# Social learning for adaptation

## a descriptive handbook for practitioners and action researchers

"We learned to listen to people,
so that we could speak to them
in ways that they could understand"

*Nokwanele Mamkeli, Lesseyton, Eastern Cape*

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## Foreword

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Universities are not exempt from the changing social contexts in which they are situated, and they should not desire to be. Rhodes can learn from, and needs to actively participate in important issues that are currently affecting the lives of all South Africans. It is in acknowledging this that many South African universities, including Rhodes, have implemented some form of community engagement into their research and/or teaching and learning agendas. The infusion of community engagement principals into research practices has opened the door for new and exciting ways to create and disseminate knowledge, taking seriously the ability to co-create knowledge with partners outside of university structures. As most academics employing engaged approaches to their research will tell you, there is no one way a researcher or institution might co-create knowledge. However, all research that is responsive to, and respectful of, its social context will inevitably, it seems, reflect on the purpose and practice of research methods. These reflections, as is evident in this handbook, are closely allied to social justice and transformation agendas.

The social learning approach taken by the Jongphambili Sinethemba research team places great emphasis on individual and community agency, vulnerability, and the need to constantly reflect on the process of learning. This handbook might not yield a cut-and-paste model for how to co-create knowledge in partnership with those one works with, but it does provide great insight into the commitments necessary to co-create research. The thoughtful and respectful nature of social learning, as an approach to research, not only contributes to excellence in research practices and pedagogies that Rhodes aspires to, but it better places the university in its environment, I hope it will inspire those who read it, as evidence of how successful creative approaches to traditional research paradigms can be.

## Acknowledgements

## A note on language in this handbook

An important step in the development of this handbook involved engaging with members of the target audience, in this case NGO practitioners who are actively involved in community work. During a workshop held in September 2013, we received feedback on the contents of this handbook from ten such community facilitators from around the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The single most important comment, and agreed with by all of the community facilitators, was our use of academic language and terminology. Particularly problematic terms included 'vulnerability,' 'agency,' 'capabilities,' 'social learning' and 'reflexivity.' All workshop participants were concerned about how these terms could be effectively translated into *isiXhosa,* and also felt that they were not understandable for people 'on the ground'.

This commentary placed the authors in somewhat of a quandary: many of these terms are cornerstone to adaptation thinking and approaches, and are therefore hard to exclude. We faced the dilemma of losing some important concepts and terminology (which we do feel anyone working with aspects of change and adaptation need to be familiar with) in favour of increasing the accessibility of the language and therefore the possibility of the handbook being used. Furthermore, many of the terms pointed out are not just words, but concepts that convey deeper and more nuanced meaning that cannot be simply substituted with another word, nor directly translated without an explanation. In the end we reached a compromise. The NGO practitioners agreed that a glossary would help, which we present on page 2. We also introduce and explain the terms and highlight them in text boxes throughout the handbook. In addition, we edited the text so that these terms are only used when there is no clear and meaningful substitute. Where applicable, we substituted these terms with phrases or words that were considered more accessible by the workshop participants. For example, we use the word 'challenges' to talk about the vulnerability context in which people live. The idea of capabilities, too, is substituted with the concept of 'aspirations' in order to convey the importance of what people value doing and being in their lives.

Through this approach we hope to have produced a handbook that is both accessible and therefore practically useful, as well as educational. Our aim is to expose facilitators to alternative ways of engaging with the communities in which they work. In some instances, this does require exposure to, and uptake of, new ideas and ways of thinking, which may include new, although often widely used and accepted, terminology and language.

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## Glossary of terms, acronyms and abbreviations

**Agency:** This is an important aspect of capabilities (see below), and refers to the ability to act in the world. Understanding agency requires a focus on what people think, value and do. It also requires attention to how people do things, and why they choose to do certain things instead of others.

**Capability/capabilities:** What people value 'being and doing,' or their aspirations. So while agency refers to what people can do, capabilities refer to what they value doing. This term is often used interchangeably with 'capacities,' which refers to knowledge, skills, and alternative options. We use the term in the first sense, and often refer rather to 'aspirations' to avoid confusion with the latter meaning.

**Capacity/capacities:** Knowledge, skills, personal ability and alternative options or choices.

**DSD:** Department of Social Development

**DoH:** Department of Health

**Eastern Cape Environmental Network:** A coalition of civil society and non-governmental organizations operating in the Eastern Cape of South Africa

**IDRC:** International Development Research Center (http://www.idrc.ca)

**Isibindi:** Non-governmental organization that works with HIV/Aids affected households and children

**isiXhosa:** Local language spoken by communities involved in this project

**Jongphambili Sinethemba:** Means "looking forward, we have hope" in isiXhosa. This was the name given to this project by the two communities involved in the social learning process

**NGO:** A non-governmental organisation

**NPO:** A non-profit organisation

**Problem Solving Course:** The capacity building course offered to social learning group members involved in this project

**RDP:** Reconstruction and Development Programme

**Reflexivity:** Continuously reflecting on what you have learned, and taking action to improve whatever you are doing as a result of that reflection.

**RULIV:** A non-profit organisation that provides support services for rural and urban development (www.ruliv.org.za)

**SANQF:** South African National Qualifications Framework

**Social learning:** A change in understanding that goes beyond the individual and spreads within communities or groups through social interactions between people. This change in understanding might be through learning new factual information, which increases awareness about important issues, for example about climate change or HIV/AIDs. This change in understanding might also

be at deeper levels, for example individuals and communities shifting their worldviews or values in relation to these issues. An example of this deeper learning would be people taking greater responsibility for HIV/AIDs in their community, and starting to actively assist affected households.

*Vulnerability:* A person is considered vulnerable when they are exposed to shocks and stressors (such as a flood or a disease outbreak) AND when they are in a situation (such as poverty or ill health) that makes it difficult for them to respond to and recover from these shocks and stressors. This makes it important to understand both the context in which people generate their livelihoods, and the external factors that challenge them in their lives. For example, all farmers in a region will be exposed to the shock of a drought, but poorer small-scale farmers without access to irrigation and insurance will feel the impacts more acutely (be more sensitive) and will have lower capacity to deal with these impacts (adaptive capacity) due to their lack of assets such as access to water, and insurance to replace the value of their crop if it fails.

# PART I

Handbook

# Introduction

This handbook presents the experience of a participatory social learning process that evolved to support individual and community level adaptation to the myriad of stressors affecting rural people. While the social learning process is presented as a 'package,' this is more out of convenience than attempting to represent a perfect model. In other words, genuinely responsive social learning processes may well vary in content, but possibly not in core features from what is presented here. This handbook should therefore be considered as a framework to guide thinking and reflection around how such processes might unfold, and further provide guidance towards possible approaches and activities that may be appropriate in some circumstances.

The most critical factor emerging through the experience of this social learning process is how facilitators see their roles and their relationships with participants. It is essential to strive for a balance between responsiveness and guidance, achieved through an approach that is open, based on a principal of seeking equality, and one that is fully prepared to follow a path different from the one that may have originally been envisaged. This adaptive approach embraces the concept of co-learning, and was one of the objectives of the social learning processes embarked on in this project.

This handbook emerged over the course of four years, during which time facilitators associated with a vulnerability and adaptation research programme set out to support social learning processes in two communities simultaneously. Facilitators did not 'get it right' every time, in fact they often got it wrong. However, in a reflexive process such as this, these experiences were used to improve interactions with community members. Here, we try to present not only a process that might assist others who seek to understand local vulnerability and build adaptive capacity in communities, but also some of the key co-learning 'moments' experienced along the way in which either the facilitators or the community participants changed their thinking about what they were doing together (co-learning in action).

It is important to remember as you read this handbook that the process was developed as part of a broader scientific research project on vulnerability and adaptation to climate change and other stressors, with a focus on knowledge building. It was led through Rhodes University, not through a development agency, and therefore the focus may be quite different from one arising in a more development-based context. Nevertheless, many aspects of the handbook should resonate within different contexts. We believe the handbook will be useful for NGO practitioners who work with communities and seek to build critical capacities, researchers who are interested in processes of action research, social change and co-learning, and government employees who are mandated to support communities in their efforts to collectively overcome hardships.

## Some background to this project

In this handbook we draw on our experiences of social learning facilitation and co-learning, as we were engaged in these between January 2010 and August 2013 in two communities in rural South Africa. The research project was funded by the International Development Research Center (IDRC), and was named *Jongphambili Sinethemba* (looking forward, we have hope) by the communities involved. The project was a collaborative effort between Rhodes University in South Africa and the University of Alberta in Canada. In addition to several postgraduate students conducting research on various aspects of food security, health, vulnerability and adaptation, a parallel and closely linked social learning process was facilitated in both communities. That process was intended to ensure that the communities' concerns and voices were heard in the research project, to build capacity to adapt to climate change and other stressors affecting people, and to establish platforms for co-learning. The social learning process was therefore not only focussed on climate change, but also on the contextualised vulnerabilities that were identified as important.

The process was designed to be intensively reflexive, with community participants and facilitators involved in on-going reflection of the process itself. This shared monitoring yielded insights from both the facilitators' and communities' perspectives, and it is on this rich source of insight that this handbook is largely based. The reader will find the voices of different facilitators, community members, project managers and researchers emerging through the handbook. This medley of perspectives is intentional, and largely mirrors the perspectives that influenced the process as it unfolded. In describing our process and integrating the inputs from the people involved, this guide distils lessons that might be useful to others who wish to facilitate a similar process.

## How is a social learning approach different to other participatory approaches?

Pursuing a social learning approach to a participatory engagement brings with it an interest in supporting a broader agenda for social change. One of the factors underpinning such change is a shift in understanding among the participants of a given process. This change in understanding might come about through learning new factual information that increases awareness about important issues, for example about climate change or HIV/AIDs. This change in understanding might also happen at deeper levels, for example individuals and communities might shift their worldviews or values in relation to important issues, for example, people taking greater responsibility for HIV/AIDs in their community by actively assisting affected households. Another example of this deep change in understanding, and one that we saw in this project, is that of people taking greater responsibility for their own development, and essentially shifting their assumptions about what the community was able to achieve on its own, without government assistance. It is this deeper form of learning that this handbook seeks to support, although surface-level learning in the form of raising awareness remains a fundamental part of achieving this. In other words, in order to achieve shifts in values and worldviews, it is necessary to also introduce new knowledge or re-look at existing knowledge to raise awareness about important issues.

A second and crucial aspect of a social learning approach is the intention for this change in understanding to move beyond a small core group and to become integrated within the broader

> Social learning has been defined as a change in understanding that goes beyond the individual and spreads throughout communities or groups through social interactions between people
> (See Reed and others 2010)

community. This interest in impacting the broader community is embedded in a desire to support a broader agenda toward social change in ways that are acceptable to, and valued by the participants.

In practical terms, a social learning approach requires planning for long-term and sustained relationships between community members and facilitators, purposeful knowledge exchange within and beyond communities, and the co-production of knowledge about important issues. Furthermore the learning should flow in all directions, and facilitators must recognise and embrace their personal need to learn as well as to share knowledge. Everyone involved needs to embrace a concept of co-learning: i.e. learning together and from each other.

Most importantly, a social learning approach requires community participants to engage in the co-development of the process. This in turn requires the purposeful creation of spaces and opportunities in which reflections on the process can take place (Figure 1).

Social learning processes must therefore be premised on the idea of learning through 'reflexivity,' meaning the entire process – from inception to closure – must be actively subjected to continuous reflection and review by everyone involved. Time must be allocated during every interaction for reflection on the process and how it might be improved. Facilitators must be ready to change their plans in both the short and the long-term; and community members too, must be ready to change their views on what might be interesting or useful to learn.

Reflexivity is central to a social learning approach, and refers to continuously reflecting on what you have learned, and taking action to improve whatever you are doing as a result of that reflection.

**Social learning in this handbook is about:**
- A long-term process of engagement with core community participants, the broader community, researchers and facilitators;
- Creating a process that allows knowledge exchange both into and out of the core group of participants;
- Learning for social change, in this case in support of adaptation to experienced stressors;
- Knowledge sharing and learning by all, including the facilitators and researchers producing knowledge of the context;
- Co-developing the learning process with participants;
- Learning through reflexivity.
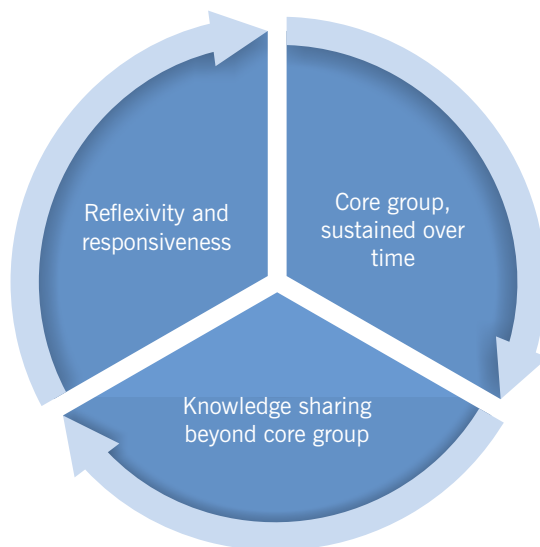
*Figure 1: A social learning approach to supporting community adaptation requires three core areas of activity: 1) sustained interaction with a core group of participants over time, 2) knowledge sharing beyond the core group, and 3) the creation of time and space for reflection that informs the development of the process.*

It also requires other processes such as developing a deeper understanding of the contexts in which the learning takes place, and of those factors that both constrain and enable learning and change. This, in turn, requires quite specific facilitation skills when the goal is social learning. One of the most important attributes of an effective social learning facilitator is the ability to create an atmosphere in which people feel confident to express their ideas about both the topic under discussion and the process itself.

Such confidence should extend to being willing to voice perspectives that are divergent to those that may be dominant or taken for granted. Facilitating a social learning process requires techniques that include recognising, being, and providing actions that are not always part of the focus areas in standard participatory training manuals. These are summarised in Box 1.

The adaptive and essentially open-ended character of a social learning process highlights a central tension in this handbook. This handbook is a descriptive guide. It is not meant to, and cannot be, used as a recipe or a list of steps that can be followed. Facilitators will have to constantly seek ways to balance the provision of guidance to participants, while allowing room for the future of the process to be uncertain. This is often an uncomfortable space for facilitators.

## Vulnerability and adaptation when the future is uncertain

This handbook is about facilitating social learning in support of adaptation to uncertain futures. The future is often uncertain (particularly regarding a changing climate and its impacts) for poor and impoverished rural households, because of the many different stressors impacting on people's lives on a daily basis, some of which are local or domestic in origin, and some of which are caused by trends outside of people's control. It is therefore important to reflect on what it means to be vulnerable to such multiple interacting stressors, and what adaptation really means.

