of South Africa (UNISA) repository show multiple authors that have investigated the participatory communication across various disciplines e.g., Chisale, (2014); Ali, (2017); and Khatala, (2019). There appears to be a huge gap between theory and the actual practice of participatory communication. Literature indicates that participatory communication is highly praised, but poorly applied, which means there is no consistent definition of the term participation that may lead to projects being labelled as participatory, even if they have partial involvement of communities (Thomas, 2013; Ali, 2017). Nevertheless, a combination of both theoretical knowledge and the actual practical experiences holds great potential, provided that the system is democratic. On a study about Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to promote participatory communication conducted by Paolo Mefalopulos (2008), the author did not focus on the communities, but only focused on an international organisation itself. Findings indicated that there is a gap between what the theory of participatory communication presents, and the actual applications of this concept, where many projects fail due to a lack of involvement (Mefalopulos, 2008; McPhail, 2009; Anaeto & Anaeto, 2010). The above literature review emphasises the need for novel research that seeks to understand the perceptions and practice of participatory communication in one of the least developed regions in South Africa, Lusikisiki.

This study does not merely concern investigating a single development entity, but it is aimed at investigating a holistic approach of key stakeholders to create long-lasting viable relationships, sustainable and empowered communities (Capon, Gillespie, Rolfe, & Smith, 2015). The approach taken is to improve communication processes, socio-economic development processes, to build trust relationships amongst stakeholders, and augment the ability of the communities to voice their opinions when it comes to decision-making (Willems, Jegers & Faulk, 2016).

### 2.1.4      Challenges to participatory communication

There are various unavoidable challenges associated with the participatory development context. The challenges associated with community development involve a lack of authentic participation and the dismissal of community insights (Chisa & Hoskins, 2016). Therefore, this study argues that communities ought not to be classified as mere 'recipients' in the development process, but that their considerable knowledge, expertise, networks and the level of education makes them more than mere recipients. Some scholars are of the opinion that highly structured projects are not suitable for participatory development (Waisbord, 2018). Another preoccupation is in terms of sustainability of these communication projects. Some have shown that the projects become successful when there are funders injecting funds into projects that subsequently create dependency

in the communities for which they are designated (Ndou, 2017; Friendly & Stiphany, 2018). The next section will explain the research design and proposed research methods for the study.

There are three types of paradigms in the field of development communication, namely, the modernisation, dependency, and participatory paradigms.

In contrast, participatory communication assumes that people should be involved in programmes since they could contribute vastly to developmental programmes affecting their livelihood (Burnside-Lawry; 2012 Bland, 2018). By making use of a participatory approach, the communities are instrumental in articulating their problems, and deciding on their autonomy (Naidoo, 2010). Participatory communication is intended to improve the lives of people in a sustainable manner. It places emphasis on a people-centred approach when responding to the problems of different communities (Berglund Hallgren & Aradottir, 2013; Bryant, 2015).

To elicit such participation, communication is the core element required to facilitate such processes. The importance of communication lies in ensuring that the community members in the developing communities are involved at every level of development effort. Participatory communication has witnessed widespread usage for more than three decades, and without it, sustainability development is highly unlikely to occur (Van de Fliert, 2010; Gehrke, 2014; Arcidiacono, Grimaldi & Di Martino, 2016). A detailed discussion on these paradigms will be undertaken in the next session. The aim of the study is based on an assumption that the key failure of projects is caused by limiting access of the community to those projects. Calvet-Mir, Maestra-Andrés, Luis-Molina and Van den Bergh (2015) explain that development has been associated with several failures and disappointments. In concurrence, Khatala (2019) notes that there has not been much improvement in the lives of the people in developing countries. This is due to the lack of involvement of the so-called 'recipients' of development when taking decisions and designing development strategies in relation to those development projects (Aylett, 2010; Sandberg & Wallo, 2013).

The participatory model allows people to be part of the decisions affecting their lives. Bau (2018) and Ndou (2017) indicate that horizontal flow of communication is a necessity in ensuring that genuine participation occurs. This study will explore the extent of practice of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy Project in Lusikisiki. Participatory communication has been utilised both in theory and in practice, where the researcher aims to investigate the main concepts associated with its use and application. The chapter will focus on the concept of participatory communication and the review of empirical literature. To achieve the main objective of the study, perspectives of participatory communication will be unpacked and then woven together for a coherent set of assumptions that reinforce the study.

## 2.2     CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the overall framework of the study, grounded within participatory communication. The focus of the study is placed on a two-way communication model within the development space, which locates the relevant communities at the forefront of development efforts designed with them in mind (Kakeneno & Brugha, 2016). This model is a participatory two-way model that creates an environment through which people can participate in process that will uncover solutions intended for their sustainable development (Burnside-Lawry, 2012). A participatory development framework is first unpacked to provide context about this theory. This is mainly because the research embraces participatory communication. Within the context in which the study is

conducted, there is dearth of research regarding whether communication used in community development may be considered as participatory (Arcidiacono, Grimaldi & Di Martino, 2016). Hence, the purpose of the study is to explore the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy Project in Lusikisiki. According to Bryant (2015), in a community development setting, stakeholders participate in programmes that benefit them.

In theory, there are three development paradigms, namely modernisation, dependency, and participation. The participatory communication approach as a process of social change has now become an alternative approach in driving development. This approach does not assume that development ought to be approached by making use of a one size fit all model, but rather a people-centred approach. For this reason, participatory communication requires a sincere involvement of the locals and contextualisation of driving development work successfully (Bau, 2018; Naidoo & Ramphal; Ndou, 2017). With this approach, people are not just classified as beneficiaries of development, however, they play a crucial role in driving their own development. Consequently, a participatory approach is not associated with just disseminating information to attain development goals. This chapter will review literature within the field of participatory communication, where more discussion will be placed on three types of paradigms within the field and their critics. A review of other studies will be done within the field of participatory communication. Thus, a detailed discussion about why participatory communication is an ideal sustainable development approach will be undertaken. The theoretical framework of the study will be explained in the section to follow.

## 2.3      THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Remarkably different paradigms within the field of development are still being applied at different levels. However, the need for people's participation and involvement at the grassroots level regarding the role for which participatory communication advocates when enrolling development works remains a crucial factor (Manyozo, 2016; Koningstein & Azadegan, 2018). This section of the study briefly reviews literature on the theory and practice of participatory communication in which this study is situated. There have been several studies that have been produced in this field and below a summary of key ideas is presented. The literature review will begin by looking at the historical background of development communication. It will then move on to definition of key terms, main paradigms (modernisation, dependency and participatory) in development communication, and how these have shifted, including challenges within the field of participatory communication. It is important to note that deep overview will be placed on participatory communication as an ideal approach for development.

Criticisms have been noted in the dominant paradigm, where numerous development initiatives have caused serious social impact within societies, such as a rapid rise in poverty (Jooste & Van der Vyver, 2014). It is mentioned that these programmes were designed by Western experts, without involving the people in the targeted societies. This resulted in communities being left behind by external agencies, with programmes that were not formulated according to their own traditions (Van der Linden, 2014). According to Khatala (2019), failures associated with those development projects were caused by a "one-size fit all" approach to modernisation theory. Similarly, other scholars observe that the failure to involve communities in development initiatives is associated with several project failures (Ali, 2017, Khatala, 2019). SANRAL adopted a sustainable development model to drive their intended legacy programme, which will be explored by this study, as to whether the practice of participatory was employed within the project. Certain studies indicate that top-down

communication approach of the modernisation paradigm have dominated development projects within scholarly debates (Pawar, 2010; Higgs, 2011; Peng & Vlas, 2017). Modernisation theory continues to have a persistent influence on many development projects, however, participatory communication has not been practiced (Georghiou, 2014; Melkote & Steeves, 2015). For this study, it is therefore crucial to explore the extent to which the participatory communication was practiced.

This will then assist in terms of positioning the participatory communication model within development communication space. Participatory communication is associated with two-way flow of communication, which allows the people to be the generators or the key drivers of their own development, and not just beneficiaries (Naidoo, 2010; Ako, 2017; Berglund, Hallgren & Arradottir, 2013).

The current study will adopt participatory communication based on the relevance of its theoretical framework as relevant to the study. The theoretical framework assumes that participatory communication could facilitate development, as suitable for the current study. Additionally, participatory communication tends to be flexible, where according to Van de Fliert (2010) and Bland (2018) it can be applied within a given context, without being a pattern. Participatory communication is a tool that provides a bottom-up approach, which challenges the diffusion model used in the modernisation and dependency models. As mentioned by Naidoo (2010) and Georghiou (2014), the above-mentioned paradigms were only used to persuade , change their way of thinking and behaviour, whereas the participatory model perceives people as equal partners in the development process.

Participatory communication constitutes a basic component of development theory and practice. Scholars are certain that this approach will be successful, as compared to other modernisation and dependency paradigms. These assumptions were based on a theory that participatory approaches are aimed at enhancing the community by involving them more when developing initiative programmes are designed with them in mind (Friendly & Stiphany, 2018).

These approaches are designed in a manner that ensures that communities take part in implementing policies during the initiation of these interventions (Ako, 2017). Participation necessitates trust and assists in decreasing distance between developers and the community, while facilitating an equitable sharing of knowledge and experience (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008, Chang & Jacobson, 2010). This approach calls for various stakeholder groups within a society to become part of an accessible platform in which they can carefully discuss, while weighing and mapping their strengths and weaknesses, in order to come up with alternative solutions to reach consensus (Netshitomboni, 2017). This is done in a way that not only reaches those decisions, but also considers emotions less technically. The lack of adequate development efforts to facilitate socio-economic development have resulted in several projects failing (John & Etika, 2019). Moreover, based on several failed projects in developing countries, this is still associated with the lack of community involvement and direct community benefits (Ako, 2017; Ali, 2017). Likewise, Otto & Fourie (2012) and Friendly and Stiphany (2018) report that insufficient consultation and participation has resulted in communities rejecting those development efforts. The following section will explore key terms of the study.

### 2.3.1.1    Characteristics of development communication

The birth of the field of development communication can be traced back to the post World War II period (Khatala, 2019). Scholars noted that at the time that although development projects were widely promoted, public

participation was neglected (Kachentawa & Cheyjunya, 2017). On the other hand, development has shifted from the modernist to dependency and lastly participatory paradigm, which makes use of mainly dialogic forms of communication (Burger, 2017). Development communication places an emphasis on various levels of transformation. Its participatory inclination argues that horizontal communication ought to be promoted, as opposed to a top-down approach (Melkote & Steeves, 2015; Saez, 2016). As a consequence, this approach is adopted for this research study, since it is in line with the objectives of the study. A shifting paradigms exploration will be undertaken in development communication.

### 2.3.1.2 Perspectives on the concept of communication

Melkote and Steeves (2015) classify communication as a system, whereas others perceive it as part of culture in all aspects of social change. Likewise, Hsin, Chien, Hsu, Lin and Yore (2016) believe that communication ought to be regarded as something on which any form of social change is contingent. In field of research communication is crucial in all aspects hence it is more meaningful to occur between more than two people. Torruella, Casademont, Gifreu, Prieto-Flores (2018) note mutual agreements are based on common interest. For this reason, genuine communication relies on mutual understanding between a sender and a receiver. Thus, communication includes human interfaces that may range from a top-down approach to a two-way flow, and consequently, it can shift from interpersonal to a facilitated process (Koningstein & Azadegan, 2018). A broad conceptualisation of the concept of communication has been employed for this research study.

### 2.3.2 Participatory communication

Laurian and Shaw (2009) also mention that participation refers to an approach that allows for relationships between civil society and developers (Khatala, 2019). Likewise, Chang and Jacobson (2010) classify participatory communication as a communicative form of action that consists of the voluntary exchange of certain ideas amongst stakeholders to achieve common understanding. Laurian and Shaw (2009) note that this approach is unlike top-down methods, intended to enhance and shape programmes for development. Participatory communication allows participants to be free in expressing their opinions (Sandberg & Wallo, 2013). This understanding is adopted for this research study because participants ought to be free to communicate on matters pertaining ABCD Legacy Project development, and not only that, but also to incorporate their ideas into final decisions that are taken related about the relevant Project.

Nevertheless, the elusive term of participation has no easy or straightforward definition. In some instances, the definition of participatory communication merely reflects the current state of reasoning in the development space. It is nonetheless seen as a dialogic process, which enables stakeholders to share information therefore facilitates their empowerment.

## 2.4 MAJOR PARADIGMS IN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

There are **three major paradigms** in the field of development communication according to Arku and Arku (2013) and Koningstein and Azadegan (2018).
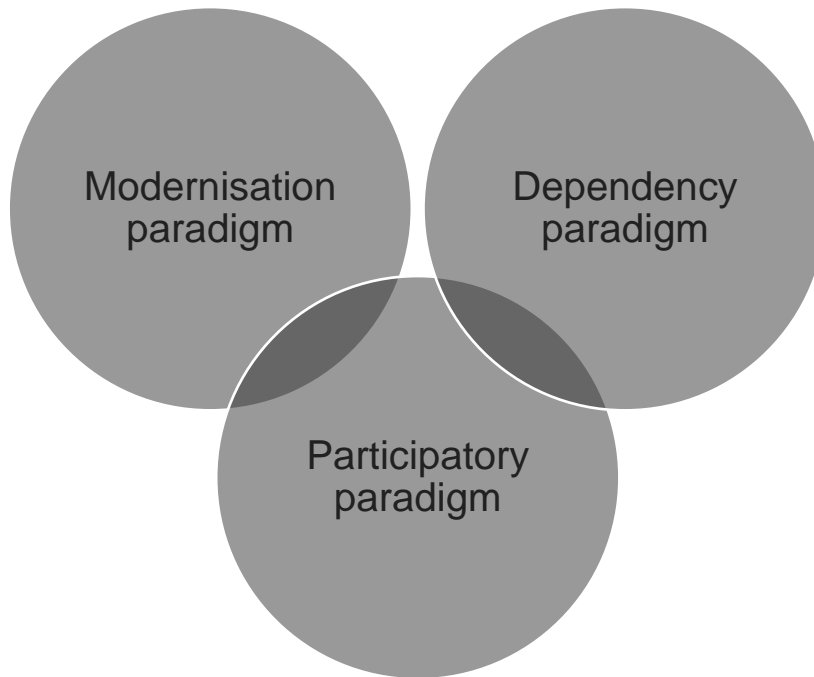
These paradigms are important paradigms in development discussions (Van der Linden, 2014). The origin of participatory paradigm was informed by the failure of modernisation and dependency paradigms to address issues of development on the world systems theories (Servaes & Tamayo, 2013). Each one of the paradigms will be defined below, starting with modernisation to dependency and later move on to the participatory paradigm.

### 2.4.1    Modernisation paradigm

 Non-industrialised countries have been considered incompetent in resolving their own developmental matters, which could be resolved by involving external role players (Rasmussen, Ronnberg & Tsatsaroni, 2015; Protopsaltis, 2017). This theory became popular in the 1950s and was criticised for only considering a single model when approaching development (Reyes, 2001). It started in Western Europe and then moved to other parts of the world. Modernisation theory argues that modern societies are more productive. Ojukwu and Mbah (2019) explain that modernisation is process of social change, where less developed societies look up to the more developed societies. Also, Ojukwu, Ukatu, Ohuoha, Nnakwue (2016) state that it considers a new social order linked to technology advancement.

Hence this model has been associated with western model of development and change in pollical culture (Mclean & MacMillan, 2009). These programmes were aimed at bringing about transitional stage to modern stages of development. Its theorists believed that continuous interactions would be absorbed by the underdeveloped societies and that would come in handy for these societies with technological improvements. However, some critics note that development is not unidirectional, but that it shows a certain possibility for development (Ojukwu & Mbah, 2019). Another theory that emerged was dependency theory.

The modernisation paradigm facilitates change in various stages of human thinking and actions from a traditional state, adapting to the mores of modernised countries (Jooste & Van der Vyver, 2014, Gilman, 2018). This paradigm has promoted liner approach to development, which depends on technology to transfer messages, and which is driven by the state (Georghiou, 2014; Senyo, 2018). For modernists, the only way to attain development in non-industrialised countries was to make use of western science (Gilman, 2018). According to Mbah and Uchechukwu (2019), the assumption made was that there could be only one way of development as indicated in the advancement of the developed countries. International developmental challenges began after a speech by Truman in 1949 leading to the execution of development project, which led on to the birth of modernisation development theory (Ali, 2017) .This theory is also known as a dominant paradigm. It was highly influential in the development space, and guided intellectual thinking between 1940 and 1960 (Melkote & Steevees, 2015). In this milieu, communication was viewed as a top-down approach of transmitting information, with no room for feedback in a modernisation paradigm (Melkote & Steeves, 2015).

Likewise, Sylvester (2016) states that under this paradigm, transmissive ways of communication were used (see the Shannon-Weaver Model of 1949). The Shannon and Weaver model focused on the source of information and the channel, which must be freely distributed with messages to the receivers for the development to take place. This then affords the top-down communication approach, where rich and developed elites shares information considered relevant from their side for the development of the poor (Sylvester, 2016). Assessing development communication, social scholars, such as Waisbord (2018) and Manyozo (2016), highlight that this paradigm does not empower people, where, due to these defeats, another paradigm referred to as dependency emerged.

According to modernisation theory, development was associated with economic growth. It was the approach used to endorse and provide support in the economic development. Those subscribing to this paradigm believed that the western model was universal in terms of its potential application (Waisbord, 2018). Also, Netshitomboni (2017) concurs with Freire's argument that the dominant paradigm was only concerned with economic growth. It was perceived as a huge compressor aimed at destroying civilisation, and can be called as a theory of civilisation, due to its approach in moving towards an exclusive model. This paradigm viewed communication and development as a set of interdependent processes in which social structures can be distorted into a modern structure. The implications associated with this included that traditional people were disrupted from their extant state (Georghiou, 2014).

Access to mass media became a prerequisite for inclusion in modern societies. In this regard, mass media has had a defining influence on people's behaviours and attitudes. Ali (2017) notes that in this paradigm, the role of mass media was to create awareness, and to motivate people to adopt inventions brought to them by external parties. Media has become capable of changing people's thinking by transmission of western messages such as development messages to influence developing countries (Peng & Vlas, 2017; Wise, 2017). Media can be seen to have been influential enough to communicate messages that would lead intended development processes (Ali, 2017). To capitalise mass media for modernisation, there has been a significant connection between modern societies and modern mass media. Moreover, the shifting of this paradigm from taking a traditional view to a modern view of societies has been associated with westernisation and economic growth (Melkote & Stevees, 2015). Additionally, economic growth was promoted as a solution for all challenges associated with underdevelopment (Servaes, 2008; McPhail, 2009). This paradigm focused mainly on the

quantification of the economy and ignored qualitative terms such as freedom and quality of life, justice, to name a few. Therefore, underdeveloped countries rejected their old ways in favour of the innovations of the developed countries promoted as paradigmatic (Netshitomboni, 2017). A lack of information sharing was considered as one of the major challenges for underdeveloped countries. To overcome this challenge, a solution proposed was to implement an information sharing model by which messages would be shared in order to persuade the public. This information sharing involved a flow of messages from the privileged to the poor. The modernisation paradigm involved information sharing (Tufle & Mefalopulos, 2009; Van de Fliert, 2010). Generally, this was also done to promote new technologies of the western style of modernisation.

Melkote and Stevees (2015) note that the development conception that advocated industrial growth and another part of the modernisation theory is diffusion of innovation theory, which was associated with distribution of new communication using certain channels from rich to poorest countries. This was aimed at modernising poor countries and their people. This model involved sending messages from a sender to a receiver. Modernisation reinforced efforts to use communication as a tool for the success of development, both socially and economically. Thus, these efforts to re-invent developing countries in a western setting were ineffective, and there was a lot of criticism that was associated with this theory. This demotion of the human dimension of development resulted in the demise of this development theory.

### 2.4.1.1 Criticism of modernisation paradigm

After the 1970s the expected goals of industrial growth were not accomplished. Scholars criticised the modernisation paradigm for not placing emphasis on the significance of broad public participation in development matters (Jooste & Van der Vyver, 2014).

Developing countries were left with all sorts of challenges, in fact, things got worse. Scholars reported that this was mainly because several people in these countries experienced a decline in their standard living conditions (Mefalopulos, 2008).The ineffectiveness of this paradigm resulted in serious critics, and was perceived as being methodologically incompetent. It was further criticised for not being able to consider a broader spectrum of social dimensions of development and socio-political issues linked with development. It was viewed as being insensitive to cultural inclusion and diversity.

Moreover, this paradigm assumed a certain power of the mass media, where the motivation was drawn from hypodermic needle theory or the bullet theory since the assumption was that the media was capable of changing people's attitudes and behaviours (Ali, 2017). Overestimation of mass media alone could not change mindsets of the traditional societies. There were several misconceptions about communication being used to only disseminate information which had a significant impact in this paradigm not being effective. Communication needs were not addressed by this top-down information sharing in addressing development issues, and the reinforcement of active participation (Mefalopulos, 2008).

It is believed that previous failures of projects in development settings were caused by a one-size-fits-all method initiated by modernisation theory (Maharani, 2013). Notably, Calvet-Mir *et al.* (2015) highlight that this paradigm did not empower people and its inadequacy led to a dependency paradigm. Based on the failures that were associated with this paradigm, there was a need for an emergence of a theoretical development paradigm in the field of communication.

For this, one developer believed that underdevelopment was caused by a consequence of the developed countries in the Third World. The dependency paradigm originated as an alternative approach from an economic and a political viewpoint.

### 2.4.2 Dependency paradigm

Dependency gained its prominence in the 1970s, focusing mainly on understanding economic underdevelopment (Farny, 2016). The foundations of dependency focused on underdevelopment and adapted dependency theory for Marxism (Thelwall & Thelwall, 2016) where Georghiou (2014) reformulated Marxism as 'world systems theory'. This theory focused on development domination, which, it argues, creates a breach of rich and poor, which then leads to the development of a participatory paradigm. Apia (2017) notes that dependency theory does not promote participation, hence participatory paradigm also emerged. Like modernisation, it promotes the idea that developmental ideas ought to be transmitted into societies. This model uses transmissive models of communication see, Roger's diffusion model (1973). This model looked at which rate ideas travelled through technology. These are linked to creating an awareness or persuasion about a subject matter.

Dependency theory has been viewed as a possible way of clarifying the persistent deficiency of underdeveloped countries and is driven by Marxist thinking (Georghiou, 2014). This paradigm was a reaction to modernisation, which placed focus on underdevelopment. Dependency theory was refined and termed world systems theory. World systems theory was considered due to exploitation under capitalism. This theory argued that deficiency was the result of a revolution of global political economy, which penalised poor people and favoured the rich (Pawar, 2010).

Also, Naidoo (2010) notes that, in the 1960s, modernisation was criticised by the proponents of the dependency by failing to bring about equality and development. Not only that, but Lyne (2015) points out that the modernisation theory was theoretically flawed, as part of a general critique by dependency theorists. In addition to that, Pawar (2010) regards modernisation as being impractical when it comes to the processes linked to development. Dependency theory criticised modernisation theory for looking at development from within a stable social system lens, which allows no consideration of social dissonance. Colonisation blocked development efforts from occurring because profits that could be used to improve industrialisation were drained by colonial powers. Hence the international economic order preserves a false dependency of those countries that are still developing on the ones that are already developed (Vliegenhart, 2010). For scholars of dependency theory underdevelopment is a result of the international economic system known as an "international division" of labour (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008; Mefalopulos, 2008).

According to Khatala (2019) a dependency approach on development policies was great in the 1970s and 1980s because it advocated for dependency on two levels, according to Table 2 to follow.

**Table 1: Dependency approach**

| Lyne (2015) and Naidoo (2010) state that the first level was that countries ought to thrive by implementing policies to insulate state industries from international competition. | The second layer as mentioned by Mefalopulos (2008) is at the international level, where peripheral countries would devise structures such as alliances to be able to have more influence at an international political and economic level. |
|---|---|

Based on the enormous growth of its appeal, dependency theory developed various branches, which include a Marxist tradition (Thelwall & Thelwall, 2016). At the beginning of 1970s, the dependency paradigm originated and became the second most dominant paradigm in international development. A dependency paradigm was a Marxist theory inspired by the cold war to reflect on reality. After the failure of modernisation, scholars started to critically investigate the development path of modernisation that was paved by its scholars. Predominantly past injustice, exploitation of poor countries and the slave trade caused a huge gap, by impoverishing developing countries while enriching the western ones (Rogers, 2008; Ali, 2017).

The dependency paradigm proposes that developing countries work on two levels to address imbalances. Firstly, they need to be economically self-reliant, and secondly, they ought to depend less on imports from foreign countries (Ramodibe, 2014; Ifeduba & Balariwa, 2016). This called for a strategy to create political presence, which demanded a balance exchange of communication, as well as cultural programmes between the rich and the poor.

