

**COMMUNITY GROUP ENVIRONMENT FOR PEOPLE PARTICIPATION AND
EMPOWERMENT**

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explores participatory development methods which may be engaged with a smaller community interest group to create an environment conducive to free and effective participation towards empowering more participants in rural communities. The study was conducted in Makhuduthamaga Municipal area in Sekhukhune District of Limpopo Province. The data was collected through participants observation during application of Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques, community groups' documents reviews, and groups and individual interviews. The study looked into participation procedures and pattern during Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques, groups' institutionalisation and internal participation environment. The study also conducted comparative analysis between community interest groups and organisational linkage structures, in order to establish how free and conducive the groups' internal environments are between the cases.

The study found that: interest groups are more common, accessible and empowering in rural communities than organisational linkage structures. People participate and attain self-esteem and self-reliance, making them participate and develop a sense of responsibility and ownership. The findings will therefore inform development agents in government departments and NGOs about the elements to consider in the implementation of development programmes, and to make appropriate choice of participatory models for effective participation and empowerment. The study's theoretical contribution is in *sustenance participation theory*, which argues that for people to effectively participate in their development, they should be made to participate by being given responsibilities which may motivate them to participate in finding solutions, own the outcomes, and participate towards sustaining them.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BASED Delivery	-Broadening Agricultural Services and Extension
CAN	-Church Aid in Need
CPA	-Communal Property Association
GtZ	- <i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Zusammenarbeit</i>
DFR	-Durban Functional Region
EMYUO	-Ellias Motswaledi Youth Umbrella Organisation
FFS	-Farmer Field School
IDP	-Integrated Development Planning
LDA	-Limpopo Department of Agriculture
MASOPA	-Makhuduthamaga Sorghum Producers Association
MEC	-Member of Executive Council
NGO	-Non-governmental Organisation
PAR	-Participatory Action Research
PEA	-Participatory Extension Approach
PLA	-Participatory Learning and Action
PPF	-Peace Parks Foundation
PRA	-Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRAP	-Participatory Rural Appraisal and Planning
RDP	-Reconstruction and Development Programme
RDPOM	-Rangel District Popular Organisational Movement
RMC	-Resource Management Committees
SANParks	- South African National Parks
SFG	-Small farmer Groups
SFGA	-Small farmer Group Association
TFCA	-Transfrontier Conservation Area
UNDP	-United Nations Development Programme