> A person is considered vulnerable when they are *both* exposed to shocks and stressors *and* when they are in a situation (such as poverty) that makes it very difficult for them to deal with these shocks and stressors.

**BOX 1**

Facilitating social learning requires:

Recognising:
- That social learning is multi-faceted and multi-directional
- That social learning takes place all the time, in all activities
- That much social learning is sub-conscious (people are not aware of learning or sharing knowledge)
- That social learning is inherently a participatory and reflexive process
- That social learning can lead in directions not envisaged
- The on-going seeking of equality between participants in a social learning process
- That social learning should lead to strengthened individual and collective agency
- That social learning is also a process of co-learning, and being willing to move out of one's own comfort zone to learn from others, including their divergent perspectives.

Being:
- Both responsive and guiding
- Willing to learn and change
- Open and receptive to critique and negotiation
- Honest about own views, understandings, strengths, and limitations
- Accepting of others' views, understandings, strengths, and limitations
- Realistic in expectations
- Imaginative in a way that opens up alternatives for the future

Providing:
- Learning, technical and emotional support
- A coherent framework and supportive context for learning
- Own skills, knowledge and experience
- Opportunities for individual and collective growth
A space in which participants feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and where there are no rights and wrongs

A person is considered vulnerable when they are both exposed to shocks and stressors and when they are in a situation (such as poverty) that makes it very difficult for them to respond to and recover from these shocks and stressors. Rural populations, particularly in developing countries, have to continually deal with a range of stressors such as diseases (like HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa), crime, land and resource erosion, degradation of trust and family networks and changing values to mention a few. Often these stressors, especially amongst poorer communities, are experienced within an environment of historical neglect, poverty and powerlessness, poor service delivery, ineffective policies, poor planning, a lack of livelihood options and safety nets, poor social security systems, poor infrastructure, limited access to markets and a suite of other context specific issues. Such stressors and issues can undermine our ability to deal with any new shocks and changes that we may encounter.

Despite this complex picture, there can be a tendency to consider factors in isolation from one another and gloss over their widely varied impacts on vulnerability. For example, the negative livelihood

consequences of a climate event, like a drought, are almost never a result of drought alone. The reality is that multiple interacting stressors inside and outside the community exacerbate the vulnerability of households dependent on natural resources.

Consequently, if we hope to support adaptation, given the inevitability of bigger changes on the horizon, like climate change, then this complexity of influences on local livelihoods needs to be considered. We need to be able to build the capacity of communities and households to deal with both daily and unexpected stressors and shocks, and to voice their concerns regarding what makes them vulnerable in the first place and hinders their ability to respond. Structural and governance barriers to communities trying to address their daily challenges must also be highlighted. Social learning processes such as those described in this handbook can help to achieve this.

Adaptation is, however, not a simple linear or managerial process. Rather, adaptation, particularly at a community level, is often a complex process that involves multiple linked steps to identify and learn about risks, evaluate possible responses, create enabling conditions, mobilise resources, choose and implement adaptation options, and revise choices with new learning. Adaptation can come about in different ways. It can be planned (facilitated through external participants) autonomous (people's own responses), anticipatory (in expectation of future threats) or reactive (in response to stressors). This handbook offers insight into a facilitated process that falls somewhere between these different forms of adaptation, and offers an approach to developing an adaptive process with communities, where the longer-term goal is to support autonomous responses to issues that are important to communities themselves. For this reason we also focus on developing agency (the ability to act) and capabilities (aspirations) through the social learning process. The emphasis on building capabilities and problem solving capacity also carries some aspects of anticipatory learning (and may help community members to better pre-empt and therefore pro-actively engage with potential future threats). As the process is facilitated at least in part from the 'outside,' and in this sense might be considered planned, engaging communities in an adaptive social learning process means that the outcomes are co-developed by both the facilitators and the community participants.

> **Highlights on vulnerability and adaptation**
> - Recognise and accept uncertainty about what the future will look like
> - Understand the cumulative impacts of vulnerability, stressors, and shocks
> - Focus on and build capacity to deal with both known and unknown stressors
> - Adaptation is a complex process that can be either planned for in advance or reactive in response to negative experiences

## Why support human agency in addition to identifying technological solutions?

In many discussions around adaptation, there is a strong emphasis placed on technological solutions. Although technologies have, throughout human history, played an important role in social change by enabling us to do things differently, (which is what adaptation is all about), many years of technological innovation have also shown that if inadequate attention is given to social and cultural aspects of technological innovation and adaptation solutions, then few of these technologies function successfully.

A social approach by definition means focussing on people, and specifically on what people think, value and do. It is further concerned with how people do things, and why they choose to do certain things instead of others. Focussing on these aspects of human activity means giving attention

to human agency, or people's ability to act. Everyone has the capacity to exercise their ability to act, and do so every day, for example, when they choose to visit friends. They often exercise this ability in situations that are not of their own making, even though they are able to influence these circumstances. Poverty is a known factor that reduces options for exercising agency, hence the focus on reducing and alleviating poverty in international and national policies. For example, a rural farmer has the ability to act (to farm), but how he or she farms is influenced by the amount of land that he or she has access to, his or her experience and knowledge of farming, the kinds of farming equipment and technology that he or she may have access to, government policies and strategies related to farming, and the climate and other ecological variables that influence what he or she can plant, by way of examples. Poverty is likely to further shape what options the farmer may or may not have, thus shaping his or her ability to act in specific ways. It is therefore important to see people and their actions within their social contexts.

Social learning processes, such as those shared in this handbook require that facilitators and community members need to develop: 1) a shared understanding of the contexts in which community members are doing things, 2) what community members are already doing in their social contexts (i.e. what agency they are already exercising), and 3) what could potentially be changed or improved through further action in this context.

In addition, it is critically important to fully understand what community members value being or doing, and how they may want things to be different or changed. If facilitators' values overtake those of the community members, social learning processes run the risk of becoming social engineering processes. However, this is not easily avoided, as facilitators often think that they 'know best' what others may value, need or want to be. These values related to being and doing are also described as capabilities, or aspirations. For example, people may aspire to be educated, healthy, and free from poverty. Achieving aspirations involves converting resources (e.g. money, natural resources, social relationships) into actions that contribute towards the over-arching capability of the individual.

To return to the example of the rural farmer: he or she may have personal resources (a commitment or

"Human agency" refers to the ability to act in the world. Understanding human agency requires a focus *on what people think, value and do.* It also requires attention to *how* people do things, and *why* they choose to do certain things instead of others.

**Capabilities and Capacities**

The word 'capabilities' has two meanings. It can be used interchangeably with 'capacities', which refers to knowledge, skills, and alternative options. However, it also refers to what people *value* being and doing (their aspirations), and introduces values as being important to capacity development.

It is in this sense that Amartya Sen uses the word 'capabilities.' He argues that development 'as freedom' must involve and include all people's aspirations, and not be equated with economics only. For example, people may value having economic resources, but they may also value being healthy, educated, living in a non-violent society, having friends and so on. All of these are important to consider around adaptation. Furthermore, capabilities should not be reduced to the concept of capacity, but capacity can be enhanced to expand capabilities (e.g. improved knowledge or capacity to choose between better health care options can enhance your health aspirations).

interest in farming), access to good quality environmental resources (fertile soil, a diversity of seeds, and good rainfall), and access to good social resources (farming subsidies and a farmer-support learning forum). These resources can potentially be converted into new farming practices – if the farmer values such practices and/if the farmer has enough knowledge of such farming practices. This then contributes to his or her wider aspirations (or capabilities) of being free from poverty, being healthy, and having access to a good supply of food.

However, in a context of 'uncertain futures' it may be difficult to establish whether existing aspirations are appropriate to changing circumstances, what these aspirations ought to be, or how current understandings of aspirations may need to change. For example, the rural farmer may value intensive irrigation technologies for improving his or her farming output (as an adaptation strategy out of poverty), but in a context of climate change and water scarcity, this technology may not be practical. Therefore the farmer may need to think of an alternative adaptation strategy – in this case using modern conservation farming techniques that use less water. Furthermore, the farmer may value planting a particular kind of crop (e.g. maize), but with global warming and projected temperature rises in his/her farming area, it may not be sensible to establish a long-term farming enterprise based on this crop, and may be more advisable to plant a diversity of drought resistant crops. This highlights the importance of co-learning and the establishment of adaptive, reflexive and open-ended approaches to social learning that are open to review and change. Such co-learning processes can potentially engage people in learning new ways of doing things, and possibly reveal new aspirations.

To deal with an uncertain future, people need new and shared knowledge and understanding of what is happening in their contexts of practice; they also need to develop new skills that can expand their current knowledge, practices and aspirations. Furthermore, they need to be engaged in reflexively reviewing these aspirations – questioning whether they need to stay the same or if they can be expanded in new ways, and whether alternatives are both valued, and indeed possible.

# Getting started

## Planning stages and process design

At the outset it is necessary to have a good idea of the intended or expected outcomes of the social learning process. In the case of the *Jongphambili Sinethemba* project, these outcomes were primarily associated with increased individual and collective capacity for adaptation in response to various challenges and stressors faced by rural community members, both existing (such as poverty and unemployment) and potential (such as climate change). The project was therefore focussed on developing individual and collective *agency* as described previously.

The initial process plan was developed by firstly outlining the stages required to achieve these outcomes. Although there were some changes made to the detail of the plan resulting from interactions with community members, the essential shape was retained and is illustrated in Figure 2. The plan included understanding the local *vulnerability context* (the challenges people have to deal with in their lives and the factors that make it difficult to do so), understanding existing *capabilities and responses* to a range of stressors (what people are doing to respond to these challenges), building required *capacities* (new knowledge, skills and forms of engagement) and breaking down *barriers* to adaptation.

### Lessons for the start-up phase

- Understand where you want to go to as a facilitating team, i.e. have a plan
- Remember that your plan is a compass, not a blueprint – it will and should change
- Select the core group members carefully, or give community members guidance to be able to choose these individuals carefully
- Be honest about what you can and cannot bring to the community
- Develop the objectives of the social learning group together with elected members
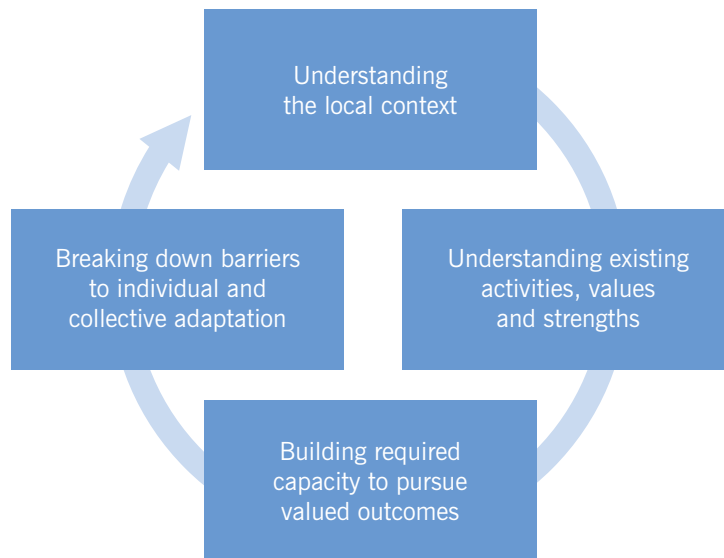
*Figure 2: A generic process that might inform planning in the early stages of a social learning approach aimed at supporting adaptation*

Figure 3 illustrates the various stages of our process, and the facilitation tools that supported each phase. It shows how existing capabilities in Phase 2 (things that people valued being and doing) were firstly – during Phase 1 – understood contextually and then further expanded through capacity building activities in Phase 3.
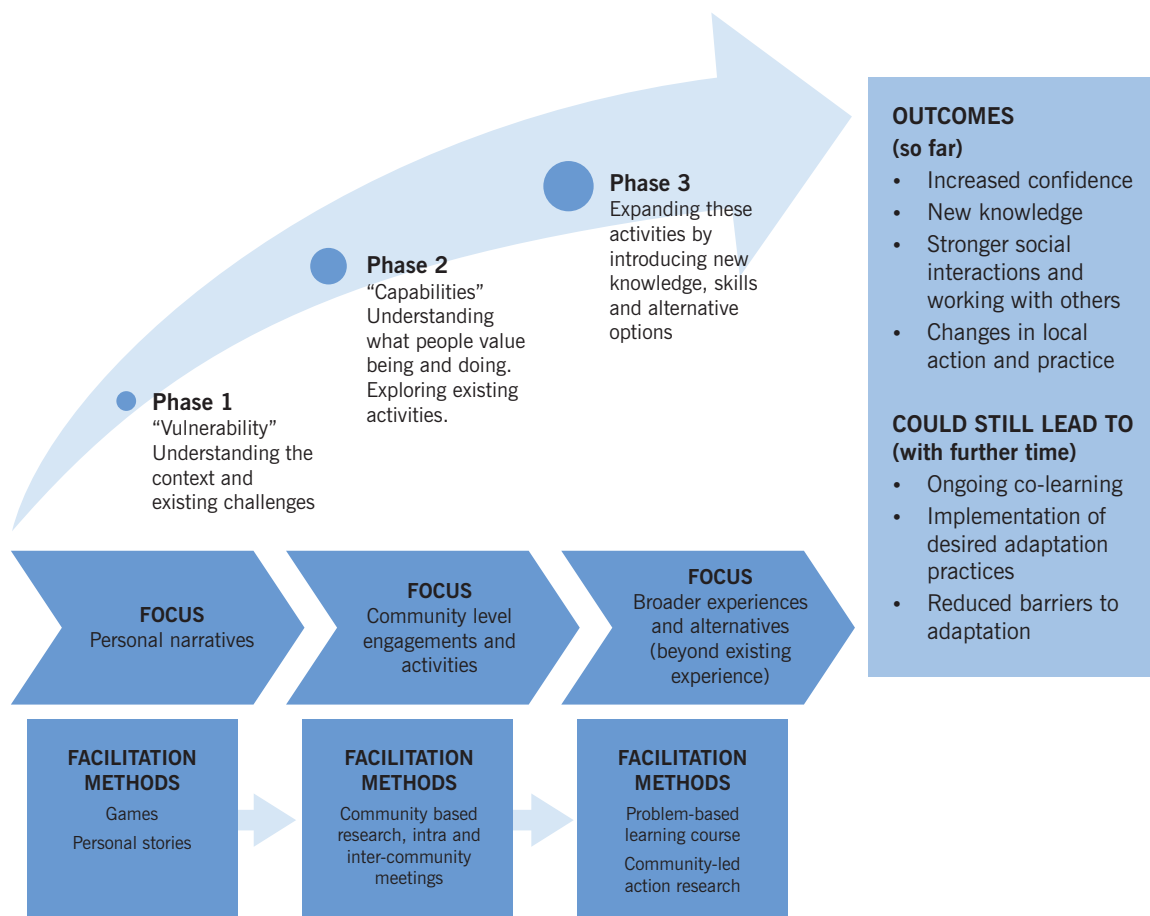


*Figure 3: A facilitated social learning process that builds on what people value being and doing given the context in which they live, in support of adaptation to multiple stressors*

## Engaging with community members: introducing the project and forming social learning groups

Introducing the project to the community is a vital first step in the process. In the *Jongphambili Sinethemba* project, this required following locally appropriate channels to obtain wide support for, and interest in, the project. As social learning processes require sustained interaction with a core group of community members over a long period of time, the goal is to establish social learning groups that will form the core of the participatory process. This introduction phase provides the best opportunity to identify the appropriate participants to form these groups with whom to engage and build a relationship with.