There was no substantial difference between dependency theory and modernisation theory in the conception of communication. Like modernisation, communication was also media-centred, and horizontal communication was ignored (Melkote & Steeves, 2008; Servaes, 2008). Dependency theory was ineffective, however it did contribute to creating a better understanding of the challenges in the developing countries from a new perspective. It also assisted in proving insight about the challenge linked to humanity. Nevertheless, the advocacy of a paradigm shifts to encounter underdevelopment issues this theory had practical flaws which were open for critics.

### 2.4.2.1    Criticism of the dependency paradigm

Again, dependency failed to consider essential stakeholders in the process of development communication. Processes were detrimental to attaining desired communication goal from the source. As such, the two paradigms did not produce intended development for the target audience. According to Alao, Uwom and Alao (2013), some of the concerns included social inequality and poverty. This accentuates the view that this was an inadequate way to approach evolving development (Arowolo, 2017). With these arguments, becomes clear that these models were indeed less empowering for those they were intended to serve, where they overlooked to propose to take stakeholders on a journey of co-creation in development ventures. This theory failed to

recognise the role of national elites. It also could not spot the difference amongst the political and economic situations. To respond to these shortcomings, a participatory paradigm emerged (Naidoo, 2010; Ali, 2017). The next section discusses how participation has become an alternative development paradigm in the efforts of international development.

### 2.4.3      Participatory paradigm

Consequently, an alternative participatory paradigm emerged. Its significance is that it commends robust grass-roots involvement in development processes and suggests that communities create their own development approaches for them to attain their ideal development goals (Burger, 2017). Furthermore, participatory communication is a type of communication that accentuates equality and enables people to be free, while having equivalent access to the means of articulating their viewpoints, feelings, and experiences (Msibi & Penzhorn, 2010).

At the centre of participatory communication is a new view for genuine participation linked to dialogue and a bottom-up approach. As alluded to in previous sections, the failure of modernisation and dependency theory to achieve desired outcomes has to the emergence of an alternative route to development. However, since the 1970s this paradigm has evolved drastically as a critical alternative development approach. Tesfaye (2011) and Enghels (2016) believe that real participation affords beneficiaries an opportunity to make all decisions. There have been lengthy discussions regarding whether participation is a means or an end (Parfitt, 2004). This argues that participation ought to be implemented at various levels in order to give a chance to the communities benefitting the development programme to also make critical decisions that affect them.

Participatory communication notes that it is essential for communities benefitting from development projects to be hands on. Participatory communication emphasises two-way communication, encouraging dialogue and bottom-up approaches aimed at raising awareness (Otto & Fourie, 2016). Accordingly, this approach separates itself from a one-way communication method of sharing information or persuading the masses to change their own behaviour (Naidoo, 2010). Several projects have failed magnificently due to inadequate development efforts that the developers bring into communities aimed at facilitating development (Enghel, 2016).

Participatory communication gained prominence through development communication discussions as well as in the research space (Burger, 2017; Msibi & Penzhorn, 2010). Similarly, participatory communication has then been a blood cell for sustainability in development communication. Nevertheless, it remains a contested concept (Ali, 2017). Participatory communication however has *six principles*. These principles situate participatory communication at the centre of socio-economic development, whereby the community is central to their own empowerment. Correspondingly, these principles view participation as a genuine effort aimed at facilitating development, 'by the people for the people'. The community is perceived as an eco-system through which they depend on their own assets to drive development not just for themselves, but also for the generations to come.

Basic principles of a participatory approach as classified by Serveas & Malikhao (2005) are summarised as follows:

**Table 2: Basic principles of a participatory approach**

| Basic needs | Fulfilment of human and material needs |
|---|---|
| Endogenous | Development initiatives evolve in manner that involves the society and that development is not imposed to them |
| Self-reliance | Level of self-sufficiency of the community |
| Ecology | A friendly approach towards the environment which considers environmental concerns when approaching sustainable development |
| Participatory democracy | Genuine practice of democracy when facilitating social development whereby the communities are truly involved |
| Structural changes | Balanced socio-economic relations to empower the communities and engaging them vastly in decision-making |

The principles mentioned above indicate that participatory communication ought to be genuine, and communities ought to be truly involved in order to attain sustainable development. The initiatives should then be accepted by the society, and this should be treated as their basic human right. Within the participatory paradigm, communication is conceived of as dialogic in approach. Hence it has evolved from the modernisation theories and has been widely endorsed since the 1970s (Serveas, 2008; Mefalopulos, 2008). Multiplicity 'participatory paradigm' reformed the way in which communication was being both applied and apprehended. As mentioned in the previous section, communication was just used to persuade the individuals by the elites. There is a broad consensus amongst scholars that participatory communication lies at the core of sustainable development (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009; Huesca, 2008). Accordingly, communication does not only serve to spread economic and political values such as marketing models, unlike in a modernisation paradigm which was more manipulative and destructive. This makes participatory communication a different model that has been accepted widely both theoretically and practically, as mentioned throughout the development communication literature (McPhail, 2009; Chang & Jacobson, 2010). There is no common solution for development challenges, thus development ought to be approached as a vital multidimensional process that differs from case to case. This approach views development as a self-reliant structural transformation, and it encourages participation when framing development processes, as well as during the course of their implementation (Aylett, 2010; Sandberg & Wallo, 2013). The most basic approach to commencing with participation processes is to conduct engagements and thorough research, and to consult with the community leaders (De Vente, Reed, Stringer, Valente & Newig, 2016).

Participatory research can be applied in order to either destroy or enhance capacities of a given community. He postulates that constructive participation is something that is a basic human necessity. This is an approach that enhances empowerment, and through which communities can understand their capabilities, while being involved in the decision-making (Stack, 2013; Marais, Quayle & Burns, 2017). To build a society that participates in development programmes, it is crucial that communication for development processes differs from that of the

broader media landscape, particularly that of commercial interests and mass media. This study encourages a two-way communication process during participation.

Participatory communication is grounded on the assumption that individuals are actively involved in programmes and processes for development, through which they contribute their ideas, knowledge, and expertise (Lu & Ares 2015). In contrast, emphasis is placed on the process of outlining how communication resources can be used in designing programmes aimed at bringing about change in the development sector. Participation has been classified as a vital element in development communication (Burger, 2017). Additionally, Kakeneno and Brugha (2016) note that participation brought emphasis back to a praxis that had previously emerged in the developing countries that involved self-directed development rather than development imposed on a community by outsiders. This has enabled people to become forerunners of their own development, and not only objects of processes (Naidoo, 2010). Several scholars have contributed tremendously to the literature of participatory communication by identifying four ways of viewing participation in development, viz.: participation in implementation; participation in evaluation; participation in benefit; and participation in decision-making (Yoon, 2004).

| Participation in implementation involves communities actively in the actualisation of projects, where they are assigned responsibilities and also given a chance to contribute their resources. | → | Participation in evaluation involves communities in reviewing projects upon completion | → | Participation in benefit refers to direct value for the community in question. | → | Participation in decision making involves individuals initiating, conceptualising, and executing activities that will be conducted by themselves as a community. |

The are several ways that can be used when viewing participation in the development field, as mentioned above. The communities should be actively involved in shaping, implementing, evaluating and taking decisions to roll out projects within the community. Nevertheless, participation that lies within decision making in participation is perceived as the most vital, as it allows communities to have power over both their environment and their own lives (Marais, Quayle & Burns, 2017). It is important to acknowledge Yoon's theory, which emphasises importance of participation in decision-making, because this opens room for communities to be empowered with the necessary skills and knowledge to be responsible in changing their own lives to drive truly sustainable development. Development communication has been iterated through various paradigms, before the advent of participatory communication (Naidoo, 2010). This communication approach serves as a tool to improve participation in development. Mansuri and Rao (2013) note that a concept of participation is innate to all cultures. Participation played a significant role back in the days, whereby decisions were taken by male citizens only. Its existence has been traced back to about fifth century BC between Hindu and Bhuddist followers in South Asia

(Ali, 2017). The idea of participation was acknowledged in AmaZulu communities in South Africa where the chief's power was controlled by the Umkhandlu council's decisions that served community interests. This was also practiced in West Africa (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Scholars indicate that theories and practices of development communication are continually evolving.

Consequently, the participatory paradigm has been endorsed as a preferred approach for many organisations, particularly internationally like the UNICEF and the World Bank (Kakeneno & Brugha, 2016). Nevertheless, there has been a broadening of literature on participatory development, where its evolution from modernisation to participatory styles has not been unilinear when it comes the application of theory (Maharani, 2013). These days participation sideways with concerns for having a voice, empowerment is fundamental in most development programmes. It is a principle according to which support ranging from different stakeholders such as ordinary citizens or government can have a voice (Melkote & Stevees, 2015). The failure of these approaches to the participatory development paradigm received strong support from several theories/scholars (Alemnew, 2017). They all pronounce importance of this approach for social change and development. The section below presents criticism of the participatory paradigm.

### 2.4.3.1     Criticisms of participatory paradigm

There are several critics associated with a participatory approach. Msibi & Penzhorn (2010) argue that ordinary people's abilities are activated in situations where they might improve their potential. However, Servaes (2008) notes that, even if there are disagreements when the participatory programmes are being rolled out, these are reduced to reach consensus. It is difficult for participation to occur if the objectives are not aligned, or are uniform for participants. Others argue that participatory approaches are vague in highlighting procedures for development interventions (Waisbord, 2018). Those in power may stimulate appreciation for the challenges experienced by poor people without conducting proper consultations on development issues with them (Akpabio, 2012). Otto and Fourie (2016) meanwhile maintain that when groups govern a given participatory agenda, they usually benefit more. Similarly, Enghel (2015) states that there is inconsistency in terms of local cultures as they have been established in the west. Meaning most of the time only active members of the society may benefit. When the approach was being introduced the optimism was that it would be successful, however there have already been much criticism about it.

Waisbord (2002) deliberates on these **criticisms** to note that:

- This approach is not effective in crisis situations when urgent matters need to be resolved.

- It places too great an emphasis on the potential of social or interpersonal communication. This is more visible in Freire's theory of two-way dialogical communication, which places emphasis on group interaction. It is also mentioned that this approach downplays mass media.

- Similarly, practising participatory communication in societies that are not democratic, local people may be coerced into participation.

The abovementioned critiques constitute some of the key failures of the participatory approach, some of which can be refined, while others cannot. As indicated in Section 2.7, there is a 'ladder' of participation by means of which stakeholders can be involved. This study aims to identify whether a concrete gap exists between the

theory and application of participatory development and suggest recommendations to address this gap. Lastly, participation should be seen a free communication between all those involved. Participants require the assurance that their input will result in a mutually beneficial goal. In Section 2.6, some debates relating to the notion of participation are explored.

## 2.5  DEBATES ABOUT THE NOTION OF PARTICIPATION

There are various fields that have posed relevant questions about the notion of participation (Khatala, 2019).

### 2.5.1  Agenda of participation

Regarding the agenda of participation in a development context, where stakeholders, like agencies, government have been dominating the agenda-setting scenes (Delgado & Staples, 2009; Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009; Thiollent, 2011). Delgado and Staples (2009) and Call-Cummings and James (2015) explain that, when the public is fully involved in a democratic manner on issues regarding development programmes affecting their livelihoods, this act is classified as a form of participatory development. Nevertheless, a participative process ought to result in the affected parties reaching consensus. Consensus is only attained after all parties have looked at every effort to accomplish them. Therefore, in service delivery programmes, participation should be enhanced by a people-centred communication approach (Naidoo & Ramphal, 2018).

### 2.5.2  People's capabilities

This involves looking into the capabilities of the community itself and how these can be capitalised on or strengthened (Otto & Fourie, 2016). In some instances, participation is used as a function to gather information that could be influenced by those in power. Information sharing in participatory settings is a matter of intense discussion, where Kakeneno and Brugha (2016) suggest that, for development issues to be tackled, the sharing of information between role players ought to be both accessible and understandable. It is does not serve the purpose to share information that people are not able to understand. In the same way, the availability of information about development efforts on the part of SANRAL should to the fourteen villages. This is to assist in address the issue of implementing projects that are not required by the community.

### 2.5.3  Political, social, and cultural factors

This debate is linked to political, social, and cultural factors, which shape the context in which participation takes place (Laurian & Shaw, 2009; Pawar, 2010). They also argue that sprawling bureaucracies often determine the approach that participatory methods ought to take. Additionally, there was an interesting discovery that during developmental stages, participation plays a crucial role in reducing potential conflict amongst stakeholders (Rowley, 2011; Calvet-Mir *et al.*, 2015; De Vente, Reed Stringer, Valente & Newig 2016). Participation enables a distribution of power, which results in decisions being taken with the interest of affected societies. Which position then in a good standing of also being part of those decisions. Participation encourages transparency at all levels, which promotes clear communication with stakeholders involved.

### 2.5.4    Involvement of local people in development

The last debate is linked to the actual involvement of local people in development (Call-Cummings & James, 2015). When looking at the theory of development, emphasis is placed on participatory scope, and how support can be provided in a sustainable way. Similarly, Laurian and Shaw (2009) note that local development projects should be linked to an approach that permits the people to express themselves freely in order to attain sustainability within a participatory process. Being aware of how power is distributed between participants is crucial, especially during a decision-making process, which is normally driven by a select few stakeholders. In this setting, a majority of the stakeholders are deprived an opportunity to have a voice (Dyll-Myklebust, 2012). When it comes to theory of communicative action, two-way communication is embraced as instrumental (Otto & Fourie, 2016). In support of this, Thomas (2014) adds that political economy ought to be used to assess participation to determine its degree of authenticity.

The next section will explain various types of participation which are imperative for the study.

## 2.6    TYPOLOGIES OF PARTICIPATION

There are several theoretical definitions and interpretations of the concept of participatory methods. However, stages of participation can be positioned on a continuum, which entails scholars as well as those espousing partial implementation of principles within participatory development sector (Huesca, 2008; Post, 2010) on the one end, with those advocating for the participation tools on the other. According to Otto & Fourie (2016) in concurrence with Huesca, participation includes many divergent methodologies by means of which to establish genuine processes. With these stages of participation in mind, typologies of participation were devised.

The below table (Table 2) discusses these typologies as outlined by Pretty (1995).

**Table 3: Pretty's typology of participation**

| Typology | Features |
|---|---|
| **Manipulative participation** | Stakeholders have no power. Information is shared by external professionals. |
| **Passive participation** | Information is disseminated without giving people a chance to provide response. |
| **Participation by consultation** | Stakeholders are permitted to define their own challenges in control analysis of the problem. |
| **Participation for material incentives** | Stakeholders partake in a process by contributing resources such as labour in exchange for material benefits or incentives. |
| **Functional participation** | External entities encourage involvement of stakeholders to achieve certain objectives that have been predetermined. |
| **Interactive participation** | Stakeholders participate in strengthening development action plans within local entities. |
| **Self-mobilisation** | Stakeholders take charge of their own development programs independently. |

Each type of participation is effective somehow, however what is crucial is the overall control the community will have pertaining to decision-making affecting their lives. That is where meaning and superficial participation is distinguished, and different kinds of participation can be compared. On this note, a "ladder of participation" was envisioned to mirror the different stages in which public participation processes occur (Delgado & Staples, 2009; Waller, Dreher & McCallum, 2015). Similarly, for Bland (2018), the ladder of participation involves an indication of sincere participatory obligation since it advocates for citizen power. Bland's theory is that citizens only gain power where government loses it. The higher levels within the stages of participation reflect that power is shared at the grassroot which means that the decisions are taken collectively by the majority (Aylett, 2010). When examining the ladder of participation, its steps are displayed in a rising order, beginning at manipulation reflecting the lowest level of participation, and moving on to the highest form of participation.

The ladder of participation is crucial when interpreting programmes classified as participatory. The lowest end of the ladder is not participatory, since it is used by powerful elites imposing their motives. With this intervention participants are unable to have a voice on the interventions, hence participation does not lead to change. However, on the higher part of the ladder of participation, citizens have more control, being part of the decisions taken.
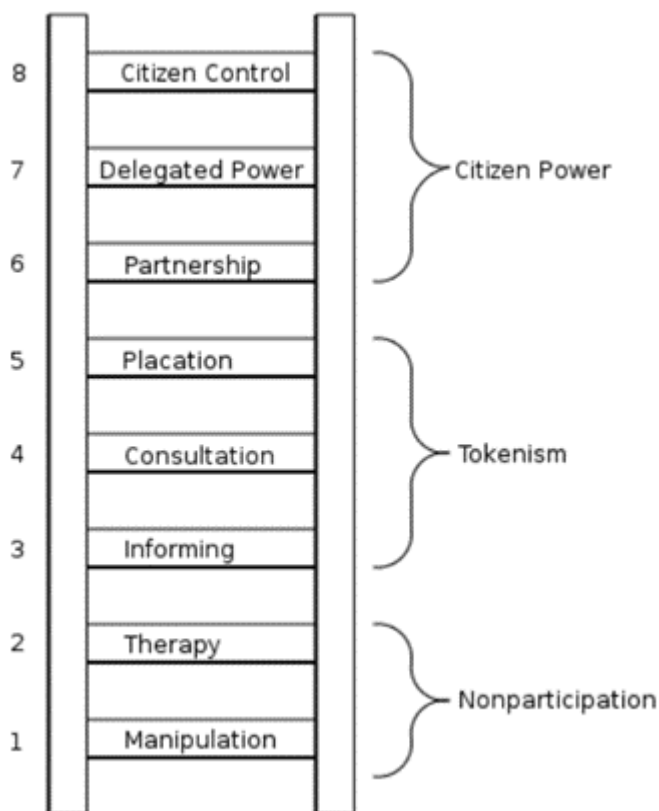


**Figure 2: Typology of participation adapted from (Arnstein, 1969)**

Section 2.8 below reviews the literature on participatory communication by examining other studies similar to those under investigation.

## 2.7      OTHER STUDIES ON PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

This research study supports participatory communication, which is highly influenced by the pedagogy notion. Participatory communication endorses methods of joint thinking by relevant participants in solving a shared problem (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009; Burnside-Lawry, 2012; Bau, 2018). The participatory paradigm contributes in a development context where some scholars mentioned that its meanings and development values be shaped by communities in which development takes place (Ndou, 2017). This implies that information received from outside may help in the process but should not dominate it entirely. Some scholars point out that international organisations, government entities, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) sometimes constitute the root cause of diminished empowerment for other stakeholders (Fourie, 2009; O'Meara, 2014). According to Royds (2015) reflection amongst stakeholders is critical. The case study under investigation is an ongoing project where the researcher is currently involved in providing professional services. There is no extant study that could be found that has explored the role of participatory communication on the SANRAL ABCD legacy project. The extent to which the practice of the participatory communication was practiced will be explored.

Khatala (2019) conducted a study on the practical guidelines for participatory communication during a review process of tariffs. His findings indicated that more research is required to explore communication in setting quality standards and dispute resolution mechanisms. He went further to explain that his topic is crucial in trying to improve sustainable development initiatives. Before comparing this project with the Khatala Project, the relevant processes need to be in place. It is anticipated that this comparison will serve to refine the process of implementation of the ABCD legacy project.

Thomas (2008) contends that the success of the participatory approach relies on the extent to which it is applied and practiced. The lack of commitment to the alterations of practices is normally responsible for the continued persistence of poverty, which is a feature of participation that is not genuine. Thomas's discussion indicates that making use of participatory communication methods has the potential to alleviate poverty. In his study, he states that projects that employ genuine participation are associated with equitable development. Thomas's study could enable a better understanding of SANRAL's approach to participation in their process of sustainable development. Extant empirical and theoretical research proves that participatory paradigm could be used to facilitate social change (McPhail, 2009).

Chitnis (2005) explored the application of participatory communication in an Indian setting on the PHD research work titled *Communication for Empowerment and participatory development*. The study documents the experiences of successful participatory development practices, revealing that the long-time application of dialogical approaches of communication principles has the potential to empower the poor. It also revealed that the success of participatory communication is only possible when developers are sensitive to local concerns in development.

In a thesis entitled *Enacting an alternative vision of communication for social change in the Peruvian Amazon Sengupta* (2007) considered whether issues of gender and human rights were interpreted correctly. This study was based on participatory research paradigm. Findings indicated that, for social initiatives to be a success, a holistic understanding of dynamics was crucial. The study examined the effectiveness of entertainment education in empowering women in the Peruvian Amazon. Now since this study is more feminine which is different with the present study, the framework that guides the present study could be this one. The current study

explores the success and failure of the participatory paradigm in a South African community development project setting.

Some projects were discovered to have been implemented without the full participation of relevant stakeholders. Also, the study was not concerned with participatory communication, with aspects of participatory communication were missing. Good participatory communication practices incorporate communication practices ensuring that the practice of participatory communication is enhanced. This represents the research gap for the study mentioned above, where, in order to address this void, the current study will examine first whether the concept is known and understood by locals.

Diallo's PhD dissertation (2007) concerns genuine participation in social change programmes. The study scrutinises indicators of genuine participation in development projects. The findings pointed to the fact that there is a difference between the attitudes of 'beneficiaries' and 'benefactors' with regards to participation. The findings concluded that there is a lack of participation across the entire social change process. Notably Diallo's study did not reflect on whether the projects showed progress through a genuine participation method.

Similarly, Ako (2017) conducted a study on participatory development studying community and citizen participation in development for municipalities in Sweden. The study was aimed at gaining more knowledge about how participatory communication is practiced within these municipalities. There was no clear definition of the concept of participatory development. Participants mentioned how they are engaged is overshadowed by authorities in which they make decisions on which projects participatory approaches should be applied and where not to apply the concept (Ako, 2017). These findings indicated that more research ought to be conducted to include community perspectives beyond that of the municipality. Participatory development plays a significant role in how the local government engages with the people, since they are the ones normally faced with development matters.

Etika and John (2019) have reported on many development projects that have failed because there was little or no community involvement. For the proposed study, the assumption is that participatory communication could facilitate development, as it is grounded in the experiences obtained via observations during an asset mapping pilot project conducted in Lusikisiki in 2019. Similarly, Ndou (2019) notes that there has been visible failure in most development projects, both in developed or developing countries, due to the under-emphasis of participation in those development processes. Communities play a significant role in projects however, as soon as neglected their limited involvement results in projects failing. With that being said it is clear that developers should pay more attention on participatory approaches when enrolling projects.

The proposed study seeks to establish the gaps between community development and participatory communication, and how the latter affects the former. The research also argues that adopting participatory communication approaches at every stage of the project life cycle is tenable (Ako, 2017). Moreover, bureaucratic interests favour informational methods of communicating over participatory methods (Aylett, 2010). It is important to note that not all project stages will allow for decisions be made at a community level. There are cases where a developer may decide on the type of development they may wish to undertake. Even in such cases, the community can then advise on what is possible, based on the conditions that inform the project outcomes with which they are both exclusively and intimately familiar.

Based on extant literature, numerous community development projects failed to attain their desired outcomes, due to the lack of participatory communication during the development process. In South Africa, community development has in certain instances been scuppered for this reason (Naidoo, 2010; Ali, 2017; Servaes, 2018). It is also evident that several development programmes have increasingly applied the participatory communication method (Inagaki, 2007). This is manifest in a study by Baú (2018), which unpacks a participatory approach in building a joint management group between the community members and timber corporations in Ghana. In this project, group communication as a participatory technique was applied, involving people in a village where workshops were conducted. These included dialogue amongst representatives that included project steering committees (Maharani, 2013). The study managed to determine that, when processes are co-created, significant results can be achieved. It was mentioned that three years after the project implementation, more than 50% of farms in the area planted trees in support of a local timber economy.

The model of participation integrates well into the evolving context of multiplicity development. It places an emphasis on cultural identity of doorstep societies, while enhancing participation at all levels, be it international, national, or local (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). In development projects, participation is critically important in the decision-making driving those programmes. This then calls for a new approach that will encourage diversity and full respect, as well as equality for those from a variety of backgrounds (International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, 1980). The collaboration approach is stressed across all levels in this model. It is evident that those fond of participation envy the ability of masses to develop themselves and the environment in which they live.

Literature on development communication showed that four non-governmental agents discovered that one-way approach of communication was still used in development programmes in Indonesia identified as participatory (Siregar, 2006). Some of the studies funded by global agencies of development have implemented participatory approaches such as those implemented by the German Technical Cooperation (Siregar, 2006). In this project, a communication strategy was not fully constructed, but participatory communication was used to share information with communities to populate action plans and implementing projects. Nzau-Muteta, Nzeyimana and N'Nguessan (2005) explain that in Mali, participation of the community in community development was insufficient, which resulted in the local people not fully supporting development initiatives. In this study, it was evident that the limitation was associated with financial management, and not on making sure that community projects are sustainable.

A study undertaken for the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) by Paolo Mefalopulos to promote participatory communication focused on an international organisation itself, instead of merely on the communities in which it served. Findings indicated that there is a gap between the theory of participatory communication, and the concrete applications of this concept, where, due to a lack of community involvement, these so-called grassroots projects tend to fail (McPhail, 2009; Anaeto & Anaeto, 2010).