It is imperative that community members participate *voluntarily* in a social learning group, nominated or voted for by the communities in question. Before the nomination process begins, it is necessary to raise awareness about the project goals through the appropriate community channels.

A community start-up strategy is outlined below, with examples from the *Jongphambili Sinethemba* research project:

**Step 1:** *Set-up meetings with community leaders, gradually involving larger groups from the community, to explain what the project is about.*

In the case of the *Jongphambili Sinethemba* project, meetings with community leaders were held to explain what the research project was about. When the community leaders showed willingness to participate in the project in their communities, their assistance was sought in setting up broader community meetings to introduce the project and seek community support.

## BOX 2

### A note on the importance of identifying and dealing with expectations from the outset

The comments below were made by community members in an early workshop with one of the social learning groups in the Jongphambili Sinethemba project, in response to the question: "As an individual, what do you need to get out of this process for you to consider your participation a success?"

- I wish the hardship that I endure could be lifted
- I wish to learn more about this Social Learning Group so that I am able to explain to other members of the community what this group is all about
- To be able to share my problems with other people
- As a farmer I wish to get a fence for my cattle
- I wish to get building material
- I wish whatever I learn from this project I will add on my CV as part of my experience.
- This project can capacitate me on how to run my own projects

*There are varied expectations presented here, some simple enough and achievable for the particular project they are aimed at, others certainly not possible, such as providing fences or building materials. Explaining this right at the beginning, and allowing people to step out of the process if they wish to do so is a fundamentally important part of a research oriented social learning process.*

The exercise also created an important opportunity for the facilitators to gain insight into the context they were stepping into - essentially giving them one of the first clear indications of what the group valued. Typically 'expectations' are spoken about as an orientation strategy for participants, but not always as a vital check point for facilitators. Regardless of whether the facilitators could meet the expectations or not, they understood the participants in a different way as a result of this exercise.

**Step 2: *Carefully explain the goals of the project at community meetings, and endeavour to manage expectations. Highlight the strengths and weaknesses of your organisation in terms of delivering benefits.***

In the case of *Jongphambili Sinethemba*, the goals of the research project were carefully explained during community meetings. An important task at these meetings was dealing with expectations, particularly–dispelling expectations that the project would bring development, jobs or funding to the community, as this was not something that the project could offer (see Box 2). It was essential to be completely honest about the resources available, and the strengths and weaknesses of the research team and universities. For example, our strengths as an academic institution lay in research, recording and reporting information, building connections with other external agencies such as local government and NGOs, and education, while our weaknesses included a lack of financial and material resources (an NGO's strength may lie in its hands-on approach, but its weakness could be funding constraints). There are possibilities for research projects such as *Jongphambili Sinethemba* to influence other stakeholders like policy makers, and indeed this was attempted in this project, although such a relationship was not fully realized during our time frame of 4 years. Hence the outcomes outlined in Figure 3 include expanded potential outcomes. Influencing policy makers may,

for example, make up a fourth Phase of the expanding social learning process. Such a process may begin to address some of the more material needs of community members, as expressed in Box 2.

**Step 3:** *Carefully explain the purpose of the social learning groups, the roles of the participants in such groups, and the kinds of people that would best suit being part of such groups.*

In the case of *Jongphambili Sinethemba*, the social learning groups' purposes included channeling information between the project team and the community, sharing knowledge and information about vulnerability and adaptation, and providing a resource of new ideas to cope with community challenges. In explaining the characteristics of the individuals who should be part of such a social learning group, the criteria we identified included:
* community members who were willing to be involved in the entire process, possibly over a period of a few years;
* community members who were dedicated to community development, with track records of active community involvement;
* community members representing a range of ages and also an even gender ratio if possible; and
* community members who were respected by their communities.

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## BOX 3

### An example of a community start-up strategy

In Gatyana in South Africa, a rural community with strong traditional leadership, the project team began by meeting with each of the three chiefs that made up the community. These meetings were set up by a local resident, and were also attended by traditional leaders. Senior project members attended these meetings and explained what the project was about. When the chiefs agreed that the project could go ahead, or at least be put before the community for their approval, they called a community meeting so that the project teams could explain the project to the community. The project team developed a dramatic play for this event to make communication interactions more diverse and interesting, and which dealt with what a research project was about, and how it differed from a development project, in a real life, dramatic way. During this meeting, the goals of the project were described, the purpose of a social learning group was explained, and the personal characteristics of individuals who would sit in this group were discussed. The community then elected participants and later informed the project team of their choices.

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**Step 4:** *The community should nominate people to participate in the social learning group, and those individuals must understand the process, and also be willing and able to participate.*

In the case of *Jongphambili Sinethemba*, the community conducted the selection process independently of the project team, and informed us of the selected social learning group participants on our next visit (see Box 3). These groups fluctuated somewhat over time, with some members dropping out after the first or second meeting, and new participants joining. It is important to allow this to happen, as some people will simply not enjoy being part of the process, whereas those who are eager to be involved should be welcomed (see Box 4). However, it remains important to emphasise upfront that you are looking for people who can commit for the long-term, and explain that if group turnover reaches more than 50%, action must be taken (for example, querying the reasons behind why people are leaving and, together with the group, considering how to address these).

**Step 5:** *Once the social learning group has been formed, some of the most important first activities include getting to know each other, and developing objectives for the group.*

In *Jongphambili Sinethemba*, these objectives were co-developed with the group members. While the facilitators had their own ideas of what the group would be able to achieve, there was room enough for group members to talk about why they were there, and what they wanted to get out of the process.

Questions that were posed included:
• What do you think the social learning group should be about?
• Why have you agreed to join this group?
• What will have had to happen by the end of this project for you to say 'this was worth my time'?

From this discussion, a list of objectives was developed for the group. These objectives were reviewed throughout the entire project process to check that expectations were being met, and to assess the extent to which expectations were changing over time.

**How big should a social learning group be?**
There is no 'right' answer to this question. In our experience though, a group that is larger than 10 people can become difficult to facilitate. However, people do tend to leave the group over time, so starting with a larger group is a good idea.

# Co-developing an understanding of the context in which people live, and the challenges that they face

*The process presented here began with an analysis of the vulnerability context, (or the challenges that people face in a specific place), and progressed to a discussion of capabilities (what people valued being and doing) later, as illustrated in Figure 3. However this is not a blueprint for all situations. For example, one may begin with a focus on assets and what people have to work with in their lives, and then only progress to vulnerability later.*

In our case, this phase of the process focussed on understanding the context in which people play out their everyday choices and actions. It was impossible to begin talking about adaptation, let alone imagining alternative options, without understanding this context. In this initial phase of the process, facilitators found it useful to begin with personal experiences, before progressing to generalised discussions of challenges and vulnerabilities at community level.

The purposes of this phase of the process should be to:

- create a space in which people feel comfortable and relaxed so that they can share and learn from each other;
- work creatively with the group and introduce an element of fun in the proceedings;
- give participants a good sense of the purpose of the group, and the value of being involved;
- explore the participants' experiences of vulnerability in their communities;
- gain an understanding of the challenges that they face and the underlying causes of this; and
- begin an analysis of the vulnerabilities that people face by asking questions that probe the factors that contribute to vulnerability.

**Lessons to guide an exploration of the context in which people live and the challenges they face**
- Commit to listening to stories that people share, and to creating time and space for these stories;
- Develop trust and mutual respect between all those present;
- Assist participants to think about what they, as individuals and as a community, are doing and can do, to deal with challenges;
- Focus on capturing discussions, and distilling key lessons, for sharing with others later on;
- Commit to creating objects, such as posters, that are always present during interactions to remind members, and inform newcomers, of previous discussions;
- Commit to actively supporting the core group in sharing their work and new knowledge with the broader community;
- As part of sharing knowledge, encourage the group to think about what would work best in their community, and feel free to make suggestions too.
- Ensure funds are put aside and available for knowledge sharing.

In our case, the conversation about the local context was initiated using some exploratory statements requiring people to finish the following sentences:
• I like living in my community because….
• My community is a risky place to live because….

Participants, including facilitators, were given ten minutes to sit alone and think about their responses to these questions. Everyone then came back together and shared their responses. We dealt with responses one at a time, which led to affirmation and discussions wherein participants found that they agreed, disagreed or had not thought about the issues raised by others.

In all communities and groups of people, existing norms often govern interactions between individuals. The intention here was to provide the space for other 'ways of being' to be explored. This ultimately impacts the presence and participation of individuals.

## Weaving stories

Following the personal reflections around experiencing vulnerability, the group reflected more generally on what it meant to be vulnerable at community level. A useful tool to enable this conversation was to ask participants to come up with simple stories that illustrated what they considered to be important aspects of vulnerability in the community. Participants were encouraged to tell stories that were not about themselves (and preferably not true), but rather stories that told us something about the community. The intention behind this was to depersonalise potentially sensitive content whilst allowing a picture of the community to collectively be evoked by the group.

Participants were given time to develop their stories – typically an hour – and allowed to work in pairs if they so preferred. It is important to allow participants to tell their stories in ways with which they are comfortable, give each person an opportunity to tell his or her story and ensure that everyone listens to the stories.

**Lessons and some cautions about discussing vulnerabilities**

Stories about vulnerability can be painful for everyone involved. Asking participants to talk about challenges in their everyday lives should be approached with sensitivity. In many rural communities people may feel completely powerless in the face of enormous challenges, such as poverty, crime and HIV/Aids. Conversations about vulnerability should therefore always be framed by associated questions about capabilities, or what people are either able to do or already doing, to cope with vulnerability.

Facilitators then worked with the groups to identify common threads that had been woven into the stories. Capturing these threads was an important part of the process, and was done as a group exercise during the storytelling. These 'threads' were captured as words or phrases on a flip chart placed on the wall. Where issues recurred in multiple stories, facilitators highlighted these. From this process, the group was able to identify a number of issues – roughly six for each group – that had emerged as important aspects of vulnerability in their community.

Typical examples of these story threads included HIV/Aids, drug and alcohol abuse, drought, gender-based violence and rape, crime, poverty, a lack of parental care for children, and a lack of education. These were all difficult issues to discuss openly in a group setting. The facilitators and the approaches they adopted were critical in creating a space where these stories could emerge. Whilst the creation of a 'safe space' helped to provide the framework for this, it must be said that the stories became unexpectedly amplified – as if the process had gained a momentum of its own. We could only

work to adequately acknowledge what had transpired and sensitively pull participants back into the present moment and towards what we were trying to achieve in the session. In doing so, we tried to continue the conversation about how we hoped to work with these vulnerabilities in this project.

## Pose the question: what aspects of vulnerability can and can't we do something about?

Following the storytelling exercise, a very important conversation the facilitators initiated with group members was set about by posing the question: which of the issues identified in the stories are we able to tackle ourselves, without waiting for help from somebody else? Facilitators discussed each thread of vulnerability identified in the stories, and encouraged the group to think about some of the things that people were already doing to deal with these issues. For example, was there anything that could be done about drug and alcohol abuse? Answers included supporting activities for the youth. What could be done to deal with poverty? Answers included planting food gardens and collecting wood for use when there is no electricity. What could be done about HIV/Aids? People could use condoms. The facilitators did not prompt such answers, but rather encouraged participants to think about the questions carefully. If participants were unable to identify a way in which people could respond, the facilitators posed the question: are there not some people who are already trying to deal with this issue? What are they doing? These follow-up questions allowed participants to think about responses not as abstract possibilities, but as activities that were already taking place. This thinking process has the added benefit of validating existing actions, and making responses seem more possible to participants, as reflected in their comments in Box 5.

## Share stories widely

Once stories had been developed, and the social learning group was beginning to feel more confident discussing aspects of their vulnerability and the challenges facing the community, it was important to share this new understanding as widely as possible. The way in which this knowledge was shared took various forms, ranging from staging dramas that portrayed the developed stories, to people simply standing up at community meetings and reporting back the outcomes of the discussions. The most effective method was to use a wide range of media at a large community event where

diverse age groups were present, from young children to the elderly. Media included posters (hand drawn where possible), choirs, theatre, praise poetry, and participants simply relating what had been discussed. The communities had existing dance and choir groups, across a range of ages and both genders, and engaging these groups in the report back process ensured that a wide audience was reached. See box 6 for a description of some of the thinking that goes in to planning such an event. This event was combined with a soccer tournament, which proved to be an effective means of getting youth into the room to listen to the discussions. This approach also raised awareness about the existence of the social learning group and the work that they were doing, which made a difference later on when these groups started to become more active in the community.

These large community events involve much thought and organisation (see Box 8). Advertising, planning and co-ordination, is key. Our social learning group members and facilitators started by asking community leaders to identify an appropriate date. Schools were then approached to see if any drama or dance groups would like to be involved. The social learning group members used their own networks to identify adult drama and choir groups and invited them to contribute. Local soccer teams were then contacted and the possibility of a tournament was discussed. Once we knew who was interested in participating, a programme was carefully drafted, leading to all groups who wanted to give a performance being visited by a professional actor, as well as social learning group members who helped them think about what they wanted to say in relation to vulnerability. Groups were given freedom to tell their own stories of vulnerability, and were not tied to the existing social learning group's stories. On the day, the friends and relatives of the performers filled the hall, bringing in people of all ages. In the process, they also heard from relevant students who presented their research findings, and social learning group members who spoke about the 'threads' of vulnerability they had identified as important within the community. Making available the space for those who wished to talk about vulnerability contributed significantly to the large turn out on the day.

# BOX 6

**A facilitator's description of one aspect of a planning process for a large community meeting with social learning group members to share knowledge about vulnerability**

The group was encouraged to form splinter groups based on how long they had been part of the social learning group. Three groups were formed. One made out of people who had more or less been there since the beginning, one made out of people who had been part of day one and two on this workshop, and one made out of people who had just come for the second day.

Each group was encouraged to think through the activities that they considered would be appropriate to include in the big community meeting. These activities were explained as peripheral activities that could generate publicity for the event. These are the activities that the group collectively came up with: Traditional dance done by elders and youth; Gum boot dance; Majorettes; Soccer tournament; School choir; Drama involving local children

Each group was then encouraged to think through the *themes* that will be explored in the big meeting. The following emerged:
• Educating people about health
• Educating people about the history of the community
• To share our problems as a community and fight crime
• To talk about access to clinics- the long distances and how they are affecting people.
• To share views on the challenges we are facing in our households
• To talk about the difficulties households are facing with regard to parental care
• To talk about the importance of sharing hardships.
• To talk about people's active roles within the community
• To talk about caring for the sick
• To talk about caring for orphans.

# Changing the conversation toward understanding existing activities, aspirations and strengths in the community

Once a fairly solid understanding of the context in which people live has been developed for all participants (facilitators and community members alike), it is important to move the conversation more purposively toward the ways in which people are already responding to the challenges that they face. The purpose of this shift in conversation is to identify existing strengths in the community that can be further developed. This shift should focus attention on what is *valued* by community members, what is *possible* under current circumstances, and also on what they are already *doing* (phase 2 in Figure 2). This shift in conversation holds the potential to help participants think about new ideas, and brings hope into the conversation about overcoming vulnerability. Talking about capabilities, or what people value, what they are doing, and what they are able to do, reveals to participants that while they face huge challenges, they have the capacity to act and to move forward. This kind of hope is an under-valued element of the capacity of people to adapt to change.



**Lessons for Understanding Existing Capabilities**

- Recognise that people already respond to challenges that they face - supporting these activities is likely to be more effective than starting something new.
- Start from the personal experiences and actions of the individuals in the social learning group, and then move from there to explore broader community level responses to vulnerability.
- Recognise individual, group and community strengths as a foundation for discussions.
- Continuously reflect on how knowledge can be shared beyond the core social learning group.
- Support the group members in documenting what others are doing in the community, and in sharing this knowledge widely.

## My role in my community

An activity that sparked the conversation about existing activities and aspirations in the *Jongphambili Sinethemba* project was to ask each participant to carefully consider the following questions:

- What am I good at?
- What aspects of my character help me to do this?
- How do I help build my community every day?
- What is my style of leadership?

When introducing this exercise, it was important to emphasise that sometimes even very small actions (which may seem invisible to other people in the community), are significant. This exercise was about validating personal actions by the group members, and building their awareness of the roles that they fulfilled, and those that they could play in the community (See Box 7). Participants were given time to sit on their own to answer each question. Each participant, including facilitators, was then encouraged to share their responses with the group. The inclusion of facilitators in this discussion was important as it gave the community members insights into their characters, and helped to establish more equitable relationships in the social learning group and its facilitation, and also encouraged *camaraderie*, thus building a team with common challenges and strengths.

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### BOX 7

**A facilitator's view on the purpose and experience of this exercise**

We wanted to bring to the surface the strength of the group and the work that they do daily, and how this work is both an asset and the foundation on which we hoped to build this project.

It was interesting to see very shy members of the group speak about what they do well. When one watched the body language of the participants in this session there was a sense of humble expansion. The smallest assets were counted and their value acknowledged by the group as a whole. This was an interesting demonstration of capabilities in action. Often only certain assets are seen to be valuable in the public eye, or one style of leadership is ratified - but this exercise began to open up the spaces for alternative gifts or traits to be recognised. In many cases we could look at people in a different light with a greater awareness of how they operate daily.

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## What groups of people do in our community to help deal with challenges

Once individual actions have been identified and validated, it is important to think about individuals or groups of people in the broader community who are working to help others respond to the challenges that they face. The *Jongphambili Sinethemba* project followed the following process:

### Step 1. *Social learning group members undertake their own research*

In the *Jongphambili Sinethemba* project, we launched the conversation about capabilities (or existing activities and aspirations) in the broader community through a brain-storming exercise, in which group members listed all the community groups and individuals they could think of who were actively working to help others deal with the vulnerability challenges in their communities. Once

these groups/individuals had been identified, social learning group members selected those they would like to investigate further. Before social learning group members investigated these groups, some guidance and training was provided on how to conduct an interview, what questions to ask, and how to take a photograph that illustrates an activity. The whole group visited two or more activity leaders in the community and conducted 'practice' interviews. Thereafter, the group reflected on the experience, and what they found difficult or simple. Social learning group members were each given a notebook, pens and a disposable camera to document the activities.

Some guiding questions for documenting the activities of community groups, which we co-developed with our social learning groups, were:

• When and why was the project/activity started?
• How is the activity supporting the community?
• What have been the successes of the group?
• What difficulties has the group faced?
• What does the group need to do their work better?

**Step 2.** *Share knowledge widely: An example of a community colloquium*

Following the interview assignment, facilitators of the *Jongphambili Sinethemba* project thought the social learning group would be enthusiastic to share their gathered information with local government, in the hope that existing community groups might receive support. Some participants, however, strongly felt that this would be a 'waste of time.' They preferred the idea of presenting their posters to get more community support. This left the facilitators with the feeling that they (the facilitators), rather than the community members, were expecting government to make things happen in the community, and proved to be a good reminder not to underestimate communities' self-reliance. It could also be an indication that community members had not received good responses from local government officials in the past, which may well be the case. Additional thought therefore had to be given to how to share this knowledge in ways that the participants considered appropriate or useful.

One strategy is to share knowledge in a similar fashion to the approach described in the previous phase, through large community meetings. Another approach would be to share lessons about community groups and the work that they do with local government, or with other communities, and to hear how they are responding to their challenges at the same time. There are many ways to do this, and it is important to discuss with social learning group members about how they think it can best be done, while also offering suggestions and ideas.

> **An example of a community colloquium agenda**
>
> **Activity 1:** Getting to know each other
> • Various ice-breaker games
> • Presentation of previously developed understanding of what it means to be vulnerable in each of the communities
> • Reflection on similarities and differences
> **Activity 2:** Hand written poster development
> **Activity 3:** Poster presentations by participants
> **Activity 4:** Reflection on lessons learned during the poster presentations.
> • What was common between the communities?
> • What was different between the communities?
> • How will these lessons be shared in each community?
> **Activity 5:** Converting the hand written posters into PowerPoint posters
> **Activity 6:** Certificate hand-over and closure

As a result of feedback from participants, facilitators focussed their attention on developing a community colloquium as an opportunity for two separate social learning groups to share their knowledge and experiences, as well as take part in planned knowledge-sharing activities within each community. Since we ran the social learning process in two different communities simultaneously, we decided to bring these two social learning groups together to share their understanding and experiences of vulnerability, as well as their individual research into community activities that aimed at coping with these vulnerabilities. The colloquium therefore focussed on existing activities, how these activities could be supported by community members or outside participants, and what each community could learn from one another. Another purpose was to give the group members a chance to learn new skills such as presenting their own research, and creating a poster using Microsoft PowerPoint. We called the event a *"Community colloquium on vulnerability and coping strategies."*

At the colloquium, the groups were firstly assisted in developing handwritten posters based on their interviews with community groups (as detailed in the previous section). They were then assisted in converting these into PowerPoint posters, following which they made a collective decision as to how these posters could best be put to work in their respective communities.

At the end of the colloquium, group members were in possession of an informative poster, they had new ideas to share with their communities that had emerged from listening to the other social learning group discuss their own responses to vulnerability, and they had a certificate to say that they had attended the colloquium (See Box 8). This represents an example of multiple layers of learning (and more concrete benefits such as the certificates) that can be achieved in one event if it is planned carefully (See Box 9 for participants views on what they learned). At the colloquium, each social learning group developed its own strategy to share new knowledge with their communities. These strategies are context specific and must be developed by the groups themselves, although it will probably be necessary for facilitators to provide support in both the organisation of the meetings, and in the knowledge sharing process at the meetings themselves.

**Lessons from the community colloquium**

- Do not underestimate communities' self-reliance. While people would like help from government, they tend to 'get on with it' in the absence of this assistance [this should, however, not be an excuse to stop working with government to be accountable and play their role];
- Work to bring new knowledge into the groups, for example by bringing different communities together to share experiences, or by bringing in outsiders who are knowledgeable about an issue, for example NGO's;
- Allow the social learning groups to decide how they would like to share their knowledge within their own community;
- There are multiple layers of learning that take place in a process like this. Examples are: learning about relationships between people, as well as more technical or practical learning, such as how to make a poster. All of these forms of learning are important and valued by participants;
- Tangible forms of recognition, such as a certificate, are really important to participants, thus it is worth it to take the time to offer this where possible.

## BOX 8

**A facilitator's reflection on offering certificates to all who attended the community colloquium**

During the handover of certificates, an image of each participant's poster was presented on the projector. This event was the cause of much joy on the part of the participants who, from informal discussions, had indicated that this certificate made the whole experience worthwhile. This is a somewhat different view from that of the facilitators who thought that the knowledge sharing experience was the most important aspect of the colloquium. Among other things, this highlights the need to offer individual benefits to people who volunteer their time for these kinds of activities.



## BOX 9

**Social learning group members' reflections on what they learned during the community colloquium**

"I learned some basic computer skills and that was very exciting."

"I learned some fundraising methods from the other community group."

"I gained confidence in public speaking, something that I was never good at."

"I liked how the workshop was run in that we participated in decision-making and we were not forced to do anything at any point. This helped us feel comfortable at all times."

"Meeting up with the other community members taught me that life is different for different people and in different places."

"I learned that there are different ways to make projects succeed and that similar projects can be run differently."

"I enjoyed working on a computer and I am keen to build on the basic skills that we were taught."

"For gardening projects to succeed, I learned that the proximity of the members to the actual garden is important in order to safeguard it and take better care of it."

"I liked the hospitality and how the facilitators were so patient with us."

"I learned about the livestock farming methods of the other community and how they take care of their livestock."
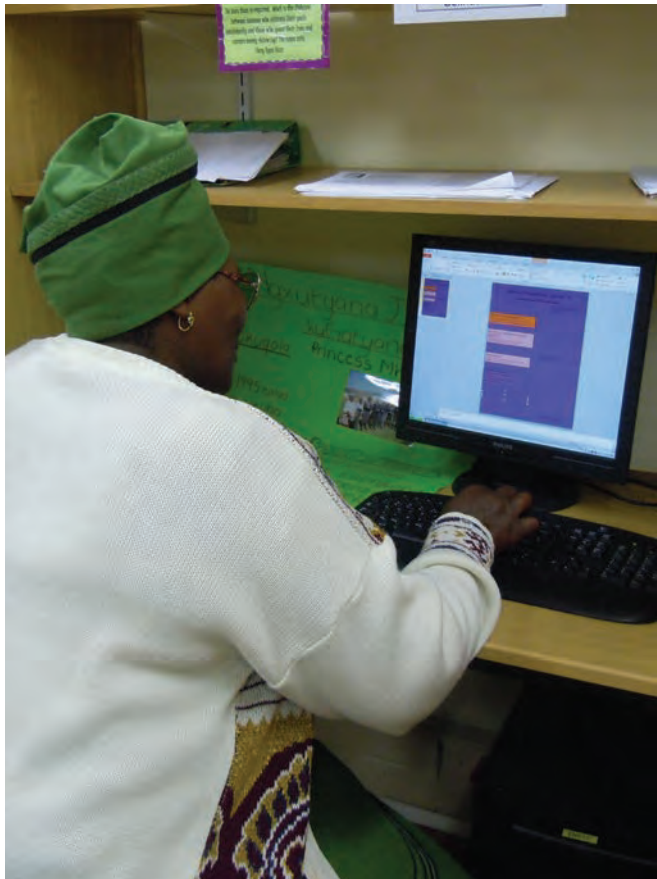
## Zenzele Garden Lesseyton

By SIZIWE LALI

*Yaqala nini?*

Yaqala ngo1989 injongoyeZenzele Garden sasifuna ukutya thina nentsapho zethu sithengisele abantu abangalimanga

*Yintoni impumelelo?*

Impumelelo kwakungekho ndlala sasihlutha yilegadi

*Zeziphi ingxaki elithe lajamelana nalo eligela?*

Kukubelwa ngabantu ebusuku ukutya kwethu namacingo bawaqhawule nokungavani kwethu

*Ibaxhasa njani abantu?*

Ibaxhasa ngokuba siyabathengisela nabo bakwazi ukutya

*Zintoni enizifunayo nileliqela?*

Sifuna ucingo lulungiswe amanzi sifakelwe itepu nezixhobo zokusebenza

*Ungaqhakamshelana no:*

Nozuko Ngqeme 0767372099

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## ETHEMBENI DAY CARE WILLOWVALE NAKAZANA

By Nobuntu Siyolo

*Waqala nini lombutho?*

Ngonyaka ka 2011

Kuba bayaphangela abazali babantwana ngoku kungabikho mntu wokugcina ababantwana kwabonakala kulungile ukuba makubekho ikreche Ababantwana bayi 25

*Lombutho ubaxhasa njani abantu?*

Ubaxha sa ngokubagcinela abantwana bekhuselekile kwaye nangokutya besempilweni

*Zintonieziphunyezwe ngulombutho?*

Kukusindisa abantwana kwiRape bahlale bekhuselekile lonke ixesha

*Zeziphi ingxaki othewajamelana nazo lombutho?*

Kukungabinakutya izinto zokudlala indawo yokufundela ababantwana

*Ungaqhakamshelana no:* N Ngadlela phone nomber Ngu 0739242202

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## SOCCER TEAM TOISEKRAAL

By Rosey Mraji

**AQALA NINI LAMAQELA, YAYINTONI INJONGO?**

Eleven attackers, iqale1995
Shining stars,iqale1998
Young chiefs,iqale1982
Mighty bombers,iqale2012

**LAMAQELA ABAXHASA NJANI ABAHLALI?**

Iyabaxhasa ngokuthi abantwana babo bahlale bexakekile bangachithi ixesha besetywaleni

**YAYINTO INJONGO UKUZE BAQALE LAMAQELA?**

Babesenzela kungabikho chuku ngoku bayila lamaqela ngokwelali zabo bangabiliqela elinye