Another study undertaken to examine the principles of participatory communication on the implementation of the Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) communication strategy in Kibera revealed that there was indeed community participation and dialogue, but that the component of empowerment was excluded, which resulted in the communities not buying into the process. The community also felt as if their voices were not listened to when key decisions were being taken in designing the strategy (Somba, 2017). Additionally, another

failure of this approach was seen in the data collection method used, where 82% of seminars caretaker's meetings at 18% the director of KENSUP mentioned that seminars were popular because the community were given stipends to attend the sessions. However, even during those seminars, a top-down model informed the communities, which is not a true reflection of how participatory community ought to take place (Somba, 2017). Again, the government of Kenya employed what they referred to as functional participation, where the community was involved in discussions of predetermined objectives, only to find that their views were never taken into account. Government have focused mainly on a top-down hierarchical approach, which bases communication on sending information about developmental practices (Ndou, 2017).

For development to be effective, communities should actively be involved in partaking in decisions, planning and ownership in activities aimed at improving their collective well-being (Maharanin, 2013). If there is lack of participation of relevant community development, is in danger of being rejected by those communities. Therefore, a critical principle for participation is that it only occurs when the communities take full ownership and responsibility for their own development programmes. This is to say that communities are not only beneficiaries of development, but they also have a say in taking the decisions that are associated with the programmes (Calvet-Mir *et al.*, 2015). Development programmes that make use of the first form of participation when it comes to taking decisions pertaining initiatives is being considered as not real participation (Inagaki, 2007). Various levels of participation are postulated in the next section below.

## 2.8     LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION

This research study explores the practices of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD legacy project. It will contribute to the existing literature within the field of participatory communication. It enriches our understanding of how state entities approach development in South Africa, and provides unique insights into an ongoing project.

**Table 4: Levels of participation and communication**

| Level of participation | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Information sharing | Informing people about that which is going to transpire, as a form of one-way communication to disseminate information. |
| Consultation | Mainly a one-way approach to communication which places more emphasis on feedback, and which is applied where stakeholders offer input, however they do not have a say in taking decisions. |
| Collaboration | Open interaction processes that take place and input in decision making is well-adjusted. |
| Empowerment | Shared thinking and two-way communication are ensured, transferring power from agents of change to the local communities. |

*Levels of participation and communication adapted from (Mefalapulos, 2008).*

Table two demonstrates the level of participation of relevant methods for public participation or development communication projects. Depending on the nature of the process, the first level of participation is information sharing, which can be associated with monologic communication methods. The second level involves consulting

with stakeholders which means they are not only informed. The third involves decisions being adjusted in order for collaboration to occur. The fourth involves shared thinking, in which communities are empowered to become reflexive agents for change.

Scholars such as Naidoo and Ramphal (2018) and Ndou (2019) argue that participatory communication lies at centre of the concept of community, where developers should always remember that communities are not just a single entity, but a diverse group of individuals with their own sovereign interests. Normally, decisions are taken with a supposed mandate from the communities, only to find that a precious few individuals were represented by those decisions and that decisions taken merely serve the interests of a selected few individuals. At this point communication then turn into a form of manipulation. It is crucial for developers to ensure that different groups within society are represented, where mapping stakeholders affected by a certain development issue is significant to ensuring that no specific group is excluded.

Genuine participation and true effective participation ought to take place amongst the affected parties so s to ensure that everyone is able to have an impact on the result of the development initiative (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Developers ought to be aware of the dynamics within the community when approaching development. Participation plays a crucial role in ensuring that those involved in development have a sense of ownership when it comes to activities related to communication. In the absence of ownership, development efforts will always be associated with individuals.

There are three results of a participatory development approach (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009) as noted below.

**Table 5: Results of a participatory development approach**

| |
|---|
| Commitment to do something about a challenge |
| Increased enhancement of proficiencies that are mandatory in resolving development challenge |
| The impact on an institutional or community level of development |

Participatory communication has in the past been misinterpreted. It has been operationalised in many ways, shifting from pseudo-participation to real efforts at generating participatory decision-making (Netshitomboni, 2017). Participatory approach has been encouraged, however, experts still influence the agenda of development efforts, so that even thought this approach enforces development, it has not constituted true empowerment of the people (Melkote, 2000 cited in Netshitomboni, 2017).

The historical concept of development communication has shifted from modernisation, dependency, and participatory paradigms. Both modernisation and dependency theories involve transmissive communication approach mechanisms, whereas a participatory approach make use of a horizontal model. As such, the two models relied heavily on making use of mass media to disseminate information and participatory model makes use of a horizontal approach, which encourages grassroots communication. These models are also known as a monologic form of modernisation and a dialogic participatory model. Mefalopulos (2008) summarised the difference between the two approaches in the field of communication.

**Table 6: Basic difference between monologic and dialogic models**

| Components | Modernisation/monologic | Participatory/dialogic |
|---|---|---|
| Key objectives | Information dissemination is aimed at changing attitudes of the people | Two-way (dialogic) communication to share knowledge for mutual social change |
| Reference model | One-way communication based on a top-down approach | Two-way communication approach |
| Orientation model | Output-orientated | Results are guided by the output of the process |
| Notion of development communication | Mass media is normally used in the development process | Dialogic communication techniques are used to drive interactive participation by stakeholders |

*Basic difference between monologic and dialogic models adapted from Mefalopulos (2008).*

Table 3 above draws a clear distinction between monologic methods used under a modernisation paradigm and dialogic methods under a participatory paradigm. For a modernisation paradigm, information is only shared with people and does not allow room for feedback or open discussions. However, when it comes to a participatory dialogic paradigm, two-way communication is encouraged. Literature in the field of participatory communication indicates that free and open dialogue lies at the core of guiding principles for participatory communication (Wanda, 2011). Genuine dialogue is all about ensuring that all role players are involved fully in a development process, and they are keen in discovering solutions (Burger, 2017). Additionally, dialogue reduces discrimination and inequality (Muturi and Mwangim 2009). Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) argue that the only communication approach that results in unrestricted open dialogic communication is a participatory one. Furthermore, Naidoo and Ramphal (2018) note that a dialogue constitutes a platform through which people are free, rather than feeling oppression from certain individuals because their involvement in decisions is highly valued.

This study intends to understand how the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL has been experienced by the stakeholders on the legacy project, which will in turn assist development efforts that will take place in the future. The area in which the study will be done is politically charged, with several role players involved, some of whom are recognised as legal entities by the communities, and some not. Having this type of information might save future developers and government a great deal of resources if they are aware of the dynamics in the community. There is also a signification contribution made in terms of the vitality that emerges from a custom designed development on the part of the people on whose behalf development is taking place (Otto & Fourie, 2016). This author argues that information from external from the outside is crucial to any development process, however it should not dominate the entire process. Dealing with community development projects, one will come to the realisation that there is no one-size-fits-all method when approaching community development.

Returning to the development that needs to be designed by the people for the people, an ABCD methodology that is being rolled out in some of our projects it is not always the same approach that we use for every community, because each community is different, and so are their dynamics. This depends on the intended project outcomes. Certain methods might work for example in Lusikisiki that may be rejected in Mogalakwena. For this study, change effort involves communication in development initiatives that requires the participation of the people for their own empowerment. The diagram below illustrates empowerment and a change process within a community (Naidoo, 2010).

Figure 2.3 illustrates that it is evident that proper communication, change, empowerment, and decision-making are possible, however, that change is facilitated by involving members of the community under development. It is necessary not to turn a blind eye to what communication gets applied to achieving such results. Many other scholars resonate with Freire's approach when it comes to dialogic communication. However, Freire's view only considers people in the Third World countries, where there is danger that technology builds a society which follows within the system (Naidoo, 2010; Ifeduba & Balariwa, 2016). Through empowerment people can critically deliberate on their challenges and deal with those challenges (Bolin, 2017). Nevertheless, considering the prominence that it places on two-way dialogic communication, participatory communication foregrounds action (Altamirano, 2016). The first step is for communities to begin to own the challenge through dialogue and the impression is to repeatedly assess the progression so as to ensure that there is consistency with objectives of the stakeholders. For this study, SANRAL make use of technology in order to drive their own agenda, while silencing the communities under a flag of forming opportunities that be communities depending on external stakeholders for them to survive. The following section will focus on the challenges within the participatory communication space.

## 2.9 CHALLENGES IN PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

There are several challenges that constitute barriers to participatory communication. Institutional perception on encounters of participatory communication involves three dynamics that hinder participation, namely: bureaucratic obstacles; status communication; and distancing political issues (Helena & Silva, 2017). This section will discuss how each one of those elements affects participatory communication. Firstly, the bureaucratic set up of some of the development organisations might not be suitable for participatory approaches. For example, there may be procedures that maintain specific standard protocols when it comes to applying communication to circulate messages. Participatory communication is also seen as a time-consuming exercise. Moreover, big entities, such as governments with an enormous bureaucracy, are used to regulating the direction of participatory methods that shape development (Laurian & Shaw, 2009; Helena & Silva, 2017).

Due to the nature of participatory methods, a larger degree of power should remain with the people that benefits from development. In concurrence, Rowley (2011) and De Vente, Reed, Stringer, Valente and Newig (2016) argue for several stages of developmental actions, where participation tends to reduce divergences amongst stakeholders. Participation evenly distributes power among stakeholders and enhances transparency (Cobigo et al., 2016; Naidoo & Ramphal, 2018; Ndou, 2019).

In addition,, participatory development process takes time to achieve social change, and are not able to function in an instance where there is funding involved for a short period of time (Call-Cummings & James, 2015; Bau,

2018). Having to involve communities may consume a lot of time and delay project execution when it comes to gaining approval. Other challenges might include resistance from the communities to partake in research, where a more generic challenge is getting procedural buy-in from communities based on historical experiences. Again, the existence of all the administrative related obstacles limits sincere participation.

Secondly, the status of communication that the development organisations offer tends to be more authoritarian, which is usually more visible in health and agricultural programmes and in health dependence of this nature takes away its autonomy (Waisbord, 2008). Moreover, in such cases communication will make use of programs to help achieve objectives of these organisations. Therefore, communication is used for technical purposes of sending information and not for enhancing dialogue nor for mobilising the community for a social discourse. Notably, Kakeneno and Brugha (2016) explain that in development programmes information should be easily accessible and understandable amongst all parties involved to understand. However, several times communication shared has led to domination of marginalised groups (Atikson, 2010; Lu & Ares, 2015).

Currently, South Africans are being informed about how the Covid vaccine will be rolled out, which is being undertaken using a top-down approach, where the nation was not engaged in procedural aspects. In this instance, community participation, empowerment and other notions of participatory methods have not been entertained. This has then resulted in prevalence of communication model which favours deference to experts/government in a top-down model of communication, which makes participatory communication highly unlikely to occur (Call-Cummings & James, 2015). It is not possible to use participatory communication in the absence of freedom of expression (Naidoo & Ramphal, 2018; Ndou, 2017).

When the decision-making is given over to community leaders such as chiefs to entertain other viewpoints, cultures that do not accommodate differing viewpoints do not promote participatory communication, in the form of a democratised public culture. This research study is aimed at addressing some of the research gaps that have been identified when reviewing extant literature. The goal of the project on which this research is based has been that the people within the fourteen villages are empowered, that they have a voice in development projects that are designed for them, and that their involvement in decision-making is enhanced is amongst some of the fruits that this study intends to bear. Some of these key concepts will then be beneficial in addressing research gaps within the field of communication.

## 2.10    SUMMARY

The chapter discussed in detail participatory communication as an alternative route for facilitating development communication and to assess its practice by SANRAL on the study under investigation. As mentioned by both Khatala (2019) and Alemnew (2019), failures of a modernisation and dependency paradigm resulted in the birth of participatory paradigm. Such an intervention allows for an analysis and means of field observation. The definition of operational concepts relevant to this study was done within the field of development communication, presenting the theoretical framework that guides the study, which was outlined and justified, followed by a detailed discussion on the three paradigms. A review of similar studies was done and gaps in literature were also identified. The challenges within the field of participatory communication also received mention.

In the preceding sections, participatory paradigm is shown to be considered a strong alternative to existing paradigms of development. This alternative paradigm is perceived as means for facilitating empowerment in

developing countries in particular. Hence, this study is positioned within this paradigm in order to explore if the practice of development efforts by SANRAL for the ABCD legacy project in an area such as Lusikisiki. However, there is a huge gap between theory and practice of participation (Alemnew, 2017, Ali, 2017, Ako, 2017). The study aims to examine such circumstances, for instance where Call-Cummings and James (2015) indicate that there is visible contradiction between theoretical proposition and how a concept is practiced. It is also mentioned that such contradiction has resulted in the misunderstanding of the concept within similar projects. This section considered historical developments and theoretical frameworks in development communication. Literature reviewed indicated that participatory communication is an ideal model when approaching development associated with initiatives that are aimed at driving socio-economic development for the communities.

Participation is a contestable notion that is crucial to define in the relevant research context. The discussion in this section adopted multiplicity theory to interpret participatory communication. This theory placed an emphasis on the fact that there is no generalisation or universal route when it comes to development, where there is necessarily class interdependency. Literature reviewed revealed the status of research on how participatory communication has been practiced by stakeholders in development. The study aims to show research gaps in the practice of participatory communication and how it can provide contributions to better applying this approach.

Participatory communication for this study will be used to collate information, determine the methodology that will be used to interpret information, and compare findings to draw broader conclusions of the study both at theoretical and at a practical level. The next chapter presents the research design and methods of the study.

# 3     CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

## 3.1     INTRODUCTION

The study seeks to explore the practice of participatory communication employed by SANRAL, on the ABCD legacy project in Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The overall goal of this research is to arrive at recommendations on how the practice of participatory communication could be addressed on a community development project. The following objectives underpin this study:

1. to explore the perceptions of the community, about the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy project in Lusikisiki;

2. to evaluate the perceptions of SANRAL about the practice of participatory communication on the ABCD Legacy project in Lusikisiki; and

3. to identify challenging factors that might prevent the practice of participatory communication in SANRAL's ABCD legacy project.

This chapter presents the research methodology of the study and will outline the research design, research paradigm, and the goal of the study, amongst other aspects. A qualitative research approach will be used to gather and analyse information.

The research design will **entail the following:**

-     Research questions

-     Data collection methods

-     Study population

-     Unit analysis

-     Reliability and validity for data collection methods

Interviews will be used to collect data for this study. Part of the discussion will be the motivation of the selection of data collection tools used for this study. Data collection techniques on how data will be collected, analysed is presented. The section below will discuss the study's research paradigm.

## 3.2     RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Clarke, Braun, and Hayfield (2015) note that a research paradigm refers to a combination of variables that have specific methodological approaches and tools. It entails ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Malatji, 2017). Likewise, Mahlalela (2017) states that a paradigm refers to the way in which a research problem is formulated and the overall organisation of research. Researchers use different research paradigms, depending on the assumptions directing the study (Torruella, Casademont, Gifreu & Prieto-Flores, 2018).

Similarly, based on assumptions that shape the study theoretical framework and techniques used, researchers use various paradigms (Khatala, 2017). Participatory communication has appropriate ontological, epistemological, and methodological underpinnings. Lincoln (2009) contends that in a research paradigm,

ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions are crucial. Taylor and Medina (2013) allude to the fact that a research paradigm consists of the following:

- a view of reality (ontology), either external or internal;

- a related view of the type of information and the standards for justifying it (epistemology); and

- an approach to accumulate this information (methodology).

Based on assumptions that shape the study theoretical framework and techniques used, researchers make use of various paradigms (Du Plooy, 2009; Khatala, 2017). There are four research paradigms or world views that are common in the field of communication research, namely positivist, interpretivist, constructivist, and pragmatist (Bhattacherjee, 2012; Shannon-Baker, 2015). These paradigms are elucidated below:

### 3.2.1 Positivist

Signh (2016) contends that this world view of experimental studies involves surveys that yield statistical data, and embraces descriptive research (Kraska, 2012). This paradigm adopts quantitative approach, which entails numerical analysis (Landrum & Garza, 2015; Tuval-Mashiach, 2017). Hence, a positivist paradigm is associated with a quantitative approach, where emphasis is placed on numbers and hypotheses testing (Zmetana, 2012). Quantitative researchers study human behaviour by separating the causal effects of variables.

### 3.2.2 Interpretivist

This paradigm enables a researcher to apply techniques to understanding social reality, unlike positivist paradigm (Kroeze, 2012; Benner, 2012). The ontological assumption is that reality could be constructed wherein knowledge and perspectives are explored (Stone, 2012). Interpretivism consider frameworks where social interactions arise to elicit meaning from emotions (Benner, 2012). This paradigm adopts a qualitative approach to research, which is inductive (Khatala, 2017). It places emphasis on understanding and meaning making as the goal of research.

### 3.2.3 Constructivism

Atkinson and Delamont (2010) explain that that the assumption of this world view is that knowledge is made for social experience. It is an approach that asserts that people create their own understanding of the world (Adom, Yeboah & Ankrah, 2016). This constructivism paradigm is based on the analogy that people construct through experience of what they have learnt. It advocates for a balanced representation of views. Hence there is an interaction between the researcher and participants, where multiple realities exist.

### 3.2.4 Pragmatic

This paradigm was established in early 20th century, and focused on practical consequences of social reality (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020). For Pierce (2014), the meaning of any concept was indistinguishably linked experiential consequences when examined. He later outlined what was known as pragmatic maxim, where the content of concepts could be drawn by tracing their practical significances and therefore grounding issues of human

significance. This paradigm encourages that base choices on the relevance of methodologies by carrying us from the world of theory and practice and vice-versa (Kelemen & Rumens, 2012).

## 3.3 STUDY'S RESEARCH PARADIGM

Based on the descriptions above, the most suitable world view for this study is understood to be social constructivism, where a qualitative study is associated with a social constructivist worldview. This paradigm holds that people may not experience same human experiences, where, unlike positivists, ontologically the study under investigation does not recognise that only a single reality exists. A perspective of this nature allows the researcher to capture experiences, insights, and knowledge of participants (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

Likewise, participatory communication is dynamic and complex, which requires a qualitative research approach to gather information and address main research question. Being cognisant of such, one might conclude that quantitative procedures might not be appropriate, being as they are standardised in nature. Hard data, such as surveys, cannot capture complex matters that exists within the community. The development space is associated with unanticipated variables, which may really be notably to quantify in numbers. Communication is vital in providing understanding of the multiple realities captured in a constructivist worldview in the context of development. Therefore, understanding these realities, especially from a traditional top-down approach to centred participation, proves essential. This means that the ontological and epistemological situate can be understood to make the study qualitative.

Constructivism gives no single reality, where, instead, reality or truth is generated by individuals themselves (Patel, 2015). For this study, a series of interviews was conducted in Lusikisiki to gather the insights of multiple realities of stakeholders that take part of the ABCD legacy project, which is defined by human interactions. The study will look at people's reality and their truth regarding their experiences of the ABCD legacy project. Participatory communication research must address ontological and epistemological assumptions. Thus Pilarska (2021) notes that constructivists acknowledge that there are no valid categories for people's experiences, but instead that information is the result of personal processes of constructing meaning. This is the assumption that was adopted by this study. This is echoed by Adom *et al.* (2016) when they explain that research paradigms ontology, epistemology, and methodology should comprise relevant tools to acquire information. Research objectives and questions will be explained in the section below.

## 3.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

Research objectives are the measurable formulation of findings. There is no universal perspective or definition regarding the meaning of concepts that assist researchers accomplish scientific studies (Walliman, 2009; Zmetana, 2012). There are normally two goals for research to be conducted (Leedy & Omrod; 2010). These are to firstly investigate, and secondly to develop theories. Hence, the research aim for applied research when issues are being investigated offers practical issues thereafter (Du Ploy, 2009; Durrheim, 2009). The study has exploratory objectives to gain insight about the phenomenon of participatory communication of SANRAL. "Exploratory studies usually lead to insight and comprehension rather than the collection of replicable data" (Naidoo, 2012: 103). The main objective of this research is to explore the practice of participatory communication

for development by SANRAL, on the ABCD legacy project in Lusikisiki. Below the study objectives and research questions are discussed.

### 3.4.1    OBJECTIVES

- To explore the perceptions of the community about the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy project in Lusikisiki.

- To evaluate the perceptions of SANRAL about the practice of participatory communication on the ABCD Legacy project in Lusikisiki.

- To identify challenging factors that might prevent the practice of participatory communication in SANRAL's ABCD legacy project.

The section below will discuss research questions for the study.

The general research question for the proposed study are as follows: How is the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL perceived by the community on the ABCD legacy project in Lusikisiki?

### 3.4.2    Research questions

- What is the perception of the community about the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy project in Lusikisiki?

- How does SANRAL perceive their practice of participatory communication practices on the ABCD legacy project in Lusikisiki?

- What are the challenges in practice of participatory communication in SANRAL's ABCD legacy project?

The research design for the study is discussed below.

## 3.5    RESEARCH DESIGN

Boru (2018) notes that a research design refers to the procedures for gathering, analysing, understanding as well as providing report for the findings discovered. According to Boru (2018) and Akhtar (2016), research design refers to the entire plan used to connect theoretical research problems with empirical research. Grey (2014) contends that the research design frames the procedure for the information needed, which methods will be used to generate and collect data, as well as how the research question will be answered. Other scholars also explain that the design is associated with the researcher's ideas for the research question to be addressed (Sileyew, 2019).

Research design refers to the way in which a researcher undertakes a research study. This plan entails techniques for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. A research design differs in accordance with the paradigm, which leads us to another explanation, namely that research design refers to the entire strategy selected by an academic in facilitating an integrated approach of different components in a comprehensible way (Atkinson & Delamont, 2010).

The research design is not the same as research methodology, where it provides a link between research questions and the implementation of research (Sileyew, 2019). According to Creswell (2014), researchers should question themselves about the theoretical perceptions that inform their methods on how data will be both analysed and collected. This is to ensure that researchers are aware of any bias that they might draw to any research works and be cognisant of which research approach will be most suitable (Vogt, Gardner & Haeffele; 2012).

There are three possible forms of research design, namely: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory design. The relevant base of classification relies on the purpose of the research area as each design serves a different purpose. For instance, the purpose of a descriptive study is to provide a picture of a situation, person or event or show how things are related to each other and as it naturally occurs (Boru, 2018). However, descriptive studies cannot explain why an event has occurred, and are more suitable for a relatively new or unexplored research areas (Punch, 2005). Therefore, in a situation of abundant descriptive information, alternative exploratory research design is used.

This chapter discusses in detail the methodological choice and the research design process of the study, noting that this is a qualitative study, where an exploratory research design is applicable. Qualitative research design involves acquiring detailed understanding to gain context (McCombes, 2021). Hence, exploratory research design allows the researcher to explore information that has not been discovered previously. Exploratory research design is a methodology applicable in a study that has not been studied previously, and is normally in a qualitative research study (George, 2021). Exploratory studies explain and account for data that is descriptive in nature. On the other hand, Grey (2014) explains that exploratory studies investigate the reason why a specific phenomenon occurs. Therefore, it provides evidence to support a prediction so as to report on relationships between various elements of the phenomenon in a research study (Boru, 2018). The exploratory design is normally applied in such cases where there is only a few or no studies which have been done on a matter that is being investigated to test a hypothesis (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Currently, there is no study that has been conducted to explore the extent to which SANRAL practiced participatory communication while enrolling the ABCD legacy project in fourteen villages. Therefore, the researcher is able to gain new information that has never been discovered before, which will be advantageous for future research works on a similar topic. In addition, the chapter set the procedures to collect, analyse, and report data. The approaches implemented to enhance the validity and reliability of the studies are also explained in detail. Finally, the chapter defines procedural issues of the research, including the timing, weighting, and integration decisions of the study, while presenting considerations for ethical issues.

## 3.6 RESEARCH METHODS

There are two common research methods within the field of research, namely qualitative and quantitative. These are used to ensure that research findings of social research can be validated. Holliday (2007) and Creswell (2014) allude to the fact that qualitative research explores the understanding of meaning for either individuals or groups, and link it to human problems. When describing this approach, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) make the point that qualitative research acquires issues from investigating context, and what those meanings mean to them, while focusing on drawing meaning based on the opinions of participants (Merriam, 2009; Cohen & Arieli, 2011).

Making use of the qualitative approach methods does not prevent the execution of a balanced study (Silverman, 2009; Thomas, 2009). Qualitative research methods place emphasis on exploring social issues that are crucial in gaining deeper insights about people's reality, such as asking questions such as how people understand their reality (Newman, 2007). However, some scholars argue that it is difficult to define the term clearly (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston, 2013).

They mention that it does not have a paradigm in which it is situated. But refers to real life experiences of the people, emotions or feelings, cultural phenomena, interaction between various nations, organisational functioning, or behaviours. Thus, qualitative research includes multiple realities and is not based on statistics. Qualitative research is instead more interested in exploring social production of issues by gathering non-standardised information and analysing texts rather than numbers (Flick, 2014). Likewise, Berg (2001) argues that qualitative research allows the researcher to investigate how their meanings of daily lives are constructed.

Moreover, Rahman (2017) classifies qualitative research as an umbrella term that covers a range of techniques to describe, interpret, and translate, in order to come to terms with meaning rather than frequency. This research study will employ qualitative research method. There are several advantages of using qualitative research, where Rahman (2017) on the Journal of Education and Learning states that there are multiple advantages of a qualitative research, as stated below:

− The qualitative research produces detailed description of participants' feelings and their experiences and interpretation of their actions. Also, this type of research is employed to establish insight into issues related to interpreting and designing the language assessment (Chalhoub-Deville & Deville, 2008).

− The qualitative research approach understands human experiences in various situations. It is an interdisciplinary field, which involves a range of epistemological aspects and interpretative techniques of understanding experiences of the people.

− The source of information is the meaning of various events (Atkinson & Delamont, 2010), where qualitative research analyses the behaviour during the interview when information is being gathered, along with cross-cultural influences of behaviour (Lazaraton & Taylor, 2007).

− A qualitative research technique affords the researcher an opportunity to discover experiences of the participants and how those experiences are shaped in a specific cultural setting (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

− Maxwell (2012) notes that the qualitative research approach is flexible in nature, and interactive, since this approach can be reconstructed. Moreover, Flick (2011) postulates that qualitative research approach allows participants to enjoy enough freedom to allude on what is consistent for them. Which means complex issues can easily be figured out, hence capturing dynamics in this respect becomes quite easily.

Qualitative research serves to analyse human behaviour, and begins with relevant assumptions by conducting a study in understanding a social problem (Creswell, 2007). It is also governed by its tradition of the existence of several realities in the human world. A qualitative research method will permit the researcher to explore challenges in various forms. The best approach to understanding social realities is to conduct exploration within its socio-cultural settings. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) explain that there are nine characteristics of qualitative research, namely:

- **Natural setting:** There is no manipulation in terms of behaviour, however the behaviour gets studied naturally with care to impose no external constraints.

- **Context sensitivity:** Qualitative researchers make use of information acquired from the source, so this characteristic assumes that human interactions are influenced by the settings in which they take place.

- **Direct data collection:** The researcher gets information from the participants directly.

- **Rich narrative description:** information gathered is more detailed and is regarded as important to which understanding behaviour.

- **Process orientation:** includes explanation and not only the end results.

- **Inductive data analysis:** Information is gathered first, and later synthesised, with emphasis placed on cognitive reasoning.

- **Participant perspective:** The researcher takes on the point of view of the participant.

- **Emergent design:** The qualitative researcher commences the study with an idea that data will be acquired, and certain methods will be adhered to, however the methods are performed after all data has been gathered.

- **Complex of understanding and explanation:** There are multiple perspectives at play in understanding complexity, where for this research, participants will assist in exploring the practices of SANRAL in enrolling ABCD legacy project.

Similarly, Babbie, Mouton, Voster, and Prozesky (2009) place emphasis on the fact that qualitative research discovers and interpret peoples' relationships, however, without any numerical element. Therefore, the researcher will be able to understand to the extent to which a certain stakeholder is linked to the ABCD programme. Understanding the perceptions of humans should be reciprocal, where ensuring that there is communication between the researcher and the participant is important in order for meanings to be constructed. Academics advocating participatory methods should ensure that they observe protocol or social dynamics at play within a specific society and look for ways to bring together the community (Wilmsen, Elmendorf, Fisher, Ross, Sarathy & Wells, 2008).

Qualitative research can be associated with a plan of inquiry, which is based in a social world experience. The intent for the researcher is to discover how others view and experience the world. Accordingly, this study is aimed at understanding how did SANRAL practice participatory communication in their legacy project. Qualitative research, also known as a hermeneutic perspective, involves understanding interpretations of the world, where understanding social behaviour is vital in this type of research. The experiences of the locals such as the project liaison committee (PLC), members within the fourteen villages, and SANRAL officials involved in the project. Making use of the qualitative approach will enable the study to gain in-depth insight into the phenomena. Therefore, using qualitative methods will allow the researcher to understand perceptions of the participatory communication in SANRAL development works. By making use of qualitative approach, researchers can explore how people interpret their own world. Therefore, this study will generate guidelines on how future projects can be undertaken and note the successful aspects of the project. This method will be utilised to gain inner experience from participants and determine meanings that are normally formed in culture

or through culture (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Therefore, in this inquiry, the researcher tends to discover how other people perceive the world. For this study, qualitative research seeks to understand how the local community of Lusikisiki in the 14 villages perceive and experience the participatory communication practices of SANRAL. The qualitative research is also known as a hermeneutic perspective, which emphasises the need to understand social behaviour. In this study, using a qualitative approach will enable the study to gain in-depth understanding of the practice of participatory communication on the part of SANRAL.

### 3.6.1        Research method for the case study

This dissertation will employ a qualitative case study as an approach that allows an exploration of a specific area of interest using certain methods in studying a phenomenon (Pamela & Susan, 2008). Similarly, Baxter and Jack (2008) and Yin (2014) indicate that in a case study, the research unit of analysis is normally explained as the case with experience or phenomenon happening within a specific case. It ensures that the matter is not explored using a single lens, but rather through various lenses, allowing for multiple facets of what is being understood. Yin (2003) and Boru (2018) note that case studies represent a constructivist approach.

Notably for the study case study research is employed to explore the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL. A case study is an intensive study of a single case aimed at generalising across a wide range of sets for a similar general type, where a case study research design allows a reader to construct their own meanings (Gerring, 2007). Hays (2004) and Yin (2009) note that it allows the reader to determine their own generalisations.

A case study is an effective method of exploring a social phenomenon placing a focus on a specific case (Simons, 2009; Yin, 2009; Thomas, 2011, Starman; 2013), where, in this instance, the researcher will be able to interact with key stakeholders that are either directly or indirectly affected by the project. Consequently, the case of the study under investigation is the perception and practice of participatory communication of the state road agency, SANRAL. Gerring (2007) and Woodside (2010) normally discusses the designs of a given case study in terms of single and multiple-cases study design. The focus of a single case is to understand a social phenomenon more broadly (Yin, 2009; Boru, 2018). There are several basic elements that can be implemented when designing a case study project (Starman, 2013; Khatala, 2019). This can be done to enhance the quality and trustworthiness of the entire study. For a researcher that is making use of this method, they would want to ensure that detailed information is provided so that readers will be able to access credibility of the study.

As alluded to above, the case study involves many strategies in its design principles in order to enhance and promote credibility. Information will be gathered using notes made during interactions with participants. The case study research has potential to tackle complex situations by attempting to answer questions such as "how, why", as well as to consider how the phenomenon is influenced by the context (Yin, 2009; Thomas, 2011). Case study research is more suitable to gaining insights into the case to be explored (Simons, 2009; Flyvbjerg, 2011). The study will make use of a single case design to address SANRAL's programme and divide stakeholders into different sub-units, such as SANRAL's officials, the development delegates involved, as well as local people who are classified as direct beneficiaries of the programme.

Case study research allows a researcher to embed social settings of the study while capturing the knowledge, experience, and personal insight of the participants (Ndou, 2012). The study argues that there are multiple realities, and they are constructed into that which is greater than the sum of its parts by having conversations

with different people within a community. Snape and Spencer (2003) state that the social world exists based on a personal understanding, but it is only accessible through individual interpretation. This viewpoint supports an epistemological position of this study, namely that separating the participants and the researcher is meaningless. To try and separate research and the context is like tackling only some form of reality in a social context to the exclusion of others. Consequently, investigating multiple realities in a holistic view the study will acknowledge and consider research's role, hence understanding perspectives from all parties (the researcher and the participants) is crucial (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Moreover, the current study with its basic themes such as community development, participatory communication are dynamic topics, which require lot of interaction via a qualitative research approach. A standardised quantitative approach would preclude the emergence of these key themes. Communication is a crucial factor in explaining multiplicity of realities where traditional top-down approach is being challenged, resulting in a more people-centred participatory development model (Mefalopulos, 2005). It is clearer why the ontological and epistemological positions situate this study as a qualitative approach. The data collection method that will be used will be interviews since the principal aim of the study is to provide thick description about various SANRAL communication and development practices. Therefore, more focus is on the socio-cultural contexts in which human behaviour occurs (Creswell, 2002). The section below will explain data collection techniques to be used to collect information for the study.

## 3.7 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Data collection method is a critical stage when conducting research, equipping the researcher with necessary tools to acquire useful information to answer the research question (Kabir, 2016; Cote, 2021). For this study, interviews will be used to collect intensive information from the participants that form part of the population. By making use of interviews the researcher will be able to gain insights and deeper understanding of the phenomena (Wilson & Sapsford, 2006; Given, 2008). Designing open-ended questions will then be crucial to help the researcher probe specific questions to obtain detailed information (Almalki, 2016).

### 3.7.1 Interviews

Interviews can be defined as a social encounter through which participants selected for the specific study benefit from an opportunity to share their perspectives or previous experiences (George, 2021). It is important to understand that a qualitative method such as interviews is used to provide more understanding about social dynamics (Cote, 2021). Hence questions that will be asked will be posed in an open-ended manner to ensure that the participants are able expand on their responses. which will then create a room for further participation and interaction. Notes will be taken during the interviews and recordings will be done should participants feel comfortable to do so. These notes and recordings will be reviewed after conducting interviews. Consequently, interviews are the more appropriate technique in an instance where there is not enough data available regarding the study under investigation. According to Silverman (2000) and Chadwick *et al.* (2008), interviews are relevant to exploring sensitive topics.

Information may include how the programme was agreed upon, what public participation processes were followed, who decided on the ABCD programme, was the programme well-communicated. Those answers or insights can only be achieved through a two-way communication between the researcher and participants. Interviews will be used in this study as a research method because the research paradigm for the study attributes

existence of human life to interpersonal influences (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research method requires deeper understanding as well as contextual detail of a given social phenomenon (Bhattacherjee, 2012). In this instance, people are not just controlled by a researcher, but rather individuals are capable of controlling their destiny within the research process. Furthermore, Brown-Addo (2012) postulates that the participatory research process is all about empowerment and matters affecting it. Consequently, instead of agendas being set by academics, participatory research includes affected stakeholders in a journey of analysing their own circumstances while acquiring confidence to address matters.

The qualitative research methods, namely, interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation are commonly used to gather information (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). For this study, only interviews will be used to collect data, because the researcher will be able to interact directly with the participants. Consequently, the information will be detailed and precise. Hence making use of telephonic and face-to-face interviews will allow the researcher to elicit feelings and perceptions of the participants.

It is mentioned by Brown-Addo (2012) that qualitative approach pursue participation of those classified as beneficiaries of development. The basic principle of participatory communication research is that beneficiaries should be part of the decisions and planning processes pertaining development intended for them.

Making use of interviews assisted the researcher to have proper understanding of the dynamics within the community and suggest solutions to address them. Qualitative research was used to assist tackle underdevelopment by exploring the experiences of stakeholders. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) note that complex systems are best addressed by making use of in-depth interviews, which open up room for clarification and greater understanding. Interviews were conducted as part of an upward communication process as dictated by a participatory development model. The interviews were firstly conducted with the locals (PLC members, and community members that belong to the respective Chiefdoms of Lambasi and Vellem), and SANRAL officials. Tape recorders will be used to gather information upon request in in-person interviews. A majority of the interviews were be conducted in Xhosa, especially with the communities. The purpose of structured interviews were to determine social background. Due to Covid-19, a majority of interviews were be conducted over the phone.

Subsequently, both primary and secondary information are usually used for qualitative research studies. which is then presented in many forms, such as with words and figures. The advantage of using primary data is that quality of information received is more reliable, however, there is normally lack of participation, which is sometimes a challenge due to lack of sources (Kabir, 2016). For this study, primary information will be gathered from the fourteen villages by making use of interviews, and this will be supplemented by reference to extant research (Yin, 2018). Not only is secondary research more cost-effective,  but it provides the researcher with examining alternative perspectives in answering the research question (Heaton, 2008).

There are a few data collection methods that can be employed when doing a qualitative study. However, depending on what the researcher hopes to achieve, a selection of appropriate methods are employed. Semi-structured interviews a common approach for qualitative studies to ensure that specific questions are asked (Barrett & Twycross, 2018). These authors go on to add that semi-structured interviews ought to allow for flexibility of participants to openly provide their own perspectives to the discussions. However, the interview

should have a structure that the researcher will put into place. Gill *et al.* (2008) assert that there are three research **key interview types**, and these are:

- **Unstructured interviews:** Unstructured interviews in a qualitative study includes asking open-ended questions from participants to uncover their perceptions on a study under investigation (Given, 2017).

- **Structured interviews:** These are done verbally with no intent to have no scope of asking to follow up questions and they are effective particularly should the researcher wants to ask to follow up questions for clarification. Consequently, they are relatively quick and easy to administer and may be of particular use if clarification of certain questions are required.

- **Semi-structured interviews:** Semi-structured interviews are employed for this study that encourage open-ended questions. This is a method of research that is normally applied in social research (Saepudin, Muhammad, Firdiansyah, Hijrah, Ruslin & Ruslin, 2022). Similarly, Magaldi and Berler (2020) explain that semi-structured as an exploratory interview. Semi-structured interviews are used to collect information from participants with perceptions related to the topic under investigation (DeJohnckheere & Vaughn, 2018). Notably, semi-structured interviews involve a combination of structured and semi-structured interviews. Researchers make use of semi-structured interviews to gather exploratory data, which constitutes the research design of the study (George, 2021). They will enable the researcher to gain detailed information on the study under investigation.

### 3.7.2    Interview employed during this study

This study employed an interview qualitative research instrument due to the nature of the research. Making use of interviews will clarify the dynamics within the community and society more broadly. The theoretical positioning of participatory communication in the field of development will assist in tackling issues of underdevelopment so as to understand how participatory communication has been perceived and practiced throughout the project by various stakeholders and the factors that shapes those practices that can only be achieved by employing in-depth interview process. The focus of interviews is to understand the real-life experiences of the stakeholders beyond the perception and attitudes of the communities as a whole. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) argue that complex experiences and processes are normally addressed by in-depth interviews, where an opportunity to clarify matters, in order to gain a deeper understanding. It is also crucial to understand that interviews will be conducted in a language that is preferred by the communities. Priority in terms of organising interviews will be given to communities first, and then move to other stakeholders that form part of sampling. Notably that is what is advocated by the participatory paradigm, which serves to enhance more public engagement and participation. Due to COVID-19, most face-to-face interactions may be prohibited for a long time, which means data collection was done mainly online.

For qualitative research studies, normally multiple methods of gathering information can be used, such as questionnaires, focus group discussions, or interviews (Bowen, 2009; Burnside Lawry, 2012). In this instance, only interviews will be used as a method of gathering information. An interview guide is attached as an appendix xxx, see page xxx. Also, interviews were recorded, and permission was asked from the participants, a tape recorder was then be used. For interviews done on MS Teams, recording took place after permission has been

granted. In such case where participants did not permit that the researcher record the interviews, notes were taken.

Most importantly, during individual interviews it may be the case that some of the communities or even SANRAL representatives assert their right to express themselves and their perceptions about certain research issues. Others might be reluctant to give their honest opinion about the organisation, which is SANRAL in this instance. Interviews with most of the stakeholders who have access to platforms such as Teams or Zoom, WhatsApp video or voice calls were done using those platforms. To ensure that all views are captured, normal phone calls were administered. Prior to interviews being conducted with stakeholders, they were contacted telephonically to explain matters of consent and the aim of conducting the study to them. They were asked which channel of communication they preferred. A list was made by the researcher to indicate that specific requirement of each participant and then arrangements were made to agree on the dates and timeslots during which the interviews would be conducted. The purpose and development of the interview is explained below.

## 3.8        VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

In this section, validity and reliability are explained in relation to their theoretical frameworks and then in relation to the study being conducted, which were used interviews as a method of collecting information. Eliminating errors in measurement is crucial to ensuring validity and reliability (Leedy & Ormond, 2010). Individuals, groups, or entities who form part of research have diverse views or attributes, depending on their circumstances are not just objects (Barrett & Twycross, 2018).

Validity and reliability refer to how a technique measures its object of enquiry (Middleton, 2019), where reliability refers to consistency, and validity refers to accuracy. Reliability can be referred to as the extent to which research results are consistent over a period and the precise representation of population in a study (Wilson, 2010). This is normally visible when the findings are reproduced using a similar methodology. In a qualitative study, ensuring precise representation of discoveries within the findings of research is imperative. Hence, a careful consideration of data collection methods was performed to ensure that content analysis is demonstrated truthfully (Oluwatayo, 2012; Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, Utriainen, & Kyngas, 2014). In concurrence (Middleton, 2019) and (Hamed, 2016) highlights that trustworthiness of this study will reveal quality, where the criterion to weigh trustworthiness will examine credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Now going back to issues of credibility, this is a degree whereby truth for specific research is being signified in a study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). When participants look at the study, it should make perfect sense to them that is the guiding principle of credibility. Measuring quality of a qualitative study is crucial, which is why the researcher ought to demonstrate findings in simple terms for people to understand (Moon *et al.*, 2016). Appropriate data collection methods will be used to demonstrate trustworthiness for the current study so as to ensure that the research question is answered.

### 3.8.1       Validity

validity can be classified into several types, viz. face validity, construct, internal or external validity, and statistical validity (Leedy & Omrod, 2010; Swart, 2010). Markus and Lin (2012) argue that validity is about the gathering and the applicability of evidence to support the interpretation of a certain construct.

Similarly, Dilbeck (2018) explains that validity involves interpretation, which is generated from test results that sufficiently support theoretical basis. Internal support refers to the extent to which research supports a prerogative pertaining to the casual relationship between variables (Van der Riet & Durrheim, 2019; Leighton, 2012; Maul & Katz, 2018). The reason behind this is to dismiss other non-formal classifications for evidence.

For the current study, construct and internal validity were regarded as the most crucial contemplations.

### 3.8.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which findings are replicable (Swart, 2010) and is associated with uniformity, provided that the object of research has not changed (Du Ploy, 2009; Wahyuni, 2012). Reliability is not a new concept within the context of analysing information, however, there has been a number of questions regarding the standard of reporting and the extent to which level of reliability acceptable (Gwet, 2008; Feng, 2015; Lacy, Watson, Riffe, & Lovejoy, 2015).

Reliability may take two forms (Lacy *et al*. 2015), namely:

■ **Intracoder**: Involving consistency over time, which needs to be established over a certain period. To make sure that dependability is attained the process of intracoder will be used. This term is also referred to as 'intra-observer', which ensures that the assessment of consistency where the person coding information do so over some time (Krauss & Chen 2011). Intracoder measures the degree of errors by looking at whether the researcher was careless in any other way throughout the process of coding (Van den Hoonaard, 2012). Coding will be done for the information gathered from participants regarding the ABCD legacy project study in Lusikisiki so as to ensure consistency is achieved.

■ **Intercoder:** Involves consistency across coders, which is required during content analysis, which then needs to be reported on after it has been tested. Should it happen that reality is not attained, coders get replaced since intercoder reliability should take place while content is being coded.

With the above noted, it is important to be mindful that the two terms mentioned above exist to ensure that reliability and coding protocols are attained.

Within the field of social studies, which is probabilistic in nature, the intent is ensure that a high level of probability within the relevant population exists.

For research in the field of communication, validity and reliability are of the utmost importance. To ensure validity and reliability of the qualitative analysis of a document, questions of confirmability, credibility, transferability, and dependability are also crucial (Chauke, 2015). Notably, researchers for qualitative studies normally replaces the criterion of reliability with dependability.

### 3.8.3 Dependability

Can be classified as a degree that will enable the reader to be persuaded that research findings are exactly the way the researcher presents them. Additionally, transparency is crucial in qualitative research (Tuval-Mashiach, 2017). Dependability concerns detailed or rich information that demonstrates where the opinions derive (Der Van Riet & Durrheim, 2009; Leedy & Omrod, 2010). The set of validity and reliability actions will be applied to interviews. Validity involves measuring instruments of what is supposed to be assessed (Du Plooy, 2009; Wahyuni, 2012). A valid measuring instrument should assess the concept of a study against its intended purpose. Therefore, validity is linked to the sense of accuracy, and depends on the data collection methods involved in order for information to be valid. Another aspect to note is that validity is important in social research and should be reflected throughout (Der Van Riet & Durrheim, 2009; Swart, 2010). Dependability can be classified as an assessment of documents that could be generalised (Bielenia-Grajewska, 2018). Also, for quantitative studies, transferability relates to the degree to which research findings may be transferred in other settings (Dick, 2014, Chauke, 2015; Bielenia-Grajewska, 2018). Moreover, dependability is based on the manner in which the research findings are reported, which should be easy enough for another person to gain an extensive understanding and also be able to provide critics thereof (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2006). This should not only happen amongst academics, but also the communities in which data gets generated, where there must be a room for to determine an overview and understanding of findings. The researcher will report back to the participants that will form part of the study in Lusikisiki so that they are aware of how the rest of the stakeholders perceive participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD legacy project. Hence, it will be crucial for the researcher to ensure that the stability and the extent to which information is collected is reliable (Bielenia-Grajewska, 2018). The section below will explain transferability by looking at the extent to which findings can be generalised.

### 3.8.4 Transferability

Transferability is highly associated with validity of the information, where the information gathered could then become useful to future research (Moser & Korstjens; 2017). The degree to which findings could be generalised is called transferability. Transferability involves presenting findings in manner that will enable other researchers to evaluate the research work done by other scholars (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2011). For transferability to be enhanced "…The action research cycle of planning, action and critical reflection provides space for such thoughtful attention in the reflective phase, though it is more valuable if practised at all times" (Dick, 2014:4).

### 3.8.5 Confirmability

Confirmability involves investigating bias that might take place within a research space. It may possess some threats within research this can either be intentionally or unintentionally (Khatala, 2017). Chauke (2015) and Bielena-Grajewska (2018) state that confirmability is close to neutrality, or objectivism in positivism. In order to ensure that confirmability is attained, procedures used in the document analysis are clearly demonstrated, where the documents used should be also available for other scholars to analyse.

### 3.8.6    Credibility

Credibility involves procedures used to initiate a high level of congruence among participants and the researcher's interpretations thereof (Jensen, 2012). A high level of consistency for a researcher in his or her work is what determines credibility. Such consistency will allow the research participants to understand a selected research design. Moreover, they are thereby able to select a rationale for identifying relevant participants for the study and themes that emerge (McGinn, 2012; Jensen, 2012). Additionally, Korstjens and Moser (2018) argue that credibility ought to be accompanied by the criteria of trustworthiness, viz. authenticity and plausibility. Credibility is commonly used for qualitative research studies to ensure findings of research are truthful (McGinn, 2012; Korstjens & Moser, 2017; Rubin, 2018). However, there are methodologies that are used to enhance credibility in a study, namely including contact sufficiency with participants and understanding the study context. Making use of recording devices assists the researcher to revisit interview data resources (McGinn, 2012), where the researcher will be able to develop understanding literature within the field of participatory communication. The section below discusses population and sampling methods used.

## 3.9    POPULATION AND SAMPLING METHODS

### 3.9.1    Population

Population can be defined as the entire aggregate of the entire objects or numbers of members that have common specifications (Majid, 2018). Similarly, Van den Broeck, Sandoy and Brestoff (2013) mention that population is a group of individuals with some commonalities. Statistically speaking, population refers to a pool of individuals drawn upon to form part of a sample for the study (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003; Majid, 2017). However, Bandari (2016) explains that population is normally used where information is required from all participants that form part of a study. For the current study, considerations will made with preconceived characteristics of the population and the context. The target population of the study will be participants from the fourteen villages that are affected by the ABCD legacy project. A decision to choose the research field was made because the SANRAL N2 highway construction is planned to be undertaken within those communities and SANRAL has since started a programme to leave a legacy behind after the road construction is completed. Given the geographical location of the research site and the population in the vicinity, a social stratification sampling element will be incorporated in gathering information. Holloway (2005) notes that stratifying refers to separating population into small, chunks and this is then followed by randomly sampling from each chunk. They argue further that stratification only occurs when the researcher is aware of the status of population members before the sampling could even takes place. There are challenges associated with selecting samples or participants in a research study. These may include mistrust based on historical experience (Given, 2008). The communities might not feel free to share information with people they do not know.

### 3.9.2    Population parameters/characteristics

People in this population share at least one basic characteristic, which is the fact that they are impacted by the SANRAL N2 Wild Coast Construction and Legacy Projects. Socio-economic status, education, tenure, and gender can be other attributes shared by members of the target population, however, status as those impacted by the SANRAL N2 Wild Coast Construction and Legacy Projects in Lusikisiki constitutes the most primary

common characteristic of interest, considering the research goal. The general population only makes perfect sense the moment it becomes associated with the target, and with the population that is accessible. According to Banerjee and Chaudhury (2010), general population refers to whole group related information through which information ought to be discovered or established. In this group, participants should share a characteristic or interest (Banerjee & Higgins, 2001; Creswell, 2003). Eligibility of participants in a study is determined on this basis. With reference to the current study, the general population populace of Lusikisiki. Qualitative researchers can be used to identify and specify their general population by selecting the most primary characteristic implied by the research topic and goal (Creswell, 2003).