**INGXAKI ABAJAMELANA NAZO**

Kukungabina kit,bafuna ukulungiselelwa amabala banqwenela neleague zibekhona ezilalini

Imifamekiso

**Shining Stars**

**Eleven Attackers**

1.MR P.Seti 0730429654
2.MRS.LALI O78907963
3.MR Mbenene 0735420791
4.MR Mishile 0730279814

# Building on community strengths and breaking down barriers to adaptation

## Building capacity in and beyond the social learning groups

As previously discussed, adaptation requires the development of new knowledge, skills and engagement with alternative options. It may also require expanding existing activities that people value (capabilities). The process has so far explored the context in which people experienced vulnerability (Phase 1 in Figure 3), and addressed those capabilities they were already engaged with (i.e. we have developed insight into *existing* activities as illustrated in Phase 2 of Figure 3). How then, could this form a 'platform' for further learning, and expanding social learning group members' agency, knowledge and aspirations in new directions that were valued by them? (i.e. the basis of a phase 3 in Figure 3). Social learning is also about making contributions to the broader social community, and as the representatives of the social learning group were mandated to do this, it was therefore important to work with them, in this last phase of the social learning research process, to assume their roles.
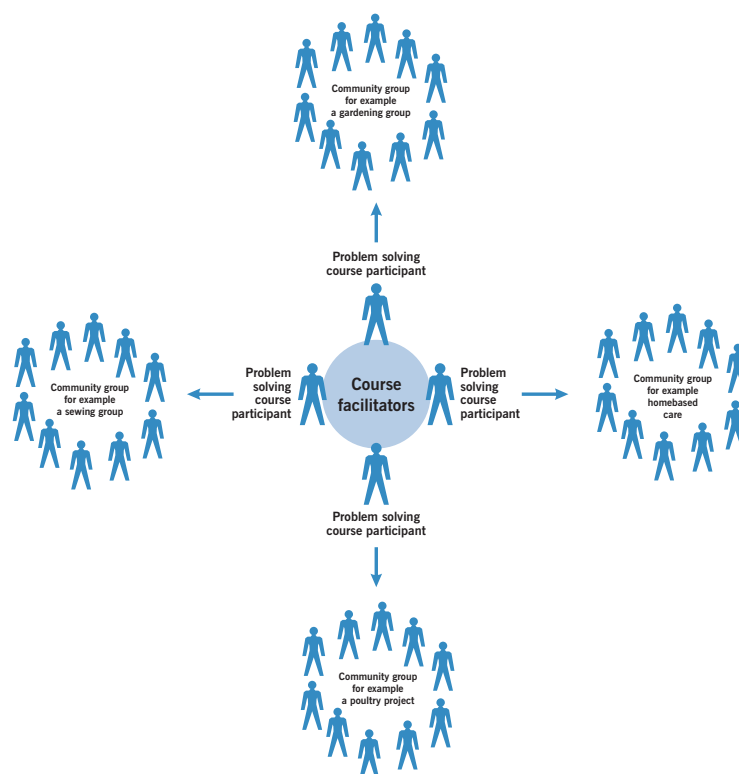
Given the group members' excitement and positive response to the poster production certificate, we considered offering them a formally certified training course (which is also one of the roles that a university can play as it is not a development organisation, but an educational organisation). After discussions with the group it was agreed that this would be a suitable 'next step' in the social learning process that would further benefit members via the recognition that they would receive from the university training course.

> **Lessons for short courses involving social learning groups**
>
> - Be responsive to different needs. Course participants will have different needs, and so will the groups that they seek to work with in the course. Be open to changing the course plan if necessary.
> - Recognise and work with barriers and constraints of individuals and groups - recognise what is and what is not possible.
> - Build the course and learning objectives around practical activities of direct value to the community groups involved.
> - Give formal recognition for course participants' effort, for example an accredited certificate of completion.

In this section we describe the course that we developed out of the previously identified needs of the participants, and show how it evolved through close discussions and reflections with the group. Many social learning group members had already demonstrated their capacity to undertake some quite rigorous and demanding training, and proved willing to participate in this phase of the project.

The *Problem Solving Course* (which is included in Part II of this handbook) was essentially developed to do two things: firstly to strengthen the capacity of community groups to pursue their various activities, and secondly to build the capacity of social learning group members to support such community groups. The idea was that with strengthened knowledge, skills, and alternatives that could shape new forms of agency and action, the community groups could become more pro-active and achieve more in their areas of operation. The course was designed for and with the members of the social learning groups in each area. In this role they were seen as *Problem Solving Course participants*, supporting social learning processes in their selected community groups (see Figure 4). Course participants selected the community groups they wished to work with. While a few course participants were actually members of these groups, the majority were not.



*Figure 4: Each problem solving course participant 'adopted' an existing community group that was already working on dealing with an aspect of vulnerability, and worked with this group in improve their activities*

Although an outline of the course was developed independently of the course participants, the intention and reality was that the course should be responsive to the real needs of the course participants and their groups. In the event, there were only minor adjustments made to the original outline, as the proposed activities seemed to meet the needs of the groups within certain limitations.

The main limitation was that the community groups inevitably stressed their need for material and financial support, something the project could not provide directly. However the intention was that the groups themselves, with increased self-confidence and better organisation and planning skills via the course participants, would be better positioned both to do more for themselves and also to access the support they needed.

There was a further limitation in terms of the structural context in which the groups operate, particularly in relation to their reliance on support from government agencies, many of which display a degree of dysfunction, and which the community members themselves had indicated were not easy to work with. While one aim of the course was to enhance the capacity of the community groups to work with government at all levels, the reality is that without a considerable improvement in the functionality and responsiveness of the government agencies there is relatively little chance of successful engagement, however capacitated the groups might be (See Box 10 for a facilitators own experience of such barriers).

# BOX 10

**A facilitators reflection on experiencing the barriers that community members face**

I had undertaken to work through a contact of mine who runs a HIV/AIDS counseling and home-based care group at a local clinic to see if I could find out about possible training for the groups in the villages where the Problem Solving Course was being run. This is what happened:

I called my friend who said his group had been given training by the Department of Health (DoH). He gave me the name and contact number of the person concerned in his local office. After several fruitless attempts to make contact, I eventually spoke with this person. I explained that I was looking for training for these groups in their different areas, that I wanted to know what the possibilities were, and if he had any contact details that might help. His response was, *'Who is going to pay for this? Where will the funding come from?'* he asked.
'No,' I said, 'we don't know about that, we just want to find out what the possibilities are.'
*'I don't think you understand me,'* he said. *'Where will the money come from to pay for the training?'*
*'Sorry, but at this stage we just need to find out about training possibilities…'*
And so it carried on for a while.
'I don't think I can help you but will talk to the programme manager and get back to you.' He asked for my contact details, but never came back to me.

Then I moved on to the DoH national website looking for contact details for the regional or district offices. Here I found only 'complaint lines' for each province, and one 'queries' line with an email address in Pretoria. I sent an email, not expecting much. However I received a reply that same day, suggesting we try the local clinics. This had already been done to no avail, so I asked for any further contacts that could help us. I received another quick response with the contact details for a person at the *Impilo Health Department* in Bisho. While talking with one of the social learning groups I emailed this person. I then gave his telephone number to the two social learning facilitators working with home-based care groups. At the time of writing I have had no response to that email, and have been told that neither group has been successful in making contact with this person, despite many attempts on their part.

When telling this story to both groups there was much nodding in agreement and recognition of the enormous difficulty in accessing the support from government to which they have a right. This is the single toughest barrier they all have to face, and it is highly unlikely that we can build sufficient capacity to overcome it. The structure, in the form of government and how this functions, currently suppresses much real and emergent agency within communities. This is a major challenge for us, and even more for community members.

A further barrier to community groups' development is in the very limited access to the information they need. In searching the Internet for information concerning registration as an NPO, I found several useful documents on the Department of Social Development (DSD) national website, including guidance for registration, frequently asked questions, model constitution, application forms and other documents. However, these were all in English, and often written in quite inaccessible 'legalese.' I sent a request to the DSD website asking if the documents were available in *isiXhosa*. I received a response saying *'No…this information has not been developed.'* I replied, pointing out that the information had in fact been developed and only required translation, but there was no further response from the department.

For course participants, the course represented not only an opportunity to improve their social facilitation skills, but also to achieve formal recognition of their efforts and their abilities. To this end the pilot course was registered with Rhodes University as an accredited short course at level 5 on the South African National Qualifications Framework (SANQF). This accreditation required that the course participants completed formal assignments and were assessed on how well they delivered these. All assignments were effectively tasks that they conducted with their community groups, designed to assist in strengthening the groups. In this way these assignments served the dual purpose of providing direct benefits to the groups, and providing opportunities to assess the course participants' achievements.



## The Shape of the Problem Solving Course
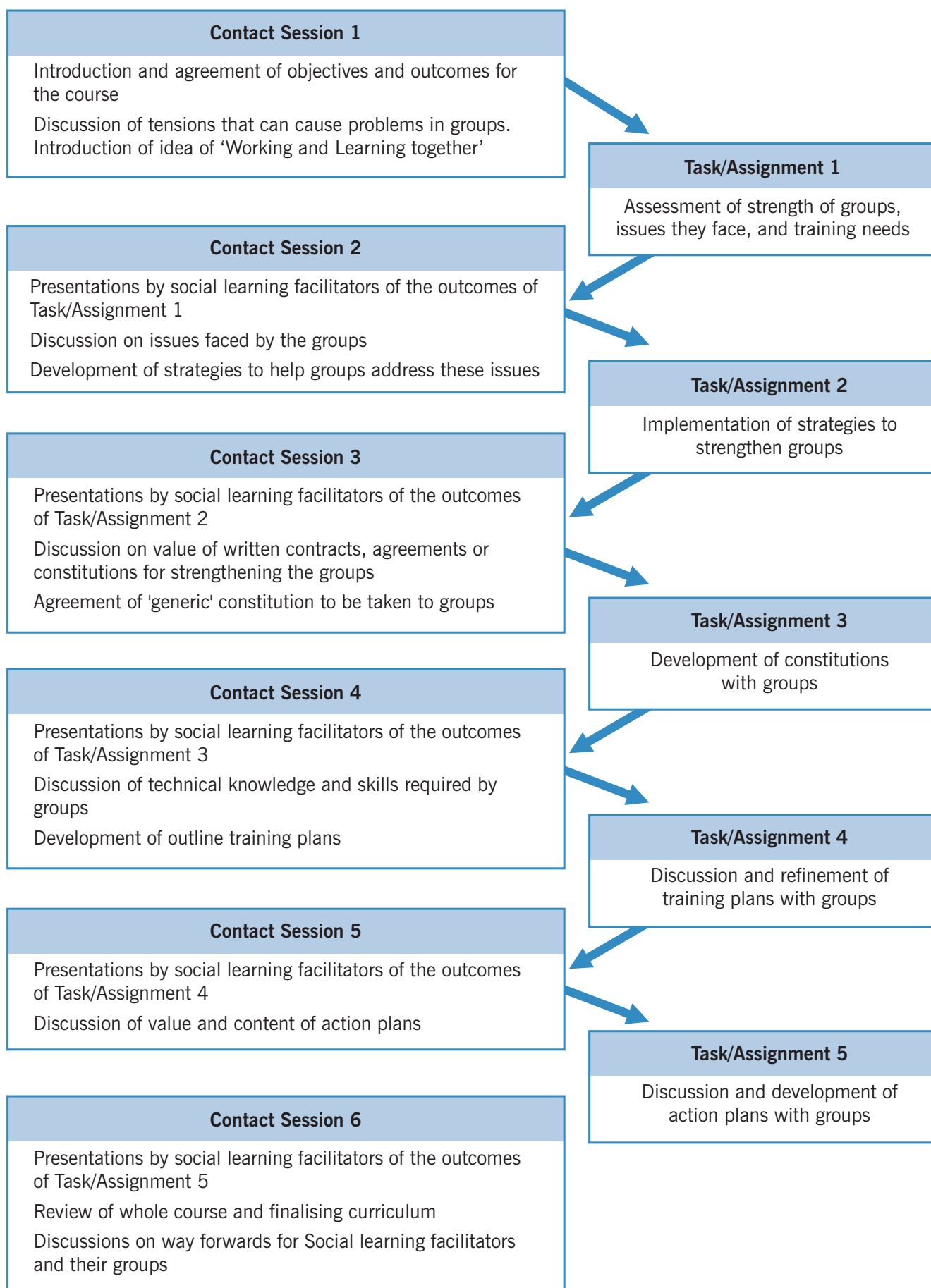
The course consisted of six two-day contact sessions, held at monthly intervals. Five tasks were assigned for the periods between the contact sessions. These are outlined in Figure 5, and full details are contained in Part II of this handbook.

**Lesson on reflexivity and review**

Throughout our entire process, including the course, all participants reflected on what they learned at each interaction. Over time, this can become somewhat monotonous and facilitators and community members may stop effectively engaging in the process. Such reflection is, nevertheless, essential to co-developing the process with all participants. It helps to vary the approach each time - *don't use the same methods of reflection at every interaction.*

The course participants were extremely keen on the accreditation, as they believed that a certificate from Rhodes University would improve their 'marketability,' their employability, and also confirm their status within their communities.

## Contact Session 1

Introduction and agreement of objectives and outcomes for the course

Discussion of tensions that can cause problems in groups. Introduction of idea of 'Working and Learning together'

## Task/Assignment 1

Assessment of strength of groups, issues they face, and training needs

## Contact Session 2

Presentations by social learning facilitators of the outcomes of Task/Assignment 1

Discussion on issues faced by the groups

Development of strategies to help groups address these issues

## Task/Assignment 2

Implementation of strategies to strengthen groups

## Contact Session 3

Presentations by social learning facilitators of the outcomes of Task/Assignment 2

Discussion on value of written contracts, agreements or constitutions for strengthening the groups

Agreement of 'generic' constitution to be taken to groups

## Task/Assignment 3

Development of constitutions with groups

## Contact Session 4

Presentations by social learning facilitators of the outcomes of Task/Assignment 3

Discussion of technical knowledge and skills required by groups

Development of outline training plans

## Task/Assignment 4

Discussion and refinement of training plans with groups

## Contact Session 5

Presentations by social learning facilitators of the outcomes of Task/Assignment 4

Discussion of value and content of action plans

## Task/Assignment 5

Discussion and development of action plans with groups

## Contact Session 6

Presentations by social learning facilitators of the outcomes of Task/Assignment 5

Review of whole course and finalising curriculum

Discussions on way forwards for Social learning facilitators and their groups

*Figure 5: Structure of the Problem Solving Course*

## Content and Support Materials

Accessible support materials are essential for a course of this nature. In our case, as the course evolved it became apparent that while the ideas were of real value, it was necessary to provide clear guidance and examples of what was required of participants and to provide these in their first language, in this case *isiXhosa.* Part II of this handbook contains the details of our Problem Solving Course, in both English and *isiXhosa*, including content and support materials that our social learning groups found useful. While the content of each contact session varied to some extent between the two groups, depending on the issues that were discussed, there was considerable generic content used to frame the discussions, and is contained in Part II.

he is the one who pushed for her to be where she is (*her clerk's position*). S refused and told him what he did was wrong and he is not going to get away with it.