In a qualitative study, the researcher 'recruits' or identifies participants that will form part of the study. It is common that qualitative researchers strive to include participants that will enrich data and most complex sources of information relevant to the phenomena under investigation (Given, 2008). However, the research questions guide the direction in which the research proceeds, and so determine the research design that is best suitable in addressing objectives of the study. A key element in the research design is to develop guidelines for inclusion. A number of factors are considered when selecting who should form part of the sample, such as age, geographic location, ethnic background, and so on. Eide and Allen (2005) postulate that careful consideration of a sampling strategy is key to ensuring that the maximal amount of information is garnered by the study.

The population characteristics are numerical terms, linked to features regarding the overall population. This means that sampling figures are generated based on the target population, where there is direct link between parameters and population (Lavrakas, 2008). The study will ensure that various stakeholders are used to ensure that multiple voices for a study. It is quite usual within the field of research that people become focused in providing an estimation of specific parameters to explore hypothesis (Eide & Allen, 2005). Notably Bandari (2016) notes that parameter provides the number delimited for the study. Ninety-four percent of the population of Lusikisiki consists of Africans. Damianakis and Woodford (2012) highlight the significance of adhering to ethical issues when the qualitative study is being done. For this study, population parameters will however be limited by age (18-65 years), geographical location (which will be respective villages of Lusikisiki), and there will be no discrimination in terms of gender. The section below discusses the target population employed for the study.

### 3.9.3    Target population

When explaining target population, Lazaraton and Taylor (2012) and Casteel and Canyon (2021) refer to the entire subjects' "elements" that the researcher will use to generalise findings that represents population. According to Ackerman, Schmid, Rudolph, Seamans, Susukida, Mojtabai and Stuart (2019), determining target population unit's characteristics should be operationalised based on relevant variables to ensure accuracy of findings. Babbie *et al.* (2009) also mention that population involves a collection of units, where the sample is situated. Mandiwana (2019) comments that these groupings of participants ought to meet the criteria based on their knowledge and experience pertaining the study so as to assist the researcher in answering the research question. Notably, a population shares certain characteristics (Allen, 2017). This permits the researcher to select who should form part of the research, based on how involved they are on the study that is being investigated (Given, 2008).

The population are chosen from the fourteen villages that form part of package four between Lingeni intersection and Msikaba Bridge, as well as officials from SANRAL and community members that are part of the project. This serves to ensure that insights from these stakeholders is attained in terms of exploring their experiences about the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABDC legacy project. The part of 'general' population which gets left after doing a proper refinement of population is then referred to as the target population (Creswell, 2003). Target population either refer to groups or individuals with specific characteristics or some sort of relevance. This means that the target population is more refined than a general population on the basis. Hence, for this study, various stakeholders between the age group of eighteen to sixty-five years of age will constitute the population. Most importantly, these stakeholders mentioned above have been affected by SANRAL's community development work, which makes them more relevant in terms of providing deep insights on how the project has been carried out.

### 3.9.4    Accessible population

For both qualitative and quantitative studies, an accessible population could be argued, however it is important to note that people or groups that form part of the accessible population are those who are deemed eligible to participate in the study. This term refers to that portion of the target audience that the researcher has access to where the sample for the study is drawn (Mandiwana, 2019; Bracht & Glass, 2011). These units of analysis may then be gathered into different groupings, which may be classified as 'strata', which have a significant influence on the sampling, methods used to gather or generate information, and results of the research findings (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). The accessible population for the study under investigation is the 14 villages that form part of package four between Lingeni intersection and Msikaba Bridge as well as officials from SANRAL, the project team, and contractors, totalling 30 participants. Approximately 30 interviews were conducted.

Qualitative studies their designs use more of participants' time to brainstorm data collection methods, such as interviews unlike quantitative studies (Creswell, 2003; Pernecky, 2016). Consequently, taking part in qualitative studies is normally regarded as more troublesome by most participants (Creswell, 2003; Williams, 2007). This might result in participants by being reluctant in agreeing to participate. As a result, willingness to participate in a research study is likely to be lower. This means targeting an accessible population, which is useful to a small qualitative design such as this. Accessible population should be well identified and well understood so as to ensure efficacious outcomes. The section below details sampling for the study.

### 3.9.5    Sampling

The process of selecting subset of subjects that make up the population for a research study is referred to as sampling (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013). These subjects can either be events or groups, and may not refer to people. According to Leedy and Omrod (2010), a sample can be materials, objects, or people through which the researcher obtains information, the sample represents the broader population. In a qualitative research study, the sample size is determined by the scope of study and the quality of information (Starks & Trinidad, 2008). Data results from the sample could be generalised in a study population (Leedy & Omrod, 2010). Sampling can be classified into two types, namely, probability and non-probability sampling.

### 3.9.5.1    Probability sampling

Fritz and Morgan (2010) as well as Wienclaw (2013) mention that probability sampling refers to when the researcher selects a representative sample in order to focus on the intended outcomes of the entire population. Likewise, McCombes (2022) states that this includes random selection that enables a researcher to formulate strong inferences pertaining the entire population. According to Given (2017), probability sampling demands that every participant of the entire population has a chance of being included on the sample. Notably, Schwandt (2011) and Du Plooy (2009) explain that probability sampling includes both cluster and stratified sampling. Within probability sampling, Atkinson and Delamont (2010) acknowledge that each sample gets an opportunity to form part of the selected group. The chosen sample therefore represents the rest of the population, which then gives the researcher an opportunity to make a generalisation of the research findings. For this study, probability sampling is the relevant sampling, as it limits bias and ensures that subgroups within the population are well represented. Not everyone that knows about the ABCD Legacy project will participate in the study. But participants will come from the PLC members, which represents a larger group within the fourteen villages.

### 3.9.5.2    Non-probability sampling

For studies making use of non-probability sampling, the participants that form part of the sample are not selected randomly, meaning that not each unit has a fair chance of being selected (Schwandt, 2011; Fritz & Morgan, 2010). However, the selection of the participants does not result in a sample that does not exist within the range more suitable for studies using quantitative research approach. According to Tongco (2007), it is not uncommon to make use of the purposive sampling when doing surveys for the study. This is not the case for this research study. Sampling should be carefully planned by a researcher. Purposive sampling is utilised for interviews so as to extend knowledge by selecting participants on purpose that will provide good insight about the study under investigation based on their relevance to it. Mastalgia, Toye and Kristjanson (2003) concur that purposive sampling makes use of participants that have experience of the phenomenon in question. This then ensures that rich data is attained from those who have been involved in one way or the other.

Sampling may consist of selecting participants, and it can also include events or other elements that will form part of the study. The relevance of the sample is what will determine the sample size for the study under investigation. Dudovskiy (2018) notes that people with commonalities are appropriate in assisting the researcher determine the sample. The number of participants selected for the study will be 30, and these will be categorised based on their relation to the study. These are SANRAL officials, Project Liaison Committee Members, Contractors and Zutari Partners ROHM and Africa Ignite, Two Tribal Authorities Chief Lambasi and Chief Vellem and the community. The sample size ought to be sufficient for the researcher to be able to acquire sufficient information to respond to the research question. For this study, saturation will be attained when findings reflect consistency in terms of the findings. The data saturation occurs when there is no other new data being found during anylsing data (Faulkner & Trotter, 2017). The section below will explain unit of analysis for the study.

## 3.10    UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The importance of defining unit of analysis in research cannot be over- emphasised. Neuman (2013) and Khan (2014) note that it is the most crucial element in any research. Unit of analysis can be classified as smallest

segments that will be part of the research study (Babbie *et al.*, 2009). Keller (2012) specifies that the unit of analysis refers to smallest units that are used to partake in a study. Adams (2012) meanwhile states that the unit of analysis must be determined because being unable to do so may lead to invalid outcomes. More specifically it refers to that information that defines the boundaries of what is missing in a study (Ritella, Rajala & Renshaw, 2020). It is important for the researcher to pose definite question together with the information that is needed to respond to the question (s) under investigation. Determining unit of analysis is also a crucial factor to consider when conducting research. If individuals are the source of information, they form part of the unit of analysis. Correspondingly, Check and Schutt (2017) note that in an instance whereby groups are the source of information, they in turn form part of the unit analysis. Those elements that will form part of the unit of analysis for the study will be the stakeholders that are involved in the ABCD legacy project. The interviews will illustrate the perceptions there of for these stakeholders. One of the key artefacts in research is the actual unit analysis such as individuals, geographical units, social connections, and groups (William, 2007). This research seeks to explore the practice (social connections/ interactions) of participatory communication (groups or a person) of SANRAL's ABCD Legacy project (object) in fourteen villages of Lusikisiki (geographical unit) that form part of package four. Ethical considerations of the study are explained below.

## 3.11    ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations refer to any code of conduct that is acceptable within the field of research and offer rules towards experimental subjects (Babbie *et al.,* 2009). Protecting participants is crucial in any research study (Arifi, 2018). Additionally, Bhandari (2017) notes that ethical considerations are principles that provide a guide research practices. Hence, it is critical to obtain an ethics approval before conducting research (Femin & Zegwaard, 2018). The researcher must ensure that participants are briefed about the intent of the study and issues of secrecy or anonymity. The rights of participants involved in the research will receive due respect. Ethical considerations include matters of harm, privacy, confidentially and issues of informed consent (Bhattacherjee, 2012). All these issues are considered, such as requesting a consent letter from SANRAL, as the target entity. The personal interviews will be confidential, and the names of participants used in the research result were not real names. The participants were well-informed about the purpose of the study and verbal explanations were provided for the participants who were not literate in order to gain their consent. This research used written and oral consents depending on the participant's preferences. Ethics was carried throughout the entire research process. The section below discusses matters of consent.

## 3.12    CONSENT

Informed consent constitutes one of the principles guiding social scientists conducting research (Wiles, 2013). Acquiring consent from study participants is crucial to ensuring that participants understand the entire research processes (De Vos & Strydom, 2011). Notably, Maseko (2018) explains that informed consent is closely related to voluntary participation. Therefore, matters of consent and voluntary participation will be explained to participants and that should they feel that they do not want to partake in the study they will be allowed to withdraw at any given time. Verbal explanations will be made so as to ensure that the participants understand issues of confidentiality, which refers to handling data concerning participants in a safe manner. Participants will be assured that information generated from the interview process will be dealt with in confidence, which includes

enhancing trust by clarifying that they will not be exploited. Hence, participants will also be given assurance that their names will be treated in a confidential manner and not be utilised for personal reasons (Lubbe, 2003). Additionally, high-level feedback will be consolidated and given back to them in terms of what transpired during data collection. The section below unpacks data analysis and interpretation procedures.

## 3.13    DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION PROCEDURES

Data can be classified as a widespread empirical objects collection process, which includes numerous methods such as interviews, focus group discussions, and so on (Sun, 2017). Now the process of analysing information to convert raw data sets, which then equips the researcher to address the main research under investigation (Durrheim, 2009). This is like research methods, where there is a broad generalisation through which methods of analysing data can be grouped for both qualitative and quantitative research approach. For example quantitative, research studies make use of statistics, where qualitative research makes use of themes that gets established through data in order try to understand relationships between data (Durrheim, 2009). Therefore, approaches used to make analysis of information for qualitative research studies are not undistinguishable, since they have various theoretical approaches based on the purpose for generating the data (McCurdy & Ross, 2017). The researcher then revisits similar information several times in order to analyse and process it which makes the process a reiterative one (Walliman, 2009). The section below will discuss data analysis for the study.

### 3.13.1    Data analysis

For qualitative research the intent is to produce findings. Fouche and De Vos (2011) state that data analysis refers to the process of translating raw information into findings. According to Maseko (2018), the process of analysing data is an activity of theorising information. This is linked to trustworthiness, where a researcher is expected to analyse findings accurately. For this reason, the section below explains how the researcher will collect and organise findings, with reference to the thematic data analysis process applied. This research involves specific methods of analysing and interpreting information following six steps by Clarke *et al.* (2015):

- **Step 1: Familiarisation, organising and preparing data for analysis.** This step will include transcripts for interviews gathered will be categorised and arranged based on the sources of information such as managers of SANRAL's development programme; the Project liaison Committee (PLC); and the Community Champions (CC) affected by the ABCD legacy project. Other than transcription of interviews, notes that will be taken during the interviews are prepared in order to analyse data.

- **Step 2: Coding.** Coding refers to deep engagement with information and produces information analysis. During this second step, the intention is to get read and understand the data by gathering requisite information. Key features pertaining data relevant to the research question are grouped together to determine whether there are any notable patterns to record. This is a critical stage when analysing information in preparation for the next step.

- **Step 3: Searching for themes** places focus on exploring the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL in the ABCD legacy project. Newman (2007) notes that coding in a qualitative study involves ensuring that raw data is organised into categories in order to create concepts. Clarke *et al*.(2015) suggest that identifying themes includes developing a clear thematic map of information. During this phase, the

researcher identifies themes in relation to the research question. There are three overarching themes used for organising an analysis, where themes are linked to analytic point and sub-themes that ensure that important feature in the key analytic point is captured. The researcher will end searching for themes when data provides a clear response to the research question.

- **Step 4: Reviewing themes.** The researcher will review themes by firstly looking at the coded information, and then to a data set as a whole. This will be done to check whether individual themes are aligned with the coded information.

- **Step 5: Defining themes**. This step will enable a researcher to elaborate on themes to write theme definitions. In a qualitative study, this is a useful step in order for a researcher to develop commentary on the information.

- **Step 6: Write up.** Interpretations of meaning of information gathered. A generalisation of findings will be made in which discussions will be based on the participatory theory so as to reflect on similarities and differences between theory and practice. The researcher will make use of similar studies, in order to validate the research findings. This will assist the researcher in making conclusions and suggesting recommendations.

The steps mentioned above do not reflect a linear form of data analysis. Data collection and the process of analysing information were done alongside processes of problem reformulation and revision of research questions for a study under investigation. Hence, the preceding steps are referred to as unilinear. Lastly, it is important to remember that the role of self-reflectivity is crucial to analyse and interpret information. Lincoln and Guba (2000) mention that reflectivity involves the researcher being mindful of subjectivity of his or her impact on the process of interpreting and analysing information. Similarly, Primeau (2003) states that the nature of qualitative research can be addressed through self-reflectivity, because the narrative is shaped or driven by the researcher. Nevertheless, it is crucial to be mindful of the fact that qualitative research is also shaped by the researcher's theoretical lens. Thus, this does not influence the eminence of the research, where reflexivity serves to ensure that quality of research is enhanced (Primeau, 2003). The section below will summarise the chapter.

## 3.14    SUMMARY

This chapter has set out why the qualitative research methodology is suitable for the study. The justifications made describe case study research serves as a crucial pathway for understanding social dynamics within the sample area. In this instance, the case examines the practice of participatory communication in the context of SANRAL's ABCD legacy project. It was also explained that in order to understand research issues and validate data in-depth, interviews are employed. Additionally, various steps will have to be followed in order to interpret and analyse information gathered. These were: organising and preparing data for analysis; going through all the information gathered and understanding; ensuring an analysis of information in detail; determination of final themes; displaying how the themes shaped the narrative for the study; and interpretations of meaning of information gathered which led to the writing of the report. The narrative of the qualitative study was formulated based on different techniques, namely narration, illustration of figures, as well as quotations. The last section of the chapter placed emphasis on interpretation of data. The research methodology chapter allowed the research

to identify the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL and the way in which stakeholders involved perceive these perceptions and practices.

# 4    CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

## 4.1    INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the research methodology received focus. Accordingly, the research design, population, sampling, the method that will be used to analyse data or findings, as well as the matter of reliability and validity for the study.

In this chapter, findings of the interviews will be discussed and interpretated. The chapter presents data analysis and interpretation of the research study that mainly focuses on the practice of participatory communication in an asset-based community development legacy project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape under the auspices of SANRAL. This chapter presents the research findings. This chapter is organised with the following objectives:

- To explore the perceptions of the community, including its traditional leaders, about the practice of participatory communication: Asset-based community development legacy project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape.

- To determine the perceptions of the SANRAL project team, about the practice of participatory communication: Asset-based community development legacy project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape.

- To identify barriers in practice of participatory communication in the asset-based community development legacy project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape.

Some major findings of the study will be categorised into five main parts or themes. The first will look at the SANRAL ABCD legacy project and processes. The second part will discuss findings on the communication methods used in the ABCD legacy project. The third part will consider communication methods used in the project. The fourth part will discuss communication challenges. The fourth part focuses on the barriers in practice of participatory communication in the ABCD legacy project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape. These are critical factors hindering genuine participatory communication, a discussion pertaining this concept will be unpacked in this part of research. The fifth and the last part will discuss the recommendations for the practice of participatory communication. The following paragraph will discuss the brief overview of the research methodology.

## 4.2    SUMMARY OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Rajasekar, Philominathan and Chinnathambi (2013) state that a research methodology is a procedure through which researchers describe the phenomena. In agreement, Almalki (2016) note that methodology provides research with philosophy and standards to be used to interpret and provide conclusions. Similarly, Babbie, Mouton, Vorster and Prozesky (2010) state that research methodology is a procedure that is employed for a research study by exploring data collection and sampling using procedures. There are several paradigms that exist within the sector of research communication (Shannon-Baker, 2015). The paradigm that will be employed by this study is constructivism. The sample size of 30 participants including the SANRAL's Community Development Manager, the community members especially the Project Liaison Committee (PLC) members of the project under investigation. Thematic analysis was then used to interpret findings.

The study was carried out by employing semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions on the interview guide to gather information. Some interviews were conducted in person in April 2022, and some were conducted

telephonically. Participants preferred not to be recorded due to the sensitive nature of the study. During the discussions, there were other underlying issues not related to the project. The researcher had to be sensitive to the matter, hence most interviews were done telephonically. The community gave names of the people that the researcher could interview, representatives from both Tribal Councils (under Chief Lambasi and Chief Vellem), the PLC, the PLO, as well as local youth appointed by the project. These representatives were mainly selected to ensure that there are multiple voices in the discussion. The researcher used the interview transcripts to identify recurring themes that appeared. The next section will expose a worldview that will be used for the study, and research methods that will be used.

### 4.2.1 Research methods

Research methods consists of scientific techniques used to undertake research (Bushan & Shanti, 2017). It is argued that in communication, research methods ought to address ontological and epistemological assumptions. For this study, qualitative research methods will be employed, as it is grounded on the emphasis that there are multiple realities linked to human experiences, which are also different. Hence, though this research is situated so as to acquire information based on how participatory communication has been perceived. Interviews will be used as a data collection method to gather data for the study.

#### 4.2.1.1 Unstructured interviews

These are in-depth interviews where the researcher tends to gather understanding. However, Dawson (2019) contends that it is important for a researcher not to ask too many questions, so as to allow participants to share their opinions freely. The unstructured approach is known as qualitative research. Accordingly, Goundar (2012) explains that this method enables the research process to be flexible. It is accurate to explore the issue without quantifying it. Hence, the main reason is to unpack the variation in a situation. Qualitative research investigates detail at a non-numerical level of information (Bushan & Shanti, 2017). The section below presents the overview of research participants.

## 4.3 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The section will discuss the characteristics of the participants such as gender, age, location, and educational level. In any given research study, the democratic profile of the participants is crucial, as it may be easily measured (Kotler & Lee, 2009). The following paragraphs discusses gender, age, and other demographics regarding the research participants.

### 4.3.1 Gender

The chart below will show the number of participants, which includes both males and females that took part in the research study in percentages. The male research participants are indicated in black, and females are depicted in light grey.
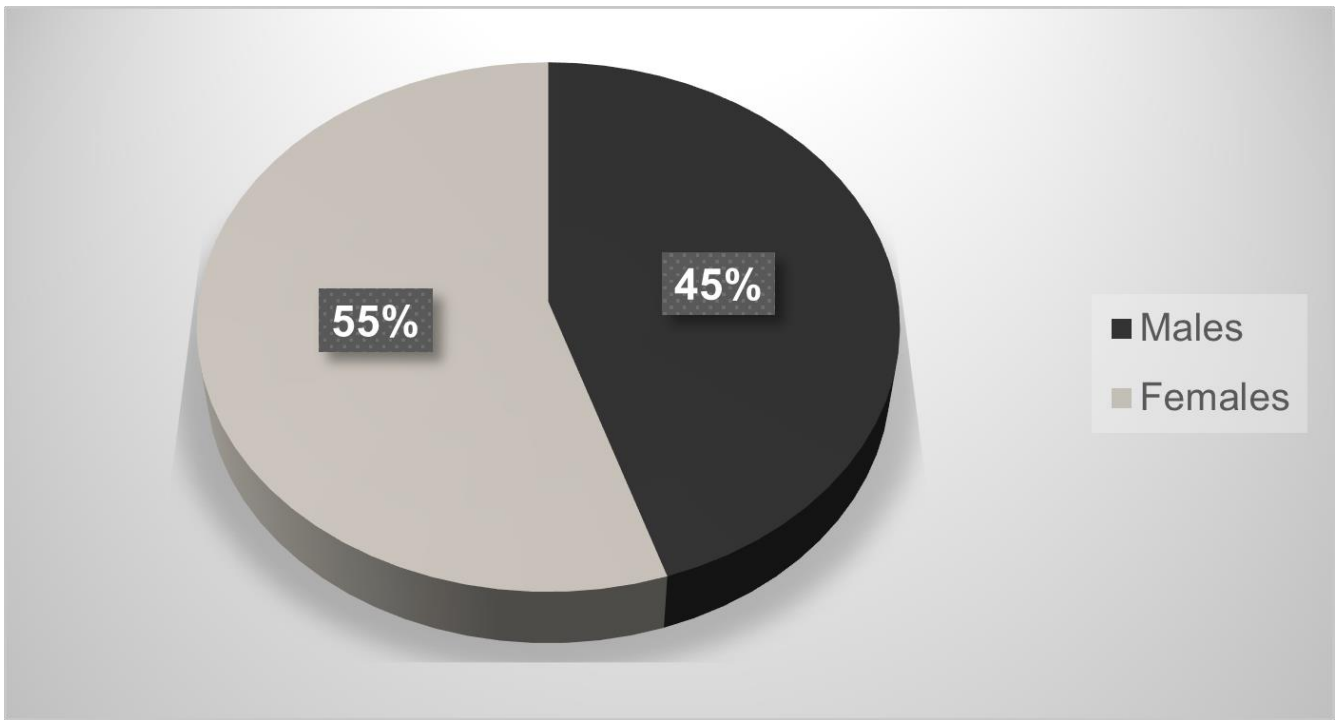
**Figure 3: Participants by gender**

*Source: Researcher's own findings (2022)*

The pie chart indicated that majority of the participants for the study were females at fifty-five percent (55%) than males at forty-five percent (45%). The participants that participated on the study was 30.

### 4.3.2    Age

The participants for the study ranges between the ages of 18-65. The chart below will show the age groups of participants in percentages to depict various age groups.
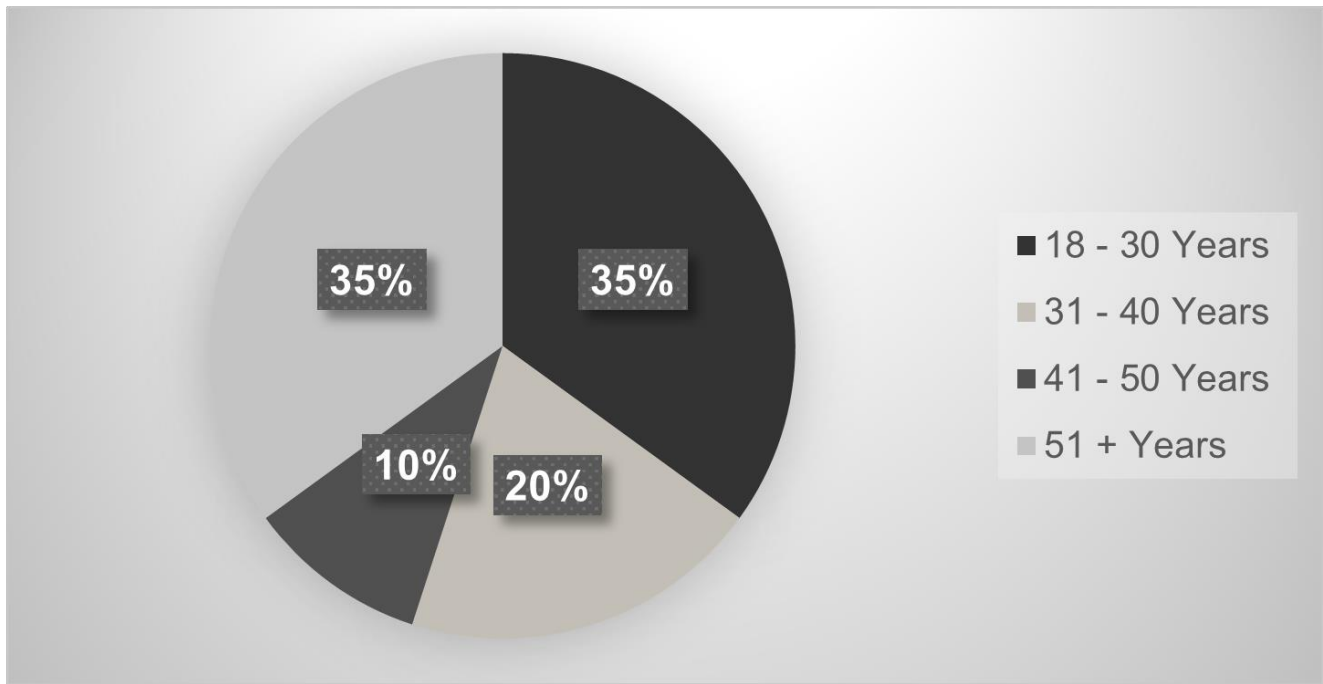
**Figure 4: Participants by age**

*Source: Researcher's own findings (2022)*

For this study, there were two dominant age groups representing thirty-five percent (35%), and these age groups are that of those who are between the age of eighteen years to thirty years (18-30 years), and those who are fifty-one years and above (51 years plus). The second dominant age group is that of those who are between the age of thirty-one years to forty years (31-40 years) at twenty percent (20%). Lastly, the least dominant age group is that of those who are between the age of forty-one years to fifty years (41-50 years) at ten percent (10%). The location of participants will be explained below.