The Chairperson realised that S was forging ahead with her intentions to expose him and he retaliated (*arguing that S does not have matric and the post wanted someone with Matric*) and was able to kick S out of her job. S was not employed for a while but the contract manager called her every month-end to assist with salary payments without the Chairperson's knowledge. S has now been fully re-employed in her post by the contract manager.

S says the social learning group workshops built her self-confidence and her ability to think independently, as well as sharpened her mind. She is not sorry for what she did even though she lost her job, but rather feels good about how she handled the situation.

*This story shows the powerful ethical challenges faced by people within their communities, particularly if they try to improve themselves. It also shows clearly S's own great strength and ethical values, and, by her own account, the impact of the project on how she thinks and behaves.*

## Course review

While reflections should occur at the end of every interaction, an overall review of such a course is essential. In our case, this review was conducted in the final sessions as an open discussion around a series of questions (some responses are highlighted in Box 10). We worked through the questions in order (*isiXhosa* copies of the questions were provided for all the course participants), with each course participant taking it in turns to lead on the responses to each question, thus ensuring input from everyone. There were several reasons for adopting this approach:

- there were quite a number of questions; more than it could be reasonably expected of people to answer in writing;
- although the phrasing of the questions was intended to limit any misunderstanding or misinterpretation the open forum approach provided opportunity to clarify any aspects of which the course participants were unsure;
- the discussions provided opportunities to ask subsidiary questions arising out of the responses, and probe deeper into any issues of interest or concern; and
- this approach in a sense 'closed the circle' of the course in a real social learning situation, with course participants and social learning facilitators sharing ideas and learning together.

There were some potential weaknesses with the approach however:

- We found a strong cultural constraint on criticism of development workers or other external mediators, especially in public.
- There is also considerable reluctance to disagree publicly with one's peers in such contexts, leading to a tendency to agree with the first opinions expressed on any issues. This was the case with both groups, with everyone agreeing with the first respondents on almost every question, to the extent that many responses were recorded several times.
- In some situations course participants might be asked to lead on questions with which they might not feel comfortable responding to in public.

Despite these possible challenges, the facilitators did not sense that the course participants were holding back on what they wished to say, rather that they expressed themselves freely. The responses were almost universally positive, as seen in Box 11.

## BOX 11

### Course participants' reflections on the Problem Solving Course

- "The 6-month course was the right length – it covered everything needed and the groups were just getting a bit fatigued."
- "The groups appreciated the value of what the social learning facilitators took to them, but still probably expected more material support."
- "2-day workshop sessions were long enough – it would have been very difficult to find more time."
- "The 4 weeks for the assignments was just enough – the one time with just 3 weeks was too short."
- "Being employed was a major challenge in attending the course – doing it in the evenings would also be a challenge because of family duties."
- "The course was very helpful in supporting the groups, provided the right tools. One group was difficult as it had already done almost everything, but they liked the action plan."
- "Should produce a 'course pack' with all the assignment guidance in *isiXhosa* - can then use it to work with other groups."
- "Assignments were the best part of the course, also group discussions, and visits to the groups – tasks were very useful for the groups too."
- "Course has improved public speaking – even in church."
- "Course brings recognition within the community."
- "No problem with translation between English and *isiXhosa* – in fact it was useful for language skills."
- "We felt we were listened to and responded to."
- "The course was not easy, but quite challenging – no one wanted to change this though."
- "At the beginning the certificate was the most important, later the work with the groups became just as important."

## Share stories widely: an example of the use of Theatre for Development

The Jongaphambili Sinethemba project used drama at a number of key points during the social learning process. The project was initially introduced at community meetings with a short drama focussing on 'good' and 'bad' research practices, which opened up discussions about the process and our intentions to conduct the project in a mutually beneficial way. Later, drama was again used at the first community imbizo, in which local community dance and drama groups shared stories about vulnerability.

Towards the end of the project we used drama in a more rigorous way, drawing heavily on the 'Theatre for

**What is Theatre for Development?**
"Theatre for Development has come to be widely accepted in Africa and other parts of the developing world as a theatre of the ordinary people used to address their own problems, in their own terms, from their own perspectives and from within their own art forms...The people are the protagonists, generating the themes and infusing the drama with conflicts from their daily lives." Ogah S. Abah, 2002

Development' approach where space is created for local communities to address their own problems, in their own way, through a process of sharing their stories and experiences. In the Jongaphambili Sinethemba project, four local community performers and two professional actors staged a drama production which presented the findings, challenges, tensions and opportunities that had emerged through the social learning process. An audition process  was led by the Theatre Director.  The four community performers were selected for their acting talents, as well as their ability to engage with the subject matter. Auditions were advertised in churches, schools and by word of mouth. During an intensive two week workshopping process the community performers worked with the two professional actors to explore the meaning of the key project findings, which had been compiled by the project team together with the drama specialists. There was therefore a strong mentorship component built into the drama development process. The overall theme explored by the drama team related to change, and how rural communities can adapt in a context of climate change and HIV. Dramatic scenes were structured around past, present and possible future scenarios to effectively explore this theme.



BOX 12

**Audience  reactions to the drama**

- "They looked as if they had taken the information from a book but it is actually our lives… The problems in the drama are relevant to us and we try to address the issues but I believe we get overwhelmed."
- "In the beginning, as a community, we did not really understand this topic but with the play and the information afterwards we can now see what this all means even if we do not have much education."
- "In the play I learned that we need to take our education seriously. In the play I saw that the father does not want his child to go to school and that parents need to take care of their children."
- "What I learned here is that we need to come together, as men of this place, and give each other some advice to get through the problems. I believe what I got from this occasion is positive things towards the future."

The drama production was then performed at large community meetings where it was well-received by local community members, and stimulated thinking and debate around a range of issues (see Box 12). We found the process useful for several reasons: It created a learning opportunity for community performers; the workshopping process drew on the personal experiences of the performers and these were included in the narrative to ensure dialogue; it raised serious and sensitive issues in ways that audience members could relate and respond to, in contrast to when 'experts' present such research findings; while the characters portrayed were ficticious, they spoke of real life dilemmas, and as such the process helped to deepen the audience and project team's understanding of vulnerabilities and capabilities.



Drama is not a 'quick fix' to the challeges of sharing knowledge with local communities. To be meaningful, drama requires hard work and professionalism. If not planned carefully, drama can simply become another mechanism for disseminating knowledge in a one-way flow from 'outsiders' to communities. Like any other community engagement process, it is important to be clear about what you are trying to achieve with the use of drama. The *Jongaphambili Sinethema* project team learned that drama can be particularly valuable when understood as a 'theatre of exploration,' and not a 'theatre of explanation.' Indeed, drama need not only be about stimulating dialogue and sharing messages at the end of a project, but can be employed much earlier in the engagement process.

For further details and to obtain a DVD of the show and process please contact the project team. A synopsis of the play is also available for a better understanding of the issues it explored.

# Chapter 6

# Some concluding thoughts

This handbook presents key lessons from the adaptive social learning process that we supported over the period January 2010 to August 2013, and provides insights and lessons from the perspectives of various participants, including community members, facilitators and project managers. Integrating these perspectives into a coherent story that may be useful to other practitioners and action researchers has perhaps been the defining challenge for the research group.

In creating this handbook, we confronted the question of whether we had co-developed a once-off process with our participating communities, or whether sharing our experiences would prove useful to others who wish to run similar processes in different contexts. However, as we have said, this handbook does not supply a recipe with a guaranteed outcome. Like the evolutionary nature of the process, outcomes depend on the people involved – both facilitators and community participants – and will play out differently in different contexts.

In this section we reflect on some of the key issues raised in this handbook. We begin with a reflection on the challenges of adopting a reflexive or adaptive approach, and then consider what it means to facilitate such a process. We conclude with some reflections on the usefulness of a social learning approach in general.

## Adopting a reflexive approach

Our social learning process was premised on the idea of 'reflexivity,' meaning all aspects of the process and its activities were subjected to continuous reflection, review and adaptation. Social learning groups provided their reflections on each contact session and every tasked assignment, while facilitators reflected on each phase of the process. These reflections helped to inform the adaptation and refinement of the process.

During the development of the Problem Solving Course, for example, we recognised (through reflection) the need to supply course participants with *written* tasks, in their first language (*isiXhosa*). Furthermore, it became clear that we needed to assess the relationships between the course participants and their groups, and in turn evaluate the groups' perceptions of the course participants and how the course contributed to their work.

Other adaptations and refinements that emerged were subtle but significant, such as realising the risk of trying to do too much during the short contact sessions, and acknowledging that social learning group members had limited stamina for the intensive discussions involved in the learning process. Furthermore, we realised that theoretical or hypothetical discussions held little appeal or value for the social learning group members. By focussing on the activities in which the social learning groups were involved and limiting discussions around feedback and upcoming tasks, these realisations shaped the content of the sessions.

The purposeful creation of time and space for reflection is cornerstone to successfully supporting an adaptive process such as the one presented here. In our experience, this reflection time must be safeguarded to avoid being traded-off in favour of 'content' discussions. For example, it can prove difficult to cut short an exciting discussion about community activities in order to honour an hour of time wherein the group can reflect on the day's activities. Furthermore, it is important to vary the ways in which such reflection takes place. Using the same questions to enable reflection can become quite 'mechanical' and ineffective, as participants 'just want to get through it.' For your part as a facilitator, try to find creative ways to ensure that participants value the time and space dedicated to reflection.

## Being a facilitator in a social learning process

Facilitating a social learning process requires a specific set of skills. Facilitators must have the ability to create an environment that encourages participants to express themselves and expand their aspirations in a learning context, and further enable them to build their confidence and ability to engage with others. While this is self-evident, facilitators must give careful thought and planning to minimising the natural barriers that exist between people of different ages, genders, cultures, educational backgrounds and social standings. Where a facilitator is from a recognisably different background, it can take some time to develop the necessary trust. Language barriers reinforce this challenge, and translators become key players in the process. Importantly, when creating an arena for discussion based on principles of equity and mutual respect, facilitators must recognise and acknowledge that they are learning as much from the process and group as the participants are learning from them (i.e. the co-learning process must be clarified).

Facilitators must further strive to be truly responsive to what community participants bring to the discussions, while at the same time provide clear guidance throughout the process and unlock new knowledge and skills in a space where new ideas and adaptation practices can emerge. This requires the

ability to 1) question without critique, and 2) present proposals that are open to genuine negotiation.

The ability to question without critique is foregrounded during feedback sessions. During the Community Colloquium and the Problem Solving Course, community participants reported on the challenges and outcomes of their agreed tasks. In this instance, the facilitator's role was to carefully listen to the report and extract key points of interest and concern, whether specifically relevant to the current discussion or in general. The group, together with the facilitator, then offered their feedback and advice to the reporter. Some of the richest discussions developed around these interactions. Community participants too, found these sessions greatly beneficial. They commented in their reflections that these interactions afforded them with new skills, such as public speaking and the appropriate responses to questions and comments. Social learning facilitators universally viewed this experience as one of the most empowering throughout the process, particularly as it unfolded during the Problem Solving Course.

The ability to present negotiable proposals is particularly relevant when introducing new tasks, which although pre-determined to some extent (in the case of the Problem Solving Course), should be open to discussion and adaptation (as highlighted in the Community Colloquium). It is critical that tasks are appropriate and realistic. In our experience, the complexity of some tasks was reduced through negotiation until the community participants pronounced them 'doable.' Focus discussions around assignments on the reasons behind the tasks, as well as their importance and probable value to the community groups. These discussions offer considerable learning potential for both course participants and social learning facilitators.

In order for facilitation to be effective, it must also be supported by considerable knowledge and experience of the development field, the potential support available to communities, and the communication channels that should be available to them. It is out of this knowledge and experience that appropriate advice can be given, and the lack of such will pose considerable challenges in terms of providing adequate learning and support. In the absence of such knowledge, the social learning process can become a circular process where only local knowledge is worked with, and new ideas from outside are never shared. This is not the purpose of a social learning process - new knowledge, from inside and outside the community, must be valued, shared and interrogated. In projects oriented to adaptation, good knowledge of scenarios and possible adaptation options and practices is necessary. Facilitators therefore need to have both very specific facilitation skills, and a range of technical understandings appropriate to the context.
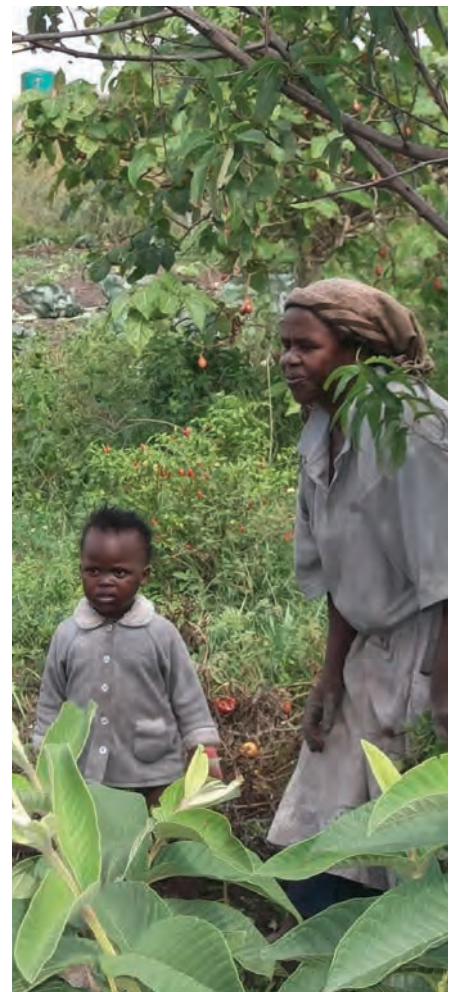
Language is also a critical aspect of facilitation. The lead facilitators in our process were not fluent in *isiXhosa*, and therefore every discussion was translated. We were fortunate that in our case the facilitator tasked with this was very capable and the translations in many cases added to the value of the discussion rather than detracted from it. Ideally facilitators should be fluent in the first language of the participants. This would not only save considerable time required for discussions, but also enable a more fluid interchange of ideas. However, as seen by the responses to the Problem Solving Course in Box 11, several course participants felt that having two languages was of additional benefit to them as they they could improve their own language skills.