### 4.3.3    Location of participants

Regarding the participants' locations the responses indicated that almost all participants are from Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape, within the fourteen villages where the project is being implemented. However, it was also critical to get views from SANRAL officials on the project. One official was interviewed who had been directly involved. This official is based at the SANRAL offices in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape. During the in-depth interviews it emerged that participants from the fourteen villages have been in Lusikisiki almost all of their life.

The location for the study research participants is demonstrated in the figure below:



**Figure 5: Participants by location**

*Source: Researcher's own findings (2022)*

The next section discusses the level of education for participants. The graph below indicates the level of education of the participants.

### 4.3.4    Level of education

The figure below indicates participant level of education.
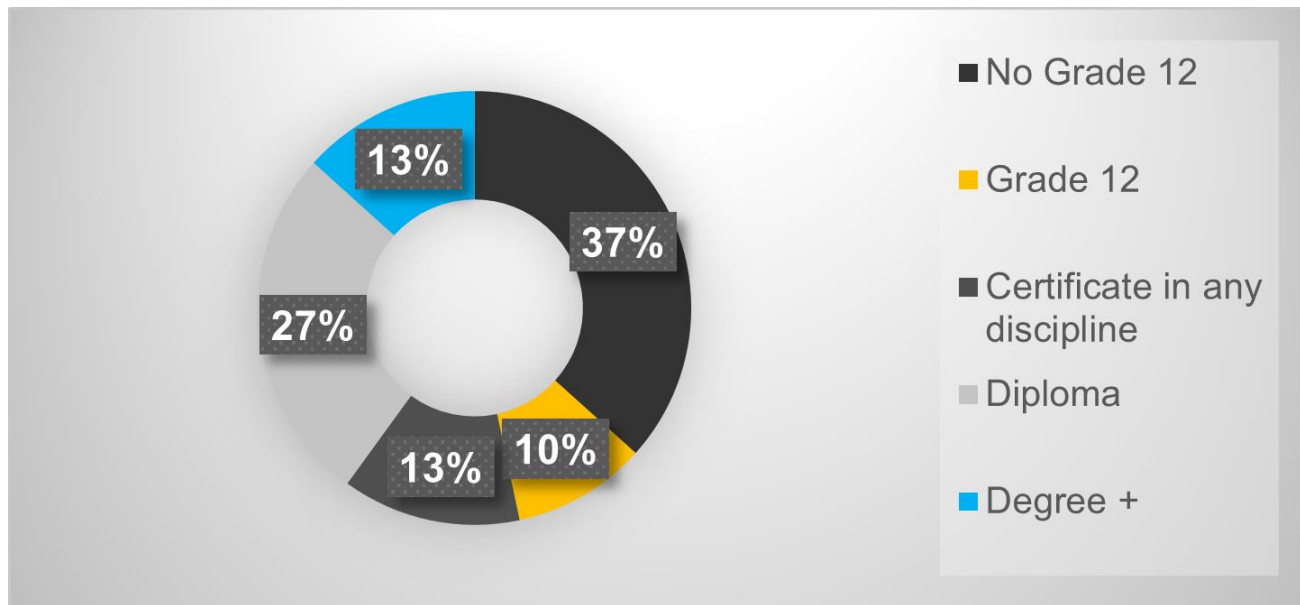


**Figure 6: Educational level of participants**

*Source: Researcher's own findings (2022)*

The study revealed that a majority of the population interviewed do not have Grade 12. Ako (2017) revealed that this was due to the socio-economic conditions of the area. Statistics South Africa (2020) revealed that the current economic growth to some extent explains the high student drop-out rate. However, it was also discovered that especially youth in the area have qualifications ranging from certificates to perform certain tasks and others have Diplomas from various institutions. Participants with no Grade 12, Diplomas and Degrees (15%), respectively.

## 4.4    PRESENTATION OF DATA FINDINGS

Analysed research information ought to be presented in an accurate manner for the reader to make sense out of it (Leedy & Omrod, 2010). Findings from the interviews, which involves qualitative data, will be presented in accordance with research questions. The discussion of findings is elucidated in the sections below.

## 4.5    DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS PER THEME

The study is anchored in the field of development communication, the derivative of which is participatory communication. This is because the study embraces a participatory communication lens to discuss the practice of participatory communication on a community-based project. The need for people's participation and involvement at the grassroots level on the role that participatory communication advocates play when commencing with development work remains a crucial factor. In theory, participatory communication holds that people become important actors in their own development efforts, as opposed to being mere beneficiaries of development assistance (Naidoo 2010:10). Participatory communication is associated with two-way flow of communication, which allows the people to be the generators or the key drivers of their own development and

not just beneficiaries (Servaes, 2008; Naidoo, 2010; Ako, 2017). The current study will adopt participatory communication based on the relevance of its theoretical framework that is relevant to the study. The theoretical framework assumes that participatory communication could facilitate development.

Before the discussion of the findings from the interviews, it is important to highlight the below research questions for this study:

- What is the perception of the community about the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy project in Lusikisiki?

- How does SANRAL perceive their practice of participatory communication practices on the ABCD legacy project in Lusikisiki?

- What are the challenges in practice of participatory communication in SANRAL's ABCD legacy project?

This is done by considering the abovementioned research questions and recommendations on how barriers of the practice of participatory communication could be addressed. It emerged from the literature review section on Chapter Two that the participatory communication is associated with two-way flow of communication, which theoretically allows people to be the generators of their own development, and not just beneficiaries (Naidoo, 2010; Ako, 2017). Participatory communication is a basic component of development theory and practice. This approach calls for various stakeholder groups within the community to be part of an accessible platform as part of which they can carefully discuss, while weighing and mapping their strengths and weaknesses in order to generate alternative solutions to reaching consensus (Netshitomboni, 2017). In the context of SANRAL's ABCD legacy project, based on the research results from the participants, it became evident that the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL is satisfactory. This was assisted by the sustainable development ABCD approach designed to leave a legacy beyond the road construction, which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

It is crucial to note that most findings were similar in nature based on the setting and other factors (age, level of education, and understanding and the context in which the study is located). It was therefore not going to be beneficial for the study to repeat verbatim quotes that are similar. The sample that was interviewed tended to share similar sentiments and ideas. They receive information the same way, and they sit on similar meetings. The setting was in the deep rural Eastern Cape, where it was even difficult to make sense of some of the information. Unlike reviewing a strategy for an institution and getting a group people with knowledge on that level.

As explained in Chapter 3, findings were analysed through thematic analysis, where key themes that emerged through data analysis are explained below.

### 4.5.1 Overview on SANRAL's ABCD Legacy Project and Processes

For this study it critical to note that it is something that has never been done before. This makes it imperative then to first understand from the participants their general understanding within the context of development as well as the way it is practiced by SANRAL as the development agency of the ABCD Legacy Project.

**Overview about SANRAL's processes**
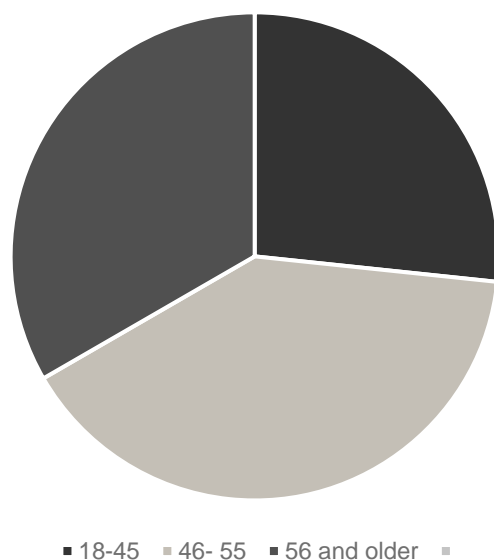
■ 18-45  ■ 46- 55  ■ 56 and older  ■

**Figure 7: SANRAL's Processes**

- A majority of participants between the ages of 18-45 years indicated that they understand entirely what development entails and what SANRAL is bringing to the communities. *"We feel empowered and engaged with the SANRAL processes for the first in our life we are engaged to this extent about a project".* The other participant also shared similar sentiments explaining that on other projects communities are never engaged *"we have seen projects, we have seen people being part of them through dodgy employed with no explanations on which processes were followed."*

- Participants between the ages of 46-55 linked developed to lack of service delivery in the area. They dwelled on matters such as poor roads and lack of infrastructure. One participant indicated that *"we see little development taking place mainly in Lusikisiki our only hope is SANRAL."* The community have high hopes in SANRAL projects as they seem to be the only large-scale project in the area. It was difficult to get multiple ideas from them as they were invested in specific views. Most participants shared similar sentiments with less information emerging.

- Participants over 65 had a minimum understanding on what development ought to entail and SANRAL's openness to job opportunities came out strongly within this group. *"SANRAL's legacy project is unique for a number of terms we see opportunities for youth, but they require some level of education, we did not know that we are sitting on the pot of gold with all our assets surrounding our villages."* The participants extended their gratitude at many levels, expressing rare appreciation for the concept through which development has been approached*. "It took us a while to realise that in this project anyone willing to benefit will benefit."* The participants went on to say, *"we are not a lazy community and SANRAL's vision will be realised."*

As indicated on the interview guide, for the researcher it was critical to first gain an understanding from the community about development prior the perception about SANRAL's development work. Before discussing the responses from the participants pertaining SANRAL's ABCD legacy project and processes. It is crucial to

remember that the main objective of the research is to explore and understand the perception and the practice of participatory communication within the context of a development project. This makes it imperative then to first understand from the participants their general understanding within the context of development as well as the way in which is practiced by SANRAL as the development agency of the ABCD legacy project. We will begin by first establishing the understanding of development by one of the community development managers of SANRAL. The manager defined development *"as a tool that should be championing empowerment and community capacity, it is about equipping communities to be able to feed themselves in a sustainable manner whereby dependency to external companies is reduced magnificently."*

To this end, SANRAL bought into the idea to enrol the ABCD programme in parallel with the road construction work to improve the lives of people in a holistic approach. One participant from SANRAL maintained that *"As the organisation, to us development is about driving a process whereby living conditions of the people are improved."* The above statement highlights that SANRAL as an entity perceives development as a broad concept, which also consists of socio-economic development of the people. Similarly, Alemnew (2017) and Bau (2018) are of the view that development should represent continuous empowerment process of people for sustainable development to be attained. In a nutshell, the entity perceives development as the economic growth of the people in a vicinity area where the road is being constructed. This viewpoint is also drawn on the first two paradigms within the field of development, namely the modernisation as well as the dependency paradigms attendant to the notion of participation. The manager, due to his involvement on the project, noted the following: *"development is all about prioritising the community to drive economic growth on the specifically for the construction of the N2 Wild Coast Toll Highway as this will increase economic capacity of the area."*

As it is conceived, the ABCD approach serves as a catalyst to ensure that the communities are ready by utilising their assets to drive continuous development even when SANRAL is no longer in the area. The manager went on to say that *"as part of SANRAL's vision is to accommodate communities and their needs to ensure provision of road infrastructure."* The above statement again indicates that SANRAL's development approach is aligned with their overarching objective to assist communities to thrive, while providing road infrastructure which is their mandate. This implies that economic development and community participation shape most of their development projects on the ground. When I asked about major development works that the entity is involved with was mainly hard development matters, such as road construction and infrastructure. One participant stated that *"to implement these projects local people and knowledge are used to ensure skills transfer occurs as well as getting local buy in on the programmes."* In concurrent, Manyozo (2016) and Koningstein and Azadegan (2018) state that in order to enhance social development participatory communication should be practiced for change within societies to be visible. This is applicable to the context of this research, which advocates for communication within community-based projects to be participatory. Another participant added that *"key engagements with stakeholders occurred prior project implementation ensure alignment between SANRAL and the community."* Through these engagements, mutual understanding occurs, where as a result, communication in a democratic setting is based on mutual agreements (Torruella, Casademont, Gifreu & Prieto-Flores, 2018).

To address the question under investigation participants were about their perception of participatory communication by SANRAL. Their responses range from "agree" perceived as positive to "disagree" perceived

as negative. *All participants expressed that the practice of participatory communication is satisfactory on the Legacy project.*

### 4.5.2 The perception of the community about the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy project in Lusikisiki.

Most of the participants agreed that SANRAL does practice a true form of participatory communication on the Legacy Project. However, one of them explained that they only practice it to a certain degree.

The perception of the community about the practice of participatry communication by SANRAL

- Agree
- Disagree
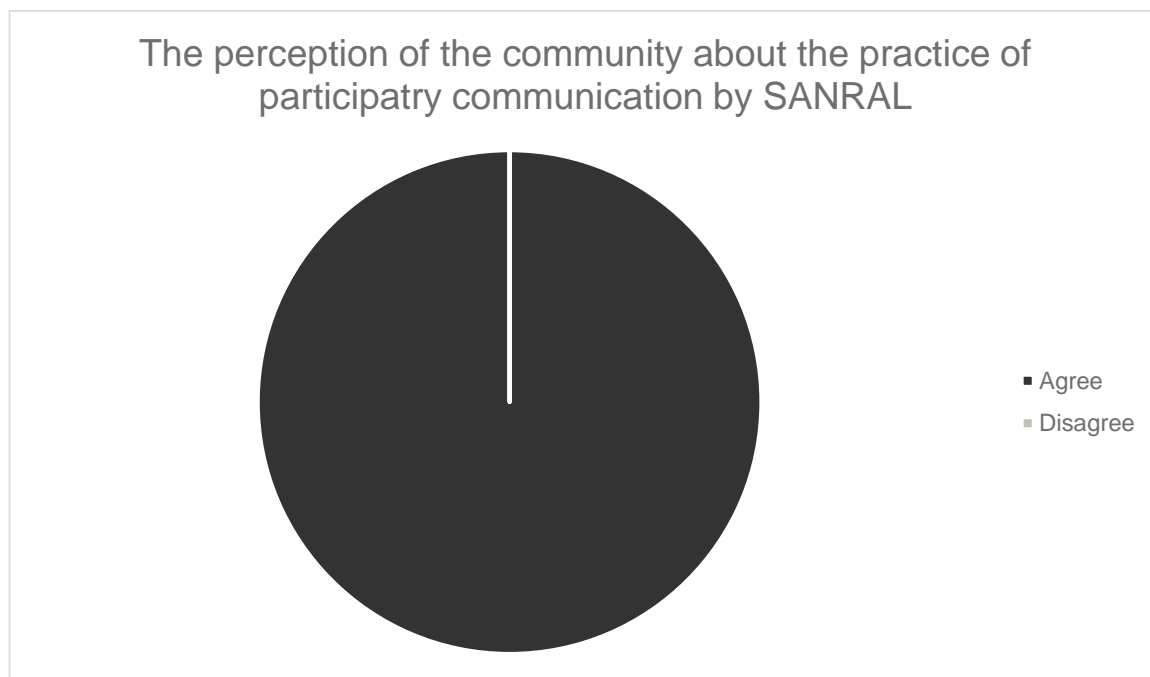
The section that will follow will address the ***first research question*** by looking at the SANRAL's processes that were established in line with suggestions raised by the communities to maximise the practice of participatory communication.

#### 4.5.2.1 Project Liaison Committee

The below information will unpack details on a structure that was formed by the community to enhance participatory communication on the project delivery within the community, namely the **Project Liaison Committee**. Based on the findings from the community, SANRAL's participatory development approach is based on the following structures and processes that were formulated to enhance maximum community participation on the project. When the participants were asked about their perceptions of the practice of participatory communication.

To ensure that there was fairness and representation from all stakeholders involved on the project a committee was established. Participants indicated that ***"there is a committee called the Project Liaison Committee (PLC) through which as members of the community we have a voice on matters pertaining development"***. This Committee was formed by SANRAL and the community to facilitate smooth running of the road construction of the N2 Wild Coast Toll Highway. As one of the participants states that ***"the Committee***

*served as a two-way communication tool while creating awareness within the community on what SANRAL offers.***"** Notably, Taylor and Kent (2014) contend that two-way communication enables stakeholders and organisations to interact.

The participants were then asked as to how the PLC was formed. Participants asserted that "the PLC consists of 30 representatives which were selected from across all fourteen villages that form part of package four of the road construction." One of the participants was asked about the role of the PLC, explaining that "the committee ensures that communication from the project team gets to the community efficiently". He explained that it was going to be better if there was PLC mainly for the ABCD Legacy project apart from the construction. Another participant indicated that "it could have been better if there were two separate committees, one for the ABCD project and one for the road construction project." He went on to say, "this was going to assist with communication being separated because ABCD project is more like a secondary project to the main road construction." According to this participant, there was some confusion with regards to communication pertaining community development stream and road construction.

The participant alluded that "there were several instances where implementation of some of the key deliverables for the ABCD project were cancelled or put on hold due to other matters not linked to the ABCD project but because of the road construction matters." This was due to one Committee serving both the construction and the community development project. It also emerged that before decisions were taken pertaining the Project, the Committee engages with SANRAL and the project team to align first. During project visits, before any communication goes to the chiefs, the committee would engage with the project team first. One participant commented that "we would raise our issues, concerns; and advise accordingly where necessary before engaging with the community." When asked to elaborate further on the key responsibilities of the PLC, another participant noted that "there are quite several responsibilities carried out by the PLC and these are to advise the team on construction related matters; to discuss concerns of residents pertaining construction and to serve as a two-way communication channel between the community and the project team." Likewise, Friendly and Stiphany (2018) and Koningstein and Azadegan (2018) advocate for a call to consider participatory approaches within the context of development. The Committee serves a risk mitigation role for the Project, when managed correctly. To drive participatory communication within the community, again there was appointment of fourteen local youth that served to enhance a two-way communication process between the project team and the community, commonly referred to as Community Champions, which were appointed to assist in driving the legacy project.

### 4.5.2.2 Appointment of local youth "community champions" to assist drive the ABCD Legacy Project

There is another structure that was also formulated to assist the project team on the ground, with ABCD related information regarding asset mapping processes. Fourteen local youth were appointed in 2019 for three months, and again from June 2021 to May 2022. This channel was also used as a communication conduit between the Project team and the Community. The PLC members indicated that, **"*as much as the product is aimed at facilitating community development through assets, investing in youth is crucial.*"** They went on to say that ***"local youth will be critical in ensuring that each village acquires adequate project related information.***" They mentioned that ***"the communities will also be able to liaise with the project team***

*through youth appointments on the respective villages."* However, the type of communication used in this instance is that of development communication. This is not a linear communication method, but communities involves communities being encouraged to engage and participate in matters linked to their development. As indicated in the literature review section, Melkote and Steeves (2015) and Waisbord (2015) classify development communication as involving the art of human communication linked to the transformation of the society's poverty to socio-economic empowerment and growth, which then results in a better quality of life while realising individual's potential. Moreover, Torruella *et al.* (2018) note that development communication is a social process based on dialogic methods; it is about learning for meaningful change through an exchange of knowledge and skills. Development communication includes determining those stakeholders involved in a project, ensuring that they are aligned in terms of their roles as well as achieving better results for the project (Richter & Dow, 2017; Koningstein & Azadegan, 2018).

Duties of the Community Champions were linked to ensuring that they mobilise the community to make use of their assets to drive socio-economic development due to high unemployment in the area. One participant explained that *"the ABCD project has positively influenced my life and those around me, especially his village".* The Community Champions served as a glue between the community and the project team some of their duties, including creating databases of various assets available in the fourteen wards, and sending information back and forth between the community and the team. A majority started their own small businesses by capitalising on their assets. The information that was gathered by champions informed the business plans that has been established across various disciplines (arts and craft, agro-processing, agriculture, and tourism). These business plans will be used to outsource extra funding in order to drive the ABCD Legacy project further. The following section discusses the business centres that will be established to provide extra support to the community.

#### 4.5.2.3 Establishment of the two business development centres

As part of the project, SANRAL has committed to establishing two business development centres under Chief Lambasi and Chief Vellem, respectively. During the interviews it emerged that the community is excited about the upcoming development, especially the business development aspect. One of the participants mentioned that *"we have been engaged several times regarding the ABCD project however now that the centres will be up and running more people will be motivated to do better in terms of development."* One of the leaders stated that *"as the community, we are proud that we have been given an opportunity to select where our centres will be located."* To this end, SANRAL solicited opinions of the community when they asked for business development centres. Accordingly, for Capon, Gillespie, Rolfe and Smith (2015) and Sueldo (2016), it is crucial to consider opinions from stakeholders in order to reduce risks with regards to project implementation. Hence, the state's stakeholders require a certain level of transparency and empowerment of the community (Willems, Jegers & Faulk, 2016). Similary, Brown (2014) alludes to the fact that support for organisations on participatory initiatives is increased by programmes that are justifiable. However, it is also crucial to note that government agencies deal with a large number of concerns that might come to compromise transparency on certain projects (Revere, Calhoun, Baseman & Oberle, 2015).

"The upcoming establishments has opened more eyes in the community people will be able to see the centres and access them to acquire business support." For some time, the community has not been able to access such

facilities within their villages. One participant added that "in the area there are no internet centres where youth could go and apply for university or jobs." They only access support in Lusikisiki Town, which is costly. Having the two centres close by will be a bargain for the community. During key informant interviews, participants were asked the question below and follow up questions. The aim was to gain insights from them pertaining their views in the context of development. The following section discusses the views of the community regarding the ABCD legacy project, which came as part of the spin-off from the SANRAL project in Lusikisiki.

### 4.5.3      Community views and involvement

As revealed in the literature review, development that is concerned with ensuring that the society is at the forefront of the programmes designed for them. Similarly, Alemnew (2017) notes that development communication makes use of communication that is aimed at improving lives of the citizens. Khatala (2019) conducted a study on practical guidelines for participatory communication during a review process of tariffs. His findings indicated that more research is required on exploring communication in setting quality standards and dispute resolution mechanisms. Various studies have investigated the role of participatory communication in different sectors, such as education, organisational change, and so on (see practical examples on Chisale, 2014). However, some studies focused mainly on studies regarding rural development and others (Msibi & Penzhorn, 2010). Ndou (2017) also alludes to the fact that there has been visible failure of projects in most development projects, both in developed and developing countries, due to the under-emphasis on participation in the relevant development processes. The current study therefore sought to establish the gaps between the community development, participatory communication, and the way in which the latter affects community development. It is also mentioned that adopting participatory communication approaches at every stage of the project life cycle is tenable (Ako, 2017).

When participants from the community were asked about their understanding of development and their views about development in their respective villages, their responses were similar across all villages that there is no development in the community. One participant explained that: *"nothing much is happening except for the SANRAL's road construction project."* Most participants said that there is no development for them they lack basic needs and municipal services. A participant reported that *"there are no employment opportunities. especially for youth."* Another stated: *"in some areas there are no access roads which makes it very difficult to travel during rainy seasons."* Now for most of the community members their hope to quality life is linked to SANRAL's development approach.

Some of the participants' responses include the following:

- "There is no development in my village, Ntlamvukazi except that SANRAL is building the road some people will get jobs". Another participant noted that, *"the ABCD project has provided the community with training, there were community engagements where the community was trained in ABCD several small businesses emerged after that."*

- In some villages there were pushbacks, where some of the community members refused to buy-in on the project. One participant explained that *"there are a few households that did not have any income prior the SANRAL project. However, due to contactors that require services in the area and other*

***development initiatives people are able to feed their families."*** He mentioned that the people understand the ABCD project and what the project entails.

The responses received during these in-depth interviews show that the community perception of development is related to poverty and lack of basic needs. SANRAL's focus on economics is aligned with the definition of participatory development, which places emphasis on holistic development aimed at improving the lives of the people economically, socially, culturally, as well as politically. These key aspects usually marginalise the dimension of development linked to the essence of participatory development and communication and fail to measure it. For this reason, SANRAL's development is seen as a form of two-way participatory communication.

The community linking poverty with development may be drawn under a communication perspective. However, they made it clear that this is linked to local government's approach of providing them with service delivery and are appreciative of what SANRAL is doing in their communities through the road construction project. Additionally, the project addresses one of their major concerns, namely transportation, since some access roads to their villages will also be built. Marais, Quayle and Burns (2017) dispute that citizens in such kind of communities be aware of the development meant for them. Again, in this manner, transparency and participation may be attained through trustworthy information. The following heading will focus on the perceptions about the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy Project.

### 4.5.4 The perception about the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy Project

The following discussion will address the ***second research question:***

- What is the perception of the community regarding the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy project in Lusikisiki?

The section will present the perception and the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy Project. The discussion will focus on how SANRAL use their participatory communication activities to communicate about the Project. The communication works will be grouped into at ***least two main themes:***

### 4.5.4.1 Communication used by SANRAL to inform the community about future and on-going development efforts

It is important to note that the study is conducted at a project-based level, not with SANRAL specifically as an entity. However, the community perceives the project team implementing the Legacy Project as SANRAL as it relates to the development information disseminated to SANRAL. The following statement demonstrate how communication is seen as dissemination of information for the ABCD Legacy Project.

One participant noted: "Development communication is about informing the community about development matters affecting them in their community." Another participant mentioned that "it is about sharing development efforts of SANRAL to entice the community about development and how they can play a role in execution of those activities." From these excerpts, a possible interpretation is that development communication is perceived as a one-way communication process from government to community. However, such conception of disseminating information is mainly used prior the broader engagements with the communication, where leaders

are brought on board. One participant indicated that, "as the PLC members they are happy with the way SANRAL's communication efforts have been enrolled as long as there is communication about anything project related." Thereafter, the community interacts directly with the project team in a platform where they share their opinions and concerns freely. Unlike a situation where an organisation collaborates with media institutions to share information, disseminating information might have two major objectives for an organisation, firstly, to inform the public or to assist building the image of an organisation. Once again, communication in this instance has not been from SANRAL's Communication Department, but from the implementing partner driving the ABCD Legacy Project. When it comes to the image building and marketing, that too has been handled by the implementing team.

### 4.5.4.2    Communication that builds relationship

This section details communication practices among the project team and the PLC members. Before information reaches out to both Chief Lambasi and Chief Vellem it starts with the PLC. This structure will then first advise and provide input on how that communication ought to be framed. Not only that, but they also look at the proposed planning at that time to see if it is something that could be implemented. Once the two structures are content with planning, then the chiefs are engaged accordingly. This communication is crucial, as it is based on creating relationship between the team and the PLC members. One of the PLC members explained that *"there has been good relationship that the project team has built with the project team and the PLC this enables this structure to protect the team during big community meetings because of transparency of the matters."* The notion of the PLC is then good for initiating their ideal development work, aimed at social change. For this reason, it is safe to argue that it is difficult to win in the battle against any development challenges without genuine involvement of the local community as the main stakeholders (Aylet, 2010; Sandberg & Wallo, 2013; Cummings & James, 2015). Thus, it is not possible to implement any development in the community without active involvement of that for whom community the relevant development efforts are intended (Msibi & Penzhorn, 2010; Burger, 2017).

### 4.5.5    Communication methods used by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy Project

The participatory communication methods used by SANRAL involved gathering the community for a communal conversation. The section below will further explore how SANRAL have been engaging the community for this project which will address *Research Question Two* further.

Communication channels used to communicate about the ABCD Legacy project
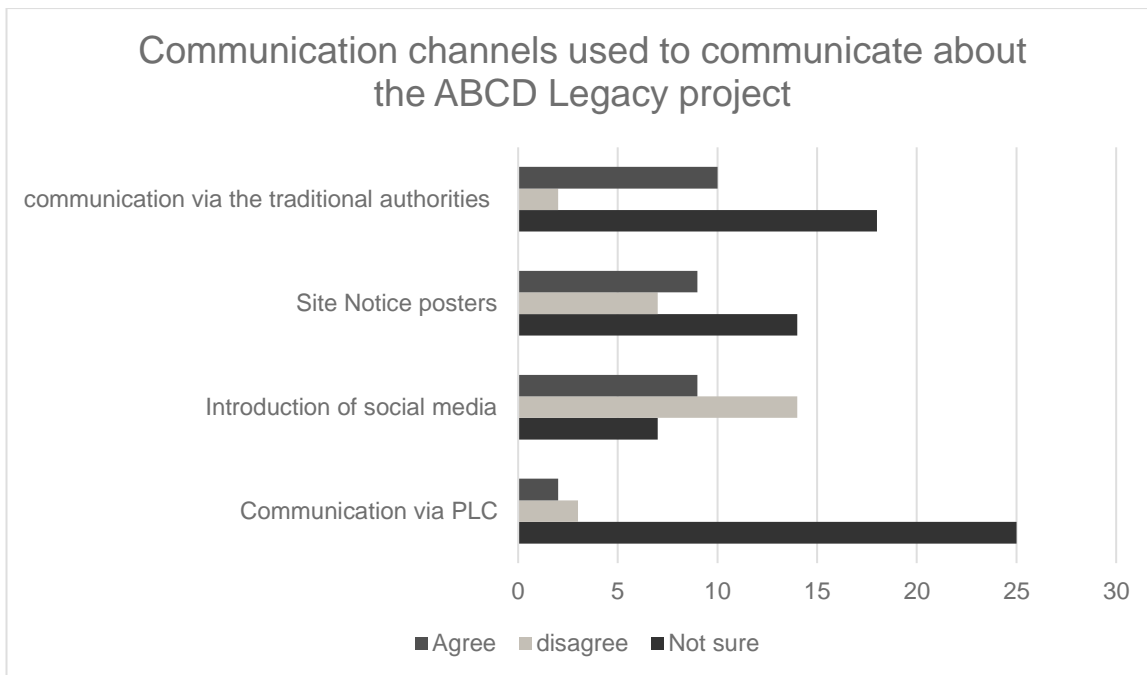
### 4.5.5.1    Community meetings or gatherings

SANRAL makes use of community meetings as their primary way of communicating with the community. Rhodes-Purdy (2015) notes that local development ought to be linked with issues of power in order to ensure sustainability of participatory process. This is mainly done so as to engage with the community regarding project specific information regarding development. The participants indicated that specifically for the ABCD Project, communication tools were used to liaise with the community via existing leadership structures. One participant explained that **"*currently these leadership structures are the Chiefs and their Traditional Council, oNozithetshana/Izinduna, for the ABCD legacy project mainly the PLC members*"**. Understanding how power is distributed within the community is critical to avoiding a situation in which decisions are dominated by a select few stakeholders (Dyll-Myklebust, 2012; Paletto, Balest, De Meo, Giacovelli & Grilli, 2016). These structures discuss matters first, and then help the community to understand will be happening pertaining the Project deliverables.

Both communities which are affected by the project have a community hall situated at their respective great places, where community meetings are held. Additionally, fourteen locally appointed community champions from across fourteen villages facilitated communication and mobilised the community once the leaders had been briefed correctly about the Project. This communication creates awareness about specific different development issues. Normally, the structures that are used to bring people together for a meeting enable the project team or any other development expert for that matter in a traditional communication setting to reach out to larger audiences. These types of gatherings open up a platform for the community to have a voice (Thomas, 2014; Royds, 2015; Otto & Fourie, 2016).

Consequently, it is quite easy to attain social change where lines of communication are both top-up down and bottom-up, aimed at facilitating social change and sustainable development. According to Pawar (2010) and Rhodes-Purdy (2015), participatory communication refers to the process of incorporating citizens mostly in planning and allowing them to raise their concerns. Therefore, SANRAL generally practices participatory

communication during the implementation of the ABCD Legacy Project. The following chapter discusses the conversation that was held with the community regarding the ABCD Project.

Having meetings with the community is the core communication method that has been used on the ABCD Legacy Project, particularly on the development issues linked to the Project. Participants stated in this regard that since the project inception, community conversations have been taking place. One participant explained that *"based on the number of meetings that the project team have organised we have always been involved and our ideas on project implementation were considered."* These meetings have been happening during a period of approximately 15 months. However, they were conducted monthly, based on the nature of the engagement during that time being linked to the project life cycle. Some of the meetings that were held included recruitment, as well as the establishment of the business development centres. Both chiefs donated land to a business support centre that the community will access to get assistance. Chief Lambasi donated a piece of land next to Mxhume Secondary School and close to the N2, and for Chief Vellem, the Centre will be located in front of his great place. This was a decision that was taken after several community conversations were held. The community took the decision themselves and informed the project team after the decision was taken.

The consistency in terms of line of communication and methods that are used to reach out to the community were notable. It emerged that the current methods that are used are applicable to SANRAL. However, for any other project coming into the area, there is consistency and a common culture that is applied with regards to communication. The community mentioned that public meetings are used to raise awareness of any nature and to invite the public for engagements linked to the ABCD Legacy Project. This is also embedded to their open cultural methods as part of the community's public communication. Therefore, the finding is aligned with what is said by Servaes (2016) and Otto and Fourie, (2016) indicating that for participatory approaches to be sustainable they should be aligned with local cultures. It is always important that communities do not end up viewing development as an external imposition.

About 98% of the participants agreed that personal invitations via the traditional authority works better for them. In contrast, they trust that information, because any outsiders will have to engage local leadership first before they enter into communication with the community. In that sense, the chiefs can perform a screening role. The findings are slightly different, with those of Hoffmeister, Holleczek, Zwink, Stock, Stegmaier and Brenner (2017), who maintain that people are inclined to attend occasions when they are invited, particularly if via their leaders. That is achieved by creating information and being open to a two-way communication approach (Melkote & Steeves, 2015; Saez, 2016; Costello, 2017). The study wanted to establish whether participants are also able to provide their opinions and speak freely during consultations with the chiefs or *oNozithetshana*. The findings indicated that the community could freely communicate and express their views about the project. The argument by Meade (2017) is that when the community is allowed to engage openly, participatory communication is attained, as this platform enables the public to share their own experiences pertaining development affecting them. Hence in Lusikisiki specifically making use of cultural communication methods is the ideal form of communication preferred by many. In addition, one participant mentioned that **"*there is trust between them and their Traditional Council"***. However, about 3% of the population noted that making use of technology should also be adopted to complement traditional communication methods. They indicated that this would ensure that the youth is also part of these engagements, since they have easy access. Another indication

pertaining current communication methods, which seem to be effective, was **"that most of the times, youth assumes that meetings should be attended by their elders and not them"**. This might be linked to other cultural matters. Therefore, introducing communication mechanisms where the youth could enjoy access invitations on social media would significantly improve numbers of attendees for these engagements. Lastly, additional ways of communication ought to be explored in order to enhance quality of discussion. The following paragraph discusses the frequency of communication by SANRAL about the legacy project.

### 4.5.5.2    Frequency of communication by SANRAL about the Legacy Project

According to Aldridge (2015), participatory endeavours address issues of power at various levels of development and the stories and voices of participants are regarded as being critical. The public should engage in participatory communication so as to articulate their own experiences about the various aspects of the development concerns it faces (Meade, 2017). Ndlela (2019) holds a similar view that it is important that an organisation understands the priorities of its stakeholders so that it may accordingly adjust its communication efforts with them. One participant elaborated that **"in terms of communication frequency throughout the project this would occur when the project was progressing to the next development stage".** Another participant added that **"we have always been content with this method, because we were always informed on what will happen next on the project."** The PLC members indicated that they gave the project team an instruction to say before they visit the community this should be communicated to the Project Liaison Officer first seven days prior the visit so that leadership could prepare themselves. This finding is in line with proposition by Naidoo and Ramphal (2018) that public participation can be improved by communication. It is crucial for them to sensitise the community on the matter to be discussed prior to actual engagements.

### 4.5.5.3    Effectiveness of communication channels employed by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy Project

The effectiveness of community meetings is that they enhance participation and allow the participants access in the community to achieve common objective. Likewise, (Chauya, 2015) contends that social groups give people a sense of belonging, which makes it possible for them to share ideas freely in a comfortable setting. However, this can only be achieved through full community participation, and lead to sustainable development. Community meetings enhance the outcomes of the meeting, while ensuring community empowerment and social transformation (Hussey, n.d.).

Most participants were clear that the communication channels employed on the project have always been effective. However, others felt that more could have been done to enhance communication. Some of the site visits did not take place as planned due to Covid-19 regulations. The project did not adhere to timeframes, as most gatherings were not permitted to occur. One of the participants also indicated that **"locally appointed youth could have been done better to keep the community up to speed in small gatherings while the team could not be on the ground."** Another suggestion made was to say locally appointed youth should have extra two people in the village that will assist them communicate to a wider audience. The following paragraph discusses the perceptions on communication methods used during the delivery of the SANRAL Legacy Project.

#### 4.5.5.4 Perceptions of communication methods used

This section discusses the perception of communication methods used by SANRAL on the Project in terms of involving the community while decisions were being taken, and well as during implementation. The discussion shows participatory communication in various stages of development. It is imperative to note that communication should be at the heart of a development processes, where it is difficult to imagine projects being implemented without communication. This study argues that not all forms of communication include a participatory process, however, that all kinds of participation are in a practical sense communication processes. Which leads us to the next part whereby communication is explored at different phases of development.

#### 4.5.5.5 Important advantage of employing participatory communication

The project employed participatory methods throughout their communication attempts across it different phases. For this reason, there is subsequent participation that has been done in the SANRAL's development work. Findings revealed that participants are content with the way in which communication has been practiced. One participant mentioned that *"we were able to make decisions pertaining development efforts about the project."* From the findings, it also emerged that the community was content with the community level dialogue that occurred including the team seeking guidance from them for local knowledge. Again, participatory communication process involves establishing relationship with the community during planning stages. Mefalopulos (2008) agrees by explaining that the application of communication in a development process can be classified into four broad phases, which are: communication research, designing the strategy, implementation, and evaluation. For the ABCD Project, this was not done, however, the actual practice of employing participatory communication emerged strongly from each interview as having taken place.

Dialogical communication was employed to share information and mutual understanding to gain social change, where during the project inception, project objectives were defined. During this dialogical communication stakeholders were able to make inputs, as well as articulate their interests. The communication was clear including precise timeframes pertaining project implementation. Trust was established and cooperation was developed with the community. There was transparency and predictability with continuous interactions between the community and the project team.

#### 4.5.6 Participatory challenging factors for communication on the SANRAL ABCD Legacy Project

The following section will address the *third research question:*

- What are the challenges in practice of participatory communication in SANRAL's ABCD legacy project?

This sub-section discusses major factors that affect participatory communication. Participation may seem like a mere buzzword in the development space, but is less practiced or not to be reflected in real life scenarios in projects. This could be caused by several factors, depending on the nature of the project. In this instance, from the interviews conducted SANRAL practiced participatory communication at various level of their development efforts. Hence, the development manager involved in the project does not perceive participation as labour contribution or mere administration after being handed over. As this could have limitations on genuine participation and keep it very low on the ladder of participation. The community do feel that they have been

empowered with relevant information. A participant indicated that **"*we were of the assumption that the two business development centres will be used for us to display our handmade products to sell.*"** There must have been some manner of breakdown in the communication process as to the reason for these centres. The intent behind building the two centres is to provide business-related support to the community as per their request. Therefore, while participation is perceived as an empowerment process, it becomes a challenge when the community is not part of the design stage of the project and communication process. Not all community members were part of those engagements. The message was then misinterpreted when it reached some of the community members. The participants did not mention incidents whereby they felt that communication took a top-down approach, except for the international article written about the project. Similarly, Khatala (2019) explains that engaging mass electronic media does not facilitate increased public participation regarding development programmes, as these messages are not dialogic in nature. A literature review undertaken for the study demonstrated that projects have failed due to inadequate community involvement and participatory communication. The current study revealed that two-way communication efforts were mostly employed to enrol the Project. The discovery made was that the use of traditional communication methods contributed significantly to enhanced participatory development efforts on the part of SANRAL.

Ako (2017) examined community and citizen participation in development for municipalities in Sweden, with the intent to acquire knowledge about how participatory communication is practiced within these municipalities. There was no clear definition of the concept of participatory development. Participants reported that the way in which they are engaged is overshadowed by authorities in which they make decisions on which projects participatory approaches should be applied on. Aruma (2018) reported on the importance of communication during development, with members of the direct communities affected by the project facilitates effective community development. However, in the current study, it became evident that some people might have missed the reason for the centres being established. Nevertheless, most participants explained that frequent communication between the project team and the community occurred. They mentioned that they felt empowered by the sustainable development approach that was presented to them. A participant expressed "*that "we appreciated being involved at all stages of communication pertaining the project."* In several instances, projects had taken place without proper communication with the community.

This is then considered as the first factor that affects participatory communication. Other than that, the community is not perceived as beneficiaries of the project, however stakeholders have always been involved in the Project, providing guidance on critical matters. It is unavoidable that the community may want to benefit more immediately on projects. By receiving temporal benefits due to high unemployment rate in the area. The development project tried to shift mindsets from that of dependency to something more permanent and sustainable. Provided that the community is willing to make use of their assets to drive economic development fighting over a six-month contract at the Msikaba Bridge. The community is aware of the road construction, however most are already working on becoming self-sufficient. The community is in a process of empowerment that could have long-term impact.

SANRAL's vision is to leave a positive legacy after the road is put in place. The other major factor that affects practice of participatory communication is using communication to transmit messages from developers to so-called 'beneficiaries'. One might argue that participatory communication may be practiced for minor issues within development. Another challenge might be that there was an absence of communication people based at the

project satellite office. Due to this gap, participatory communication may have been compromised, because people might have had the opportunity to interact frequently. There were people on the ground with first information, but it became evident that there was a breakdown of communication on some of the key messages. The study supports the participatory communication concept as largely influenced by a participatory paradigm. This paradigm suggests that participatory approach creates an environment where issues could be unpacked and solutions are co-created with stakeholders (Otto & Fourie, 2016; Bolin, 2017). It allows citizens to be fully empowered, while being involved in designing strategies and the implementation of projects within their communities. The recommendations are centred on the participatory communication with proposed measures that ought to be in place to address some of the communication challenges on the ABCD Legacy Project as informed by the literature.

## 4.6    SUMMARY

The analysis done for the study reveals that the development approach of SANRAL falls under a participatory paradigm, as opposed to modernisation and dependency paradigms. The main research questions were answered, where probing questions enabled the researcher to dig deeper on the issues of communication on the project is concerned. A two-way communication or a dialogic process allows communities to articulate themselves. They are not only seen as beneficiaries, but equal partners on matters shaping their development. The results also revealed the practice of participatory development. However, it also emerged that having no communication official based at the project satellite office potentially undermined the practice of participatory communication. Another challenging factor was differing views over the purpose for the business centre. This may have then been mitigated by a dedicated person from the project team to ensure correct messaging is kept constant at all levels. Moreover, the research discloses participatory methods that have been used on the project that reflected its effectiveness. As a consequence, this study argues that there is a high level of participatory communication practiced on the project. This served as the main development agent through which poverty will be reduced in the area, based on the practical sustainable development interventions brought about by the Project. Below section will discuss the recommendations of the study.

# 5    CHAPTER 5: SYNTHESIS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1    INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to explore the practice of participatory communication by The South African National Road Agency (SANRAL) on the ABCD Legacy Project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape. Before the discussion of the findings from the interviews, it is important to highlight the research questions for this study:

- What is the perception of the community about the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy project in Lusikisiki?

- How does SANRAL perceive their practice of participatory communication practices on the ABCD Legacy Project in Lusikisiki?

- What are the challenges in practice of participatory communication in SANRAL's ABCD Legacy Project?

This is the concluding chapter, focused on how the study's research questions and the research problem were answered. The main findings of this research study where information on participatory communication and how it has been practiced are discussed and presented. A summary of main findings are outlined. Finally, limitations and recommendations for future research works are delineated.

## 5.2    SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The main research question of the study is how the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL is perceived by the community on the ABCD legacy project in Lusikisiki. The question is drawn from the assumption that holistic development could be facilitated by participatory communication (Alemnew, 2017; Aruma, 2018; John & Etika, 2019). Therefore, as a researcher who also happened to be part of the project team involved on the ABCD Legacy Project, it was my personal interest to investigate whether sincere participation is practiced on this specific development project. Not only that, but to also explore different participatory communication methods used by the team to implement/enrol the Project. It was also critical to examine whether those methods were understood and acceptable by different stakeholders involved. It is important to note that stakeholders are aware of their development priorities, and that they tend to involve themselves on endeavours that benefit them (Bryant, 2015).

## 5.3    ADDRESSING THE STUDY'S RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS

As mentioned in Chapter 2, advocates of participatory communication argue that non-participatory communication approaches in development tend to be less effective. Subsequently, in development communication there is a predisposition towards participatory approaches and its involvement in development. This project is taking place in the area where SANRAL is constructing the N2 Wild Coast Toll Highway Section 20 between Lingeni Intersection and the Msikaba Bridge. The commencement of the highway construction raised hopes for the unemployed population of Lusikisiki that they will find gainful employment. During the asset mapping process, it became evident that there is limited to no communication between the Project Liaison Committee (PLC), SANRAL, and the community about the status of the project itself and jobs related information linked to the road. After all, Ali (2017); Richter and Dow (2018) explain that the main reason for the failure of projects could be the deficiency of communication and people participation in community development. Subsequent to the asset mapping process, a detailed business plan highlighting specific projects was developed. It was uncertain as to whether all stakeholders were involved in the development of the said business plan, and whether SANRAL is leaving a legacy that all stakeholders recognise as their own. The reflection on the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL has not been addressed to examine whether or not it was effective. The rationale of the study was the need to understand how the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL has been experienced by the stakeholders on the Legacy Project. It was therefore imperative to investigate the extent to which participatory communication was practiced during the Project implementation.

## 5.4    CONCLUSIONS IN RELATION TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The section below will discuss conclusions in relation to the three research questions for the study.

### 5.4.1    Perception of the community

- SANRAL's development approach is aligned with their overarching objective to assist communities to thrive while providing road infrastructure, which is their mandate. This implies that economic development and community participation shapes most of their development projects on the ground.

- Most participants indicated that a majority of the community was involved on matters related to the ABCD Legacy Project.

- When participants were asked about their understanding about development, they associated their current state of lack of basic services with the development. This was common across all villages, where the participants associated poverty with lack of development within their villages.

- A development approach used was perceived as a two-way participatory process, where most guidance and advice was received from the community.

- In the context of SANRAL's ABCD Legacy Project based on the research results from the participants, it became evident that the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL is satisfactory. This was then

assisted by the sustainable development ABCD approach that is used to leave a legacy beyond the road construction.

- Data confirmed that the concept of participation during development processes is understood by the community, as well as the official involved from SANRAL's side. Their direct involvement on the next steps of the project implementation did not come in the form of employment opportunities for participants, however as real participation, where communities could decide where they would like to see the business centres. This was undertaken via an ABCD methodology approach, where the community was involved.

- Few participants mentioned their dissatisfaction regarding communication flow pertaining to jobs related to the Project.

- Regarding the ABCD Legacy Project, its inception emerged from the Project team to assist SANRAL in leaving a legacy during engagements that were made with the community.

- It emerged that there is a need for improved communication, as well as a centre where the community could base local business development and support. Nevertheless, participants perceive participation as an empowerment process. Practically, genuine participation of the local community.

- Communication has been used not just as a development tool, but also as an empowerment process, which is in line with a two-way participatory communication process. It is consistent with principles of participatory communication and does not reflect modernisation theory.

- The research results indicates that development communication is not marginalised. Furthermore, communication approaches are consistent with dialogical communication, where the community interacts with developers to shape their ideal form of development.

- Different types of communication approaches were used, such as community gatherings and community conversation.

- Some factors affecting practices of participatory include the breakdown of communication between leadership structures and the community. The environment, politics and societal issues also influence how participatory communication is practiced.

### 5.4.2 Perception of SANRAL about their practice of participatory communication practices on the ABCD legacy project in Lusikisiki

Based on the statement above to address the *second research question* findings are presented below:

As per the discussions on the previous chapter, development by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy Project is participatory. Development effort of the SANRAL shapes its practice on the ground. In SANRAL's integrated report (2022) their mandate is reportedly road construction, which might be considered as hard development, focusing on economic development. Nevertheless, incorporating participatory programmes aimed at community development for locals changes the normal of implementing such projects, where they are not limited to economic development without empowering and engaging with the local community (Enghel, 2015; Friendly & Stiphany, 2018).

One of the main themes for this research is to focus on understanding the perception and the practice of participatory communication for development. This is the principal area of focus for this dissertation. Findings confirm that the community and SANRAL perceive participation not only as a labour and material contribution, which does not reflect real participation, but as an empowerment journey, through which the community could have a voice and become part of development intended for them. Findings reveal that genuine participation has been practiced on the project with few factors influencing it. Looking at the ladder of participation as outlined by Bland (2018) and Otto and Fourie (2016), citizen control, delegated power and ownership are the most empowering stage on the ladder that advocates for participation.