## The usefulness of a social learning approach to support adaptation

Adaptation to climate change and other vulnerabilities and multiple stressors is a social process. It requires technological support and intervention, but without appropriate investment in the social processes needed to facilitate adaptation, it is likely to remain reactive, possibly even exacerbating existing stressors and vulnerabilities.

This handbook does not provide specific answers to adaptation, as it doesn't focus on specific adaptation practices, such as planting more diverse crops, or introducing rainwater-harvesting systems at local community level. However, it does focus in some depth on strengthening community participation, building and expanding existing capabilities – those things that people value being and doing – revealed by peoples' actions and involvement in social activities that lean towards responding to vulnerability, challenges and risk. Although the handbook shows that such social learning processes take time, and that they can be facilitated, such facilitation processes need to be carefully constituted and sensitively implemented. They also involve development of knowledge, skills and new alternatives, and participation in these at community level. The social learning process described in this handbook has facilitated a process of strengthening the capacities of some community members to, in turn, support capacity development of other community members, enhancing learning abilities and possibilities for change.

The social learning process we describe can of course be further extended, to engage in more depth with: 1) actual adaptation practices as determined to be appropriate to the community contexts concerned, and 2) the more difficult social change relationships, such as engagement with local government systems to address those structural barriers that persist and that continue to constrain the agency of people in rural communities. These latter social learning processes are important to continue to pursue if real adaptive change is to be realised in the longer term. As shown by this handbook however, it is equally important to lay the foundation for these latter social learning processes to emerge. Facilitating confidence and increased competence and capacity for strong forms of participation is necessary to support the possibly more difficult and longer-term steps in moving towards adaptive change at community level.

## Additional reading and resources

*Read more about social learning:*

Lotz-Sisitka, H (Ed). 2012. *(Re) Views on Social Learning Literature: A monograph for social learning researchers in natural resources management and environmental education.* Grahamstown: Environmental Learning Research Centre, Rhodes University / EEASA / SADC REEP. Available at: http://www.ru.ac.za/static/departments/environsci/documents/Research%20forum/91103%20 Reviews%20on%20Social%20Learning%20Literature.pdf

Reed, M. S., A. C. Evely, G. Cundill, I. Fazey, J. Glass, A. Laing, J. Newig, B. Parrish, C. Prell, C. Raymond, and L. C. Stringer. 2010. What is social learning? Ecology and Society 15(4): r1. Available at: http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol15/iss4/resp1/

Wals, A., van der Hoeven, N. and Blanken, H. 2009. The acoustics of social learning: Designing learning processes that contribute to a more sustainable world. Wageningen Academic Publishers. Available at: http://lerenvoorduurzameontwikkeling.nl/sites/default/files/downloads/acoustics-digital_def_tcm24-290164_0.pdf

*Read more about vulnerability, adaptation and climate change:*

Santiago, O. 2001. Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change: Concepts, Issues, Assessment Methods. Climate Change Knowledge Network. Available at: http://www.iisd.org/cckn/pdf/va_ foundation_final.pdf

What is adaptation to climate change? Care International Climate Change Brief. 2010. Available at: http://www.careclimatechange.org/files/adaptation/CARE_What_Is_Adaptation_Brief_2010.pdf

*Read more about Theatre for Development*

Abah, O. (2002) Creativity, participation and change in Theatre for Development practice. In Frances Harding (ED) The performing arts in Africa: A reader. London, Routledge

Ahmed, J. (2003) When theatre practitioners attempt changing an ever-changing world: a response to Tim Prentki's "Save the children? – Change the world." Research in Drama Education, 8 (1)

Prentki, T. (2003) Save the children? – Change the world. Research in Drama Education, 8 (1)

*Read more about capabilities*

Sen, A. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sen, A. 2005. Human Rights and Capabilities. *Journal of Human Development* 6 (2): 151-166.

*Other useful handbooks and facilitation tools*

Climate vulnerability and capacity analysis handbook. Care International, available at: http://www. careclimatechange.org/files/adaptation/CARE_CVCAHandbook.pdf

Community based adaptation toolkit. July 2010. Care International. Available at: http://www. managingforimpact.org/sites/default/files/resource/care_cba_toolkit_0.pdf

Experiential learning for adaptation: facilitation cards for adventurous practitioners. Koelle, B. et al. Indigo development & change, Cape Town, 2012, available at: http://start.org/download/2013/ facilitation-cards.pdf

Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation: A Practitioner's Handbook. Care International in Vietnam, available at: http://www.careclimatechange.org/files/adaptation/CARE_VN_Mainstreaming_ Handbook.pdf

# PART II

## Problem Solving Course Pack

Developed by Lawrence Sisitka

## Introduction to the Problem Solving Course Pack

*Source: Jongaphambili Sinethemba Project, Department of Environmental Science, Rhodes University*

This course pack includes the necessary guidance and tools required to run the Problem Solving Course as it was executed in the *Jongphambili Sinethemba Project.* The course is available in English and *isiXhosa*, but can be translated into any language as required. However, many of the documents sourced from government and other websites are only available in English, and have not been translated.

### Important considerations:

1. Before attempting to implement this course, carefully read Social Learning for Adaptation: A Descriptive Handbook For Practitioners and Action Researchers.
2. For the course to be effective, it is critical that a strong relationship of trust and mutual respect exists between you and the course participants. It is also important that the trainee course participants have developed sufficient confidence to tackle the challenges of the course assignments. It is therefore advised that you invest sufficient time with course participants to develop relationships and build their confidence in this regard. This could be through activities described in the Handbook in the early stages of the Jongaphambili Sinethemba project.
3. The course is intensive and requires close engagement between you and the course participants, therefore the suggested number of course participants should not exceed 8 in any one group.
4. The most critical aspects of the course include planning the various activities and facilitating discussions during the feedback sessions. It is during these feedback sessions where most learning takes place for all involved, and is therefore important that you listen closely to the course participants and respond accordingly to any questions or challenges that may arise.
5. The course, as described here, runs over a period of 6 months, with one 2-day workshop per month and all assignments carried out between contact sessions. In the *Jongaphambili Sinethemba* project, this model worked well in terms of the time restraints on course participants versus the available time between activities. It was clear to us that most participants couldn't handle more than 3 - 4 hours of intensive work in one sitting. We therefore structured the workshops to run until lunchtime and used the afternoons to visit the course participants' selected community groups.
6. The Problem Solving Course in the *Jongaphambili Sinethemba project* was accredited by Rhodes University, with assignment assessments conducted as per the university's policies. Rhodes awarded a Certificate of Achievement to all course participants who successfully completed the course. While certification by a university or college may not be possible in many cases, it is highly recommended that your organisation provide its own certificate to recognise the achievements of the course participants.
7. This course pack contains the necessary information required to run the course as it was implemented in the *Jongaphambili Sinethemba* project; however, there is room to adapt the course according to the contextual needs of any situation.
8. Detailed records are needed of all discussions, especially the agreed outcomes of different activities

### What this Course Pack contains:

In addition to this Introduction, the pack includes:
- A generic framework for the Problem Solving Course, providing details of the activities in each workshop
- A model of the course structure showing how the workshops and assignments link together in the course process

- Detailed guidance on each of the 5 assignments that were carried out in the *Jongaphambili Sinethemba* project course
- A Pamphlet: Facilitating Community Learning and Good Practices 10 – 'Working and Learning Together' – this is the main supporting material for Workshops 1 and 2, and may also be useful in Workshop 6
- Documents concerned with developing a group constitution, and which make up the support materials for Assignment 3:
  - Guidelines for writing a Co-operative Constitution
  - Specimen Constitution for Community Groups (developed especially for the course participants in the *Jongaphambili Sinethemba* project course)
  - Blank Constitution for Community Groups (the course participants take this and the specimen constitution to their groups to help with developing their own constitution)
  - A Model Constitution developed by the Department of Social Development; Directorate NonProfit Organisations (NPO), for groups wishing to become NPOs
- Documents concerned with becoming an NPO (supporting documents for any groups thinking of becoming NPOs, and relevant to groups with non-profit making activities, such as home-based care, sport, church, and burial societies):
  - Application Form for NPOs
  - NPO Information
  - NPO Frequently Asked Questions
  - NPO Contacts (in the Eastern Cape where the *Jongaphambili Sinethemba* course was run. You can make your own list for your area)
- A document on How to Register a Co-operative (for those groups who are involved in profit-making activities, such as selling vegetables, crafts, clothes, livestock)
- A Training Plan format, to support Assignment 4
- An Action Plan Template, to support Assignment 5
- Reflection questions that can be used at the end of the first 5 workshops
- Review questions to help with a review of the whole course, at the end of Workshop 6.

You can of course make as many copies of any of these support materials, as you need!

Good Luck!

# Core course materials

## Framework & Model for 'Problem Solving Course' for members of Social Learning Groups (Course Participants)

*Source: Jongaphambili Sinethemba Project, Department of Environmental Science, Rhodes University*

### Workshop 1
- Introduce yourself and your ideas for the programme. Develop the curriculum together with course participants. Explain that the course aims to equip course participants with the skills to support community groups in both social, and where possible, technical aspects of their activities. Explain that the course will build on and further develop the work they have already done in the programme
- Recap the project's key outcomes to date in terms of community group activities, their challenges, etc. Query each course participant on where they want to direct their focus in this phase – particularly on which community groups they have identified
- Discuss the objectives of the Problem Solving Course, and agree on the course participants' specific outcomes (these will help shape the course and its curriculum)
- Explore the group's internal challenges and those related to working together (with reference to the Working and Learning Together pamphlet). Facilitate role-playing exercises around some of the issues to address the question: *How can we work better together?*
- Assess the group's strengths and weaknesses: *how well do they work together and what are the challenges they face?* Identify questions and offer observations to help them with their assignment (these will be built into the course)
- **Assignment 1** for course participants, to be completed before Workshop 2: Conduct assessment of identified community groups (based on the questions and observations established in the previous session). Identify groups' internal issues that may undermine their activities. Identify the groups' key technical knowledge and skills requirements in order to implement and develop these activities. Record all activity outcomes for presentation and assessment at the next workshop
- **Course participant reflections**

### Workshop 2
- Course participants present **Assignment 1** – their assessments of their selected community groups – and receive feedback. *What have they learned in terms of internal issues within their groups, and what key technical knowledge and skills do their groups require?*
- As a group, identify and explore the common internal issues experienced by most community groups, and consider how the course participants can support their groups in addressing these. Build on the ideas in the attached pamphlet, as well as previous discussions around *'how we can work better together' to ask the question: what opportunities can come out of some of these issues?*
- Individually support each course participant in developing strategies to address the internal issues within their groups. Each course participant presents their strategy to the group for feedback and finalisation
- Discuss the groups' key technical knowledge and skills requirements. Question how the groups could gain these, and identify the knowledge and skills that the course participants can help them to develop. Where course participants can't help, question who else may be able to support the development of the required knowledge and skills
- **Assignment 2** for course participants, to be completed before Workshop 3: Implement support strategies to address groups' internal issues. Record all activity outcomes for presentation and assessment at the next workshop
- **Course participant reflections**

**Workshop 3**
- Course participants present **Assignment 2** – their implementation of support strategies – and receive feedback. Discuss their challenges and achievements. Question what worked best – *what strategies had the best responses from groups?* Assess what didn't work – *what strategies weren't well received by groups?* Identify any new opportunities that have emerged from the process
- Refine strategies in response to the assignment. *Which approaches can be recommended to others and included in the course?*
- Discuss the possibility of informal or semi-formal written Constitutions (agreements, understandings, or codes of conduct) between group members. Question if these might help people to better understand their roles and responsibilities, and whether these might help to ensure that people fulfil their responsibilities. Discuss the benefits of adopting such a Constitution
- Discuss in detail a generic Constitution that could be used as a basis for groups involved in different activities
- **Assignment 3** for course participants, to be completed before Workshop 4: Introduce the generic Constitution to groups and discuss how this may help them. Work with groups to adapt the Constitution (if necessary) to apply to their own needs. Record all activity outcomes for presentation and assessment at the next workshop
- **Course participant reflections**
- **Visits to groups**

**Workshop 4**
- Course participants present **Assignment 3** – introducing a Constitution – and receive feedback. Question how their groups responded to the idea of a Constitution. Identify the progress made in developing or adapting a Constitution
- Agree to changes in the generic Constitution to be used as a basis for future reference in the course (and beyond the course)
- Return to the groups' key technical knowledge and skills requirements (as identified in Workshop 2). Individually support each course participant in developing a strategy to support the knowledge and skills requirements in their groups, including those areas they can support themselves, and identifying where external support is needed. Support each course participant to identify technical knowledge and skills they would like to develop themselves in order to assist their groups, and what materials they may need to support their training. Each course participant presents their strategy to the group for feedback and finalisation
- **Assignment 4** for course participants, to be completed before Workshop 5: Discuss knowledge and skills development strategies with groups, and agree on the priorities and details. Plan for any knowledge and skills training the course participants can undertake themselves (set dates), and identify contacts for external skills training. Record all activity outcomes for presentation and assessment at the next workshop
- **Course participant reflections**
- **Visits to groups**

**Workshop 5**
- Course participants present **Assignment 4** – knowledge and skills strategies for groups – and receive feedback. Discuss any changes made to their strategies. Course participants present their plans/requirements for their own knowledge and skills training
- Discuss the process of enlisting external support for knowledge and skills training: *how do we bring others in to support the groups?* Identify the main training organisations/government departments who could provide the required knowledge and skills training to groups, and discuss the appropriate way to approach these organisations
- Support the course participants to individually develop plans for enlisting external organisations to provide knowledge and skills training for their groups. Course participants present their plans for

discussion. Identify if and where training for different groups can be combined. Adapt the training plans to include any possible combinations

- **Assignment 5** for course participants, to be completed before Workshop 6: Introduce training plans to community groups. Implement the training they are able to provide themselves. Make contact with external trainers/organisations, and set dates for training. Conduct a follow-up assessment of their groups based on the questions and observations from Workshop 1: *how well are groups working together?* Record all activity outcomes for presentation and assessment at the next workshop.
- **Course participant reflections**
- **Visits to groups**