For this study, participatory development permits active participation of local community during project design. Results revealed that the community have made land available at their preferred sites for business development support centres. This is concurrent with Ako (2017) and O'Reilly, De Brun, O'Donnell, Papadakaki, Saridaki, Lionis, Burns, Dowrick, Gravenhorst, Spiegel, Van Weel-Baumgarten, Van den Muijsenbergh and MacFarlane (2018) that it is a process of empowering locals, while managing resources that influences their life. This was then assisted by the sustainable development ABCD approach that is used to leave a legacy beyond the road construction. Incorporating a community development component on a project was indeed a wise decision, as it gave pride back to the people by enabling them to have a voice (Khatala, 2019). Indeed, they were not perceived as beneficiaries of development intended for them, but true champions driving the change that they wanted to see. The literature review provided the researcher with theoretical background on participatory communication. The arguments of Waisbord (2018), Naidoo and Ramphal (2018) assisted the researcher to gain a better understanding of the concept of participatory communication. The research problem has been addressed since new findings emerged from the research study. This contributed to a better understanding on how the practice of participatory communication has been practiced on an ongoing community development project.

The study is conducted on an ongoing project at a community level, where it was crucial to investigate different project stages of development. The high level of participation that was used on the ABCD Legacy Project manifested across f**our phases**.

The section below will briefly discuss how participation in participatory communication is presented with those four phases.

### 5.4.3    Participatory communication presentation: Stages of project development

- In the design of identification of the ABCD Legacy Project findings revealed that the community was engaged. Discussions were based on genuine dialogue with the community. In doing so, stakeholders were able to build mutual trust and relationships (Naidoo and Ramphal, 2018). Such involvement then opened up room to ask probing questions. This was followed by an investigation of the cultural and socio-economic environment of the setting of development.

- During planning the community was not overlooked as this task was undertaken mainly by local community led by leadership structures. Most suitable communication approach was also determined by the community. However, messages communicated were from the project team to address desired change. Hence a two-way communication method was employed during the planning phase.

- Another important aspect is project implementation, where most community members are involved during development process. Communicating with stakeholders to reinforce activities for active participation of locals during development communication process. During the SANRAL ABCD Legacy Project communication participatory communication was practiced with the involvement of local community.

- It is also critical to evaluate and monitor programmes. The community participate in development programmes via certain committees. Through these, the effectiveness of programmes could be evaluated. The PLC members were selected, which consist of representation from all villages directly affected by the project.

Therefore, based on findings, genuine participation has been practiced. For this reason, empowerment of the community was attained, which enabled them to make decisions regarding development works. The practice of participatory communication on the project is consistent with the model of participatory communication. Marais, and Quayle (2017) note that sharing information has been associated with vulnerability and risk. This normally occurs where top-down communication is used to inform stakeholders about development projects affecting them. However, for this study, participation was used to distribute power in the society, to build trust relationships, and to minimise disagreements during development endeavours (Kakeneno & Brugha, 2016). It also allows ordinary people to be true participants during development process (Otto & Fourie, 2016). For many projects, participation has been the missing link in the development process. Communication is perceived as a crucial element of the development process and is not perceived as sending of development information (Onah, 2015; Aruma 2018). Considering the overall findings of the study, the research question was addressed. Findings from this study may guide organisations in the area on how to practice participatory communication on a community development. Research on this has not been done before. Hence the investigation of the underlying aspects of the research problem has assisted to produce new content within development communication space. Perception about the practice of participatory communication by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy Project has been explained in chapter 4. Three main themes that emerged from findings are the following:

- Communication used to inform the community about development efforts on an ongoing basis.

- Communication used to build relationships.

 The community were taken onboard throughout the journey. Aruma (2018) and Bau (2016) assert that for community projects to be successful, it is appropriate to keep channels open. The findings revealed that two-way communication was utilised, and that participatory communication had been practiced. Accordingly, Aruma (2018) confirms that community development is used to improve the lives of the community. The study confirmed that communication had been a unifying factor on the project. Similarly, Onah (2015) perceives communication as a unifier with community development projects. Hence, it should be understood by stakeholders involved within various communities.

Building relationships with stakeholders, especially traditional leaders and other leaders in the community, was successful on the Project. Communication was seen as egalitarian. Communication with the community on ABCD Project was not perceived as means of transmitting messages about jobs only, but also involved investing in empowering the community to drive sustainable development. Typically, this is in line with a two-way

participatory communication model characterised by a two-way communication approach (Bolin, 2017; Barranquero & Saez, 2017; Burger, 2017).

Engagements used were not for the purpose of orientation and information transmission. Conclusions in relation to the study's research questions are delineated in line with the findings of the study below.

### 5.4.4 Participatory challenging factors in development communication on SANRAL's ABCD Legacy Project

The findings revealed several challenging factors that could possibly hinder the practice of participatory communication on the ABCD Legacy Project. Some of the factors are linked to the nature of the project since it is an on-going one the team and the communities learn as they go. They test various systems to see if the work out or not and re-adjust accordingly. One participant stated that "to avoid confusion on the project the suggestion made was to separate the PLC that governs project implementation of the road construction and the community development project." What was also noted by the researcher was intimidation of certain members of the PLC by others. This could undermine participatory communication efforts, where certain members may come to have undue influence over others in the group. This made it difficult for the researcher to get diverse viewpoints about the practice of participatory communication in a community setting, where a tacit consensus seemed to be in play. As a result, findings received were similar in nature, because the committee has programmed and positioned themselves in a particular way in terms of how they articulate certain matters pertaining the project.

Participants strongly felt that there must be a satellite office within the community of specialists that would communicate with them frequently. This could facilitate the process and mitigate communication risks associated with the project, if managed correctly. Participants indicated that they feared mixed messaging that they received from other stakeholders within the project, and indicated that an official based on the ground would be preferable. However, it might be the case that certain parties would tend to dominate. Again, this might hinder the successful implementation of participatory communication. Other factors that emerged that could affect participation was linked to cost. To assign a permanent official on the ground could, according to participants, be costly and time-consuming, where if this is not done, participatory communication processes on the project are significantly compromised. Again, in terms of time frame linked to the project, participants complained about lack of consistency on the project by team to meet demands linked to project implementation. Challenges affecting participatory communication were not significant, as participants mentioned their satisfaction and gratitude for being considered stakeholders and not beneficiaries of development. ***"The project allowed us to sit at the table with the project team and co-create our ideal development"*** majority of the participants mentioned. Notably, findings in Chapter Four revealed that participants were part of the decisions that were taken related to the project. To address issues raised, some recommendations for the study have been outlined below.

## 5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study supports participatory communication concept as largely influenced by participatory paradigm. This paradigm suggests that a participatory approach creates an environment in which issues could be discussed and solutions co-created with stakeholders (Otto & Fourie, 2016; Bolin, 2017). This allows citizens to be empowered fully while being involved in designing strategies and implementation of projects within their communities. John & Etika (2019) posit that, in order for development projects to be successful, communication must be based on a participatory approach. The recommendations are centred on the participatory communication, with proposed measures that ought to be in place in order to address some of the communication challenges on the ABCD Legacy Project as informed by literature. Through a participatory process, a baseline study on raising stakeholder awareness in a community development project ought to be done. One of the methods that could be employed to evaluate community-based projects is Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR), (Chisa & Hoskins, 2016). This process assists and encourages community participation during designing and implementation. However, Kloppers and Fourie (2018) posit that it might be difficult to evaluate because there is no universal evaluation method for participatory communication process that could serve to optimise it.

Participants indicated that feedback, action plan, monitoring and evaluation, making use of other communication and media tools, and ensuring clear roles and responsibilities between the PLC and the community champions ought to be adopted so as to enhance the practice of participatory communication.

### 5.5.1 Feedback

Another key aspect of evaluating participatory communication is feedback, where stakeholder's responses and views can be employed. According to Welton (2017), engaging with stakeholders could be beneficial to either reducing or mitigating repetition of previous mistakes on similar projects. Hence, Rogers, Harrison, Puruntatameri, Meredith and Dunne (2018) explain that the participatory communication process ought to be measured over time. It is crucial for the community to have a certain form of ownership during implementation, where receiving feedback on the process is imperative (Kloppers & Fourie, 2018). Therefore, a platform through which the community could provide feedback ought to be established so as to sensitise the community about the project.

### 5.5.2 Action plan

The research discovered that an action plan on how and when communication activities should be undertaken should be co-created with the community. This emerged from one of the participants, who indicated that it is better to have a plan upfront then being informed at the last minute. This will assist the community plan better and mobilise all relevant stakeholders. Kachentawa and Patchanee (2017) note such activities include open meetings where stakeholders facilitate such gatherings. An action plan will also assist to provide guidance on how to shape messages, the methods that could be used, and an agenda on the discussions that will take place.

### 5.5.3      Monitoring and evaluation

Another suggestion will be to monitor and evaluate the impact of the intervention on the community. This could be done after a development initiative has been completed to investigate the entire communication programme that was employed. According to Naidoo (2010), throughout the entire communication programme monitoring and evaluation should be conducted. For the ABCD Legacy Project this was not done, however it could be beneficial for future projects. As suggested by Ghiggi, Kavaya, and Da Rosa Oliveira (2012), monitoring and evaluation should be conducted in a participatory communication programme. Communication activities required should be specified, and the person in charge of communication then should articulate timeframes. Lastly, indicators for assessing effectiveness of those communication activities ought to be tailor made for specific stakeholders.

### 5.5.4      Other forms of communication

It was also suggested that SMS and internet-based messaging such as WhatsApp may complement current traditional communication methods in place. These platforms could be useful when used in a dialogic communication (Bakowska-Waldmann, Brudka & Jankowsi, 2018). It is important to note that social media has played a significant role within development communication space, including encouraging dialogic communication (Haro-de-Rosario, Saraite, Saez-Martin & Del Carmen Caba-Perez, 2017). Stakeholders get to participate and cooperate in various media platforms. Hence, some of the participants indicated that it would be great to make use of other forms of communication methods to extend the project's reach to many people. Therefore, effective communication methods ought to be used in order to increase the number of participants reached (Sebola, 2017). According to Gerhmanne (2018), media allows people to connect regardless of their culture. Hence, participants strongly suggested a mix of both methods so as to avoid a situation where some community members are excluded.

### 5.5.5      Clear roles and responsibilities, PLC, and community champions

Due to the participatory process followed during recruitment of the fourteen youth, there was a breakdown in communication. The champions signed a contract with an implementing partner to assist with community development deliverables. This was communicated briefly with the community and the PLC members. Due to covid-19 pandemic they performed most tasks online. The PLO felt as if they were also supposed to be given feedback monthly, because they were part of the interviews. This might be something to consider in future to ensure that there is no confusion when it comes to roles and responsibilities. To be genuinely participatory, communication should take place between affected stakeholders in order to shape decisions related to development objectives (John & Etika, 2019). Study limitations will be discussed below.

## 5.6      STUDY LIMITATIONS

The study supports participatory communication as influenced by the participatory paradigm, which promotes joint action by stakeholders to a given problem (Barranquero & Saez, 2017). However, unlike other quantitative studies on other organisations and other participatory settings, this qualitative case study's findings cannot be easily generalised. The study focuses on the perception and practice of participatory communication, which

constitute only two of the several aspects of SANRAL's ABCD Legacy Project in Lusikisiki, and presents a partial view framed by the theoretical positioning of the study's research questions.

Limitations during the study included that:

- Interviewees were mostly PLC members and community champions who have a relationship with the researcher (community development manager) on a project level, which may have had an influence on their responses.

- Respondents selected not representing the entire community. It might be beneficial to use a larger sample so that findings can be generalised.

- Paucity of literature concerning exploring studies at a community-based level, resulting in overdependence on participatory communication literature.

- Lack of understanding regarding change attained due to SANRAL and other entities' interventions and the effects on development.

Despite these limitations, this research study could provide insight into how participatory communication is perceived and practised on a community-based project and a revelation on major gaps in the development sector. The study also makes suggestions for future research, which are outlined below:

## 5.7    FUTURE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

- It might be beneficial to undertake a similar study on other community-based projects in other parts of Lusikisiki and surrounding areas. Compiling lessons learnt could advance existing information about participatory paradigm.

- Studying the perceptions about different development actors about the practice of participatory communication.

- Perhaps getting more SANRAL employees to be part of the study could provide insights about the impact and practice of participatory communication on similar projects in other places.

- Research findings reveal that traditional practices affect the development works. Information filters through traditional authorities. Further research could possibly examine the extent of the research problem and search for solutions from participatory development perspective.

- It is important to consider further research on the extent to which participatory COMMUNICATION COULD ENHANCE STAKEHOLDERS ON A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT.

- Perhaps it is also necessary to design a participatory communication strategy for community-based projects.

- Further research is necessary to discover the role of participatory communication in other various regulatory functions. Such topics are crucial since they could provide the basis for promoting sustainable development.

- Future researchers can make use **of mixed methods to gather information from participants**. It was difficult to get information from key interviews considering the level of education. Perhaps it is necessary to also investigate participants outside the structure.

The next section will discuss the study's contribution on the practice of participatory communication.

## 5.8 LESSONS LEARNT FOR FUTURE PROJECT IMPLEMENTERS

- To future developers, the study revealed through findings that allowing stakeholders to take the lead in development is beneficial within those communities. It allows the developer to maximise impact by discovering power, expertise and knowledge that lies within these communities.

- It is crucial to first determine what good each community possess, and to build on that. It does not assist to come with own ideas and impose ideal development for the communities.

- Taking stakeholders on a journey result in open opportunities for those for whom development is intended.

- In doing so, stakeholders become ambassadors for the project. The communities became aware of the good in them and started running with community development projects. The status update of the legacy project was met with a consistently positive response. Strategically it is combined with the road construction to get leverage. Even during a construction hiatus, consistent communication about these two parallel processes kept the community at ease.

- Formulating structures within affected communities opens channels of communication. These structures communicate further with people from within their villages, ensuring consistent communication and feedback.

- It is crucial to adhere to all cultural customs and belief of the community. Trust relationships were built over time and on the basis of good faith.

- It is critical to make use of the resources that understand the dynamics and not to avoid community guidance.

- Stakeholders are free consultants who gain rich and useful information to shape development interventions at a grassroots level.

## 5.9 STUDY'S CONTRIBUTION TO LITERATURE

From the study findings, it can be assumed that participatory communication creates a conducive environment for stakeholders to co-create projects aimed at socio-economic development. It is hoped that the practical significance of this dissertation will empower experts and developers in the field to explore the extent to which they apply participatory communication on projects. In addition, the study will fill a research gap within the discipline of communication. The study clearly shows the benefits of incorporating participatory mechanisms on community development projects. It became evident on the study that participatory communication empowering due to the nature of two-way communication.

## 5.10    SUMMARY

There are several development approaches that have been applied in developing countries. Practical level development approaches have contributed to many successes and failures on development projects. However, sustainable development is highly unlikely to occur with no active participation of the local community (Burger, 2017), in other words, in holistic development, bottom-up communication is crucial (Naidoo & Ramphal, 2018). Due to the failure of modernisation and dependency paradigms, the participatory paradigm emerged (Aruma, 2018; Koningstein & Azadegan, 2018; John & Etika, 2019), resulting in organisations rather investing in local participatory development. This proves that the participatory paradigm is expanding its influence within the development space. As many projects have failed precisely due to limited involvement of affected people in decision-making, this research study used participatory communication as a theoretical framework. This included constructs of participatory communication, such as dialogue and physical participation, to empower communities to facilitate sustainable development (Richter & Dow, 2018). These key aspects have been used to analyse and interpret information.

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# 7 APPENDICES

## 7.1 Appendix A: Ethical Clearance

UNISA | university of south africa

**OLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

31 January 2022

Dear Andile Bongeka Maphumulo

| NHREC Registration # : |
| Rec-240816-052 |
| CREC Reference # : |
| 60979836_CREC_CHS_2022 |

**Decision:**
**Ethics Approval from 31 January 2022 to 31 January 2025**

Researcher(s): Name: Andile Bongeka Maphumulo
          Contact details: 60979836@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Supervisor(s): Name: Prof TE Mudzanani
          Contact details: 012 429 6025
          Name: Prof KF Mearns
          Contact: 0114712973

**Title: Practice of participatory communication: Asset Based Community Development legacy project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape.**

**Purpose: MA**

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

The *low risk application* was reviewed by College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) 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 should be communicated in writing to the College Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the

## 7.2    Appendix B:  Consent letter

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY**

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the <insert specific data collection method>.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname.............................................. (please print)

Participant Signature.........................................................Date.....................

Researcher's Name & Surname.........................................(please print)

Researcher's signature            Date.....................

## 7.3 Appendix C: Letter to request permission from SANRAL's Community Development Manager

20 Shoreward Drive, Baywest

Port Elizabeth

Eastern Cape, 6025



**Request for permission to conduct research at the South African National Road Agency's Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) legacy project in Wild Coast (Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape – EC) for Fourteen Villages that form part of package four.**

"Title: Practice of participatory communication: Asset Based Community Development legacy project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape."

10 October 2021

Fezile Duze

Project Manager

041 398 3250

DuzeF@nra.co.za

Dear Fezile Duze, District Office Manager: SANRAL, Port Elizabeth.

I, Andile Bongeka Maphumulo I am doing research with I am doing research with Takalani Mudzanani, Associate Professor and Kervin Mearns, Professor in the Department of Communication Sciences towards Master of Arts in Communication Science at the University of South Africa. We have funding from Zutari as my employer. The ABCD service offering, and the entire community development component of this project is offered by Communication and Stakeholder Engagement, Zutari. For the researcher it was an interesting study to explore impact when implementing community development work for our clients and the entire approach for SNRAL when approaching development and their participatory communication model. Also, to find out from the communities their perceptions about the entity and their sustainable development

We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled "Practice of participatory communication: Asset Based Community Development legacy project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape".

The aim of the study is to explore the Practice of participatory communication: Asset Based Community Development legacy project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape. Your company has been selected because SANRAL is the main driver/sponsor of the N2 Wild Coast Toll Highway construction project and the Community Development component which is the enrollment of the ABCD legacy project.

The study will entail a huge data collection component through individual interviews that will be conducted mainly telephonically and online due to Covid-19. However, for some stakeholders with access to internet a researcher will request either Teams or Zoom meetings. Few interviews will be conducted face-to-face. Each interview will take between 60 – 90 minutes, it could be less depending on the information that each participant is willing to share. There is a consent form that will be shared with participants assuring them that information gathered will be kept confidential and that they can only answer questions that they feel comfortable answering. An ethical clearance form and research authorisation from UNISA will be made available to participants.

**The benefits of this study are the following:**

- Increasing conscientizing among corporates, development sponsors and communities about the process of how to advance livelihoods and economic opportunities through the assets that those communities have.
- Future development sponsors could incorporate people's views which could shape plans and contribute to development strategies, in a way create development ownership from the very same communities that are to be developed or being developed and provide an easier way to resolve problems often encountered during developmental projects.
- Identification of improvement areas for the corporates and development sponsors through which the usage of participatory communication can assist them in ensuring that the corporate social initiatives can be successful and be owned by communities that they are targeting.
- To contribute to the academic literature review on participatory communication and the Asset Based Community Development Initiatives

There are no potential risks, since face to face interactions will be kept minimal especially for some of the participants that are senior residents in the area. The researcher will ensure that Covid-19 protocols are observed at all times, this will be easily achieved because of one-on-one interviews that will be conducted.

Feedback procedure will entail an executive summary of findings on how the community perceive SANRAL's participatory approach when approaching development.


Yours sincerely

Andile Bongeka Maphumulo

Senior Consultant: Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

## 7.4 Appendix D: Letter to request permission from the PLC

Lambasi A/A

P.O. Box 278

Lusikisiki

4820

**Request for permission to conduct research at the South African National Road Agency's Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) legacy project in Wild Coast (Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape – EC) for Fourteen Villages that form part of package four.**

"Title: Practice of participatory communication: Asset Based Community Development legacy project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape."

20 October 2021

PCL Members

Dear PLC Members.

I, Andile Bongeka Maphumulo I am doing research with I am doing research with Takalani Mudzanani, Associate Professor and Kervin Mearns, Professor in the Department of Communication Sciences towards Master of Arts in Communication Science at the University of South Africa. We have funding from Zutari as my employer. The ABCD service offering, and the entire community development component of this project is offered by Communication and Stakeholder Engagement, Zutari. For the researcher it was an interesting study to explore impact when implementing community development work for our clients and the entire approach for SNRAL when approaching development and their participatory communication model. Also, to find out from the communities their perceptions about the entity and their sustainable development model (ABCD) on the project.

We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled "Practice of participatory communication: Asset Based Community Development legacy project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape".

We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled "Practice of participatory communication: Asset Based Community Development legacy project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape".

The aim of the study is to explore the Practice of participatory communication: Asset Based Community Development legacy project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape. Your company has been selected because SANRAL is the main driver/sponsor of the N2 Wild Coast Toll Highway construction project and the Community Development component which is the enrollment of the ABCD legacy project.

The study will entail a huge data collection component through individual interviews that will be conducted mainly telephonically and online due to Covid-19. However, for some stakeholders with access to internet a researcher will request either Teams or Zoom meetings. Few interviews will be conducted face-to-face. Each interview will take between 60 – 90 minutes, it could be less depending on the information that each participant is willing to share. There is a consent form that will be shared with participants assuring them that information gathered will be kept confidential and that they can only answer questions that they feel comfortable answering. An ethical clearance form and research authorisation from UNISA will be made available to participants.

**The benefits of this study are the following:**

- Increasing conscientizing among corporates, development sponsors and communities about the process of how to advance livelihoods and economic opportunities through the assets that those communities have.

- Future development sponsors could incorporate people's views which could shape plans and contribute to development strategies, in a way create development ownership from the very same communities that are to be developed or being developed and provide an easier way to resolve problems often encountered during developmental projects.

- Identification of improvement areas for the corporates and development sponsors through which the usage of participatory communication can assist them in ensuring that the corporate social initiatives can be successful and be owned by communities that they are targeting.

- To contribute to the academic literature review on participatory communication and the Asset Based Community Development Initiatives

There are no potential risks, since face to face interactions will be kept minimal especially for some of the participants that are senior residents in the area. The researcher will ensure that Covid-19 protocols are observed at all times, this will be easily achieved because of one-on-one interviews that will be conducted.

Feedback procedure will entail an executive summary of findings on how the community perceive SANRAL's participatory approach when approaching development.


Yours sincerely

Andile Bongeka Maphumulo

Senior Consultant: Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

## 7.5    Appendix E: Interview Guide

Greetings "Molweni" Participants:

My name is Andile Bongeka Maphumulo, and I am doing research under the supervision of Professors Takalani Mudzanani and Kevin Mearns, in the Department of Communication Sciences. I am working towards my Master of Arts in Communication Science at the University of South Africa. I have funding from Zutari as my employer. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled Practice of participatory communication: Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) legacy project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape.

The intent of the interview is to collect relevant information that will assist the researcher achieve objectives of the study. For the proposed study the purpose is to explore the practice of participatory development communication by The South African National Road Agency (SANRAL) on the ABCD Legacy Project in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape. ABCD approach is a sustainable development approach that is aimed at identifying strengths within the community rather than deficiencies or problems within those communities. I am requesting that you share your insights and sincere thoughts about the ABCD Legacy Project, this is to ensure the success and truthfulness of this study under investigation. As stated on the consent form, your personal details as participants will not be shared with anyone. The researcher gives the participant assurance that all responses received will be treated as highly confidential. Information gathered will be utilised for the benefit of the study under investigation only.

### Section A: Participants' Demographic Information

**Demographic Information**

Name of the village: _____        Age: _____        Gender: _____

Married: _____        Employed: _____

Education background: _____        How many people stay in your household? ____

What skills do they have? _____

### Section B: Interview Questions

**Context and overview of the study: SANRAL ABCD Legacy Project and Processes.**

- What are your views regarding development in Lusikisiki especially your village (Dengane, Dimfi, Komkhulu, Lingeni etc)? Can you tell me more about the involvement of the community on ABCD Legacy Project?

- What is your perception about the practice of participatory development communication by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy Project?

## Research question one and two: Communication methods used in the ABCD Legacy Project.

- What communication methods are used by SANRAL to communicate with the community pertaining the ABCD Legacy Project?
- Can you describe how communication looks like between SANRAL and the community about the ABCD Legacy Project? How often do SANRAL communicate? Are you satisfied with their communication approach? Can you elaborate on the frequency of communication by SANRAL about the Legacy Project?
- Do you think current communication channels employed by SANRAL on the ABCD Legacy Project are effective? If yes/no, could you please explain its effectiveness or in effectiveness? What do you think could be solutions to address some of the communication challenges regarding the project?

## Research question one and two: Perceptions on communication methods used.

- What is your perception on the current communication methods used by SANRAL about the ABCD Legacy Project?
- Can you elaborate on the current project communication processes, what is the current line of communication? **Probing questions:** Who speaks to who? Are there any specific groups within the villages that are deployed by SANRAL to convey messages to the local community? If there are structures, how does this communication function work? What is the perception of the community regarding such processes?

## Research Question three: Challenging factors for communication.

- What communication barriers or gaps could you identify from the way SANRAL communicates with the community currently?
- Can you explain some of the communication challenges faced by the ABCD Legacy Project that might prevent the practice of participatory development communication?
- What are the key concerns if there are any on the current approach used by SANRAL to communicate about the ABCD Legacy Project?

## Recommendations:

- What recommendations would you suggest addressing some of the communication challenges faced by the ABCD Legacy Project?