**Workshop 6**
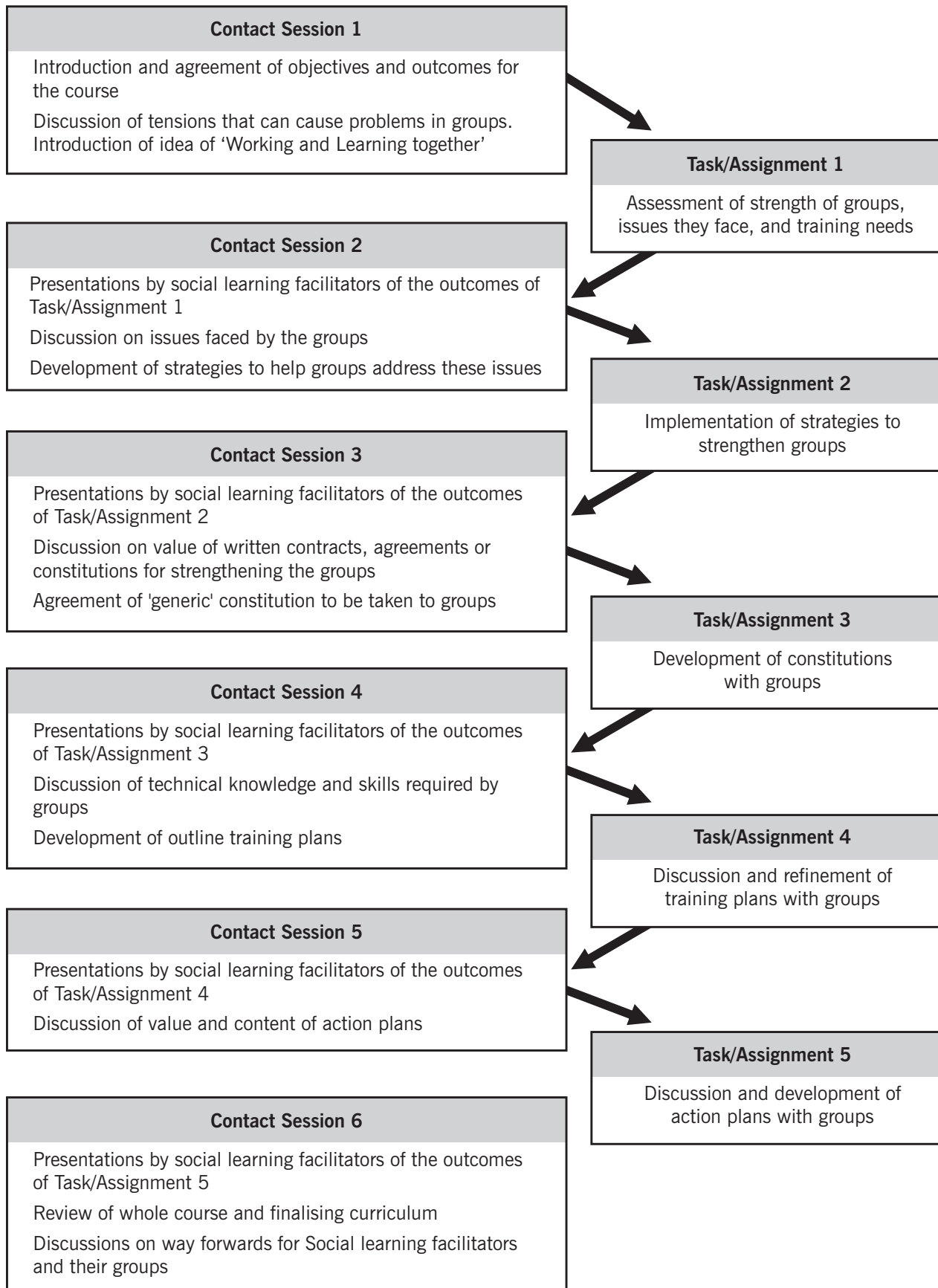
- Course participants present **Assignment 5** – implementing training plans and enlisting external trainers/organisations – and receive feedback. Discuss the outcomes of the assignment. Discuss their follow-up assessment: *how well are groups working together?* Discuss any challenges and opportunities that have emerged
- Review the Problem Solving Course towards answering the questions: *what has been learned? What has worked well, and what has not worked well? What should be included in the curriculum?* Agree on the main content areas
- Develop the final curriculum for the course. Course participants work in pairs and are supported to develop ideas for each content area. Course participants present their content to the group for feedback and finalisation
- Discuss the future. Discuss how course participants can maintain their support of their groups (and other community groups)
- **Course participant reflections on the course as a whole**

**Materials and equipment requirements:**

- Each course participant needs a strong hardback bound notebook and pens to record workshops and to fulfil their assignments
- Each course participant needs a copy of 'Working and Learning Together'
- For each workshop:
  - Printer and paper
  - Computer
  - Data projector (not essential, but might be useful on occasion)
  - Coloured cards/prestik
  - Newsprint/stand and koki pens
  - Catering (lunches etc. dependent on timing of workshops)
- Support materials for technical knowledge and skills training according to needs identified
- *IsiXhosa* copies of assignment guidance and supporting documents

# Model of the Course structure

*Source: Jongaphambili Sinethemba Project and Department of Environmental Science, Rhodes University*

**Contact Session 1**

Introduction and agreement of objectives and outcomes for the course

Discussion of tensions that can cause problems in groups. Introduction of idea of 'Working and Learning together'

**Task/Assignment 1**

Assessment of strength of groups, issues they face, and training needs

**Contact Session 2**

Presentations by social learning facilitators of the outcomes of Task/Assignment 1

Discussion on issues faced by the groups

Development of strategies to help groups address these issues

**Task/Assignment 2**

Implementation of strategies to strengthen groups

**Contact Session 3**

Presentations by social learning facilitators of the outcomes of Task/Assignment 2

Discussion on value of written contracts, agreements or constitutions for strengthening the groups

Agreement of 'generic' constitution to be taken to groups

**Task/Assignment 3**

Development of constitutions with groups

**Contact Session 4**

Presentations by social learning facilitators of the outcomes of Task/Assignment 3

Discussion of technical knowledge and skills required by groups

Development of outline training plans

**Task/Assignment 4**

Discussion and refinement of training plans with groups

**Contact Session 5**

Presentations by social learning facilitators of the outcomes of Task/Assignment 4

Discussion of value and content of action plans

**Task/Assignment 5**

Discussion and development of action plans with groups

**Contact Session 6**

Presentations by social learning facilitators of the outcomes of Task/Assignment 5

Review of whole course and finalising curriculum

Discussions on way forwards for Social learning facilitators and their groups

## Guidance for Course Participants' Assessment of Internal Issues Affecting Groups, and Technical Knowledge and Skills Requirements (Assignment 1)

*Source: Jongaphambili Sinethemba Project, Department of Environmental Science
Rhodes University*

**Assignment 1** – to be completed before Workshop 2: Conduct assessment of identified community groups (based on the questions and observations established in Workshop 1 – see below). Identify groups' internal issues that may undermine their activities. Identify the groups' key technical knowledge and skills requirements in order to implement and develop these activities. Record all activity outcomes for presentation and assessment at the next workshop

**Questions to the groups:**
1. Do you feel that the group is strong and works well together?  If yes:
2. Is this all the time, or are there some times when it is not so strong?
3. What are the things that can make the group less strong?

**Questions to individuals within the groups:**
1. Do you think that everyone in the group is doing their best to support the group?  If no:
2. What do some people do that shows they are not really supporting the group?

**Observations:**
1. Are meetings usually attended well?
2. Do people greet each other happily?
3. Are the discussions friendly?
4. Do people give each other time to speak?
5. Are there some people that dominate the discussions?
6. How do people talk about others who are not there?

**Questions about technical knowledge and skills (not about money, equipment or materials):**
1. What do we already know? What do we need to know?
2. Who do we already know that can help us? Who else should we make contact with?
3. What skills do we need? What skills do we already have? What skills do we need to develop?

## Guidance for Course Participants' Implementation of their Strategies to Strengthen their Groups (Assignment 2)

*Source: Jongaphambili Sinethemba Project, Department of Environmental Science*
*Rhodes University*

**Assignment 2** – to be completed before Workshop 3: Implement support strategies to address groups' internal issues. Record all activity outcomes for presentation and assessment at the next workshop

**Approaching groups:**
It is important that each course participant approach their group in the way they feel is best. However, the following approaches may be considered useful as a guide:

- *I'm following up on the questions I asked last time, when you were kind enough to help me understand how the group worked together, and what some of the problems were*
- *We agreed that the group was very strong, but that there are always things that can be better*
- *I have been talking with friends from the village about how we might be able to make this group even stronger*
- *These are some of the things we thought might be useful for the group to try. They are just ideas and it is for the group to decide if they are good ideas or not, and if they would like to try and make them work*
- *We can't do these things if they will cause problems in the group, but if everyone is happy with them, we can try them*
- *If the group has any better ideas, we can try those instead*

**Recording the groups' responses to the ideas:**
- Record how the group as a whole responds to the proposed ideas. Record how individuals within the group respond to the proposed ideas. It doesn't matter if the responses are positive (in favour) or negative (against)
- If possible, record some of the exact things people say when you are discussing the ideas with them. This will help you understand why they their responses are negative or positive
- If the group decides to try the ideas, record what steps they take to do this (call a meeting, identify people for a committee, elect a committee etc.)
- If they have better ideas, record these, and what was done to make them work

**Reflections:**
- After the group has decided on a support strategy, think about why they made their decision. What were the group's main reasons to try the proposed ideas or not?
- If the group has decided to do something different, consider and record why they think their approach is a better idea
- Record anything new you have learned about the group during this assignment

## Guidance for Course Participants in working with their Groups to develop appropriate Constitutions (Assignment 3)

*Source: Jongaphambili Sinethemba Project, Department of Environmental Science*
*Rhodes University*

**Assignment 3** – for course participants, to be completed before Workshop 4: Introduce the generic constitution to groups and discuss how this may help them. Work with groups to adapt the constitution (if necessary) to apply to their own needs. Record all activity outcomes for presentation and assessment at the next workshop

### Approaching groups:

It is important that each course participant approach their group in the way they feel is best. However, the following approaches may be considered useful as a guide:

- *The idea of a constitution is to strengthen the group. It should help to meet some of the problems our group may be facing now, or in the future. It will also show others, such as government departments, that our group is serious and organised.*

- *If we want to become a formal Not-for-Profit Organisation (NPO), we will need to have a constitution*

- *In the Social Learning Group we have been looking at some ideas for a Constitution, and we can see which of these ideas could work for this group. We do not have to use everything in the general constitution that I have here*

- *These are examples for each item in this constitution. If we don't want an item, we can cross it out and leave the details blank*

- *We can also add other items if we think they are important for this group*

### Recording the groups' responses to the idea of adopting a Constitution:

- Record how the group as a whole responds to the idea of adopting a Constitution. Record how individuals within the group respond. It doesn't matter if the responses are positive (in favour) or negative (against)

- If they are in favour of a Constitution, record why they think it is a good idea. Then work with them to develop their Constitution. Record the items they want to adopt (left hand column) and the details of these (right hand column). It may be a good idea to first record these in your notebook, before putting them in the table you have been provided. *You will not be asked to read out the constitution as part of your presentation*

- If they are not in favour of adopting a Constitution, record their reasons behind this decision

- Ask the group how they think they might strengthen the group without adopting a Constitution and record their ideas

### Reflections:

- Once the members of group have decided whether or not to adopt a Constitution, consider the reasons behind their decision. *What are the group's main reasons for adopting a Constitution? What are the group's main reasons for not adopting a Constitution?*

- If the group developed a constitution, were there any interesting differences (such as new items) from the general constitution?

- If the group decided to do something different to strengthen the group, reflect on their reasons behind why they consider their idea better than the idea of a Constitution

- Record anything new you have learned about the group during this assignment

## Guidance for Course Participants in working with their Groups to finalise knowledge and skills training plans (Assignment 4)

*Source: Jongaphambili Sinethemba Project, Department of Environmental Science, Rhodes University*

**Assignment 4** – to be completed before Workshop 5: Discuss knowledge and skills development strategies with groups, and agree on the priorities and details. Plan for any knowledge and skills training the course participants can undertake themselves (set dates), and identify contacts for external skills training. Record all activity outcomes for presentation and assessment at the next workshop

**Approaching the groups:**
It is important that each course participant approach their group in the way they feel is best. However, the following approaches may be considered useful as a guide:

- *While we all have good ideas about training, we must plan for training by deciding what is most important, who should have the training, and who could provide the training*
- *In our meeting in December we discussed some of the group's main training needs*
- *In the last meeting with the Social Learning Group, we each developed a training plan for our groups around the ideas that we discussed in December. I would like to discuss this plan with you, and see what changes you would like to make*
- *There is no guarantee that we can get all this training, but if we have a good plan we can take it to government or to NGOs and see how they can help us*

**Recording the group's responses to the training plan:**
- Record how the group as a whole responds to the training plan. Record how individuals within the group respond. It doesn't matter if the responses are positive (in favour) or negative (against)
- Record any changes the group has made to the plan, including any additional training they considered important
- Record the group's ideas to support and implement the plan

**Reflections:**
- Reflect on the group's response, and how they contributed to developing the plan (in particular, reflect on how they decided who would receive training)
- Reflect on the plan: *Is it realist? Is there a good chance of implementing it?*
- Reflect on how you see your role in supporting the group to implement their plan
- Record anything new you have learned about the group during this assignment

# Guidance for Course Participants in working with their Groups to develop and agree Action Plans for next 6 months (Assignment 5)

*Source: Jongaphambili Sinethemba Project, Department of Environmental Science, Rhodes University*

**Assignment 5** – to be completed before Workshop 6: Introduce training plans to community groups. Implement the training they are able to provide themselves. Make contact with external trainers/organisations, and set dates for training. Conduct a follow-up assessment of their groups based on the questions and observations from Workshop 1: *how well are groups working together?* Record all activity outcomes for presentation and assessment at the next workshop.

**Approaching the groups:**
It is important that each course participant approach their group in the way they feel is best. However, the following approaches may be considered useful as a guide:

- *We have had many discussions about the group's activities, the importance of a constitution, and about a training plan. I would now like to work with you to develop an action plan for the group for the next 6 months. This can include any of the activities we have discussed and any other ones you think are important*

- *An action plan is really important as it helps us to keep moving forward, and we can check to see that we are doing is what we planned. In an action plan we can include activities that we want to do and when we want to do them; the training we want to have and when, and say who will be responsible for the different activities - sometimes all of the group, sometimes maybe a couple of people or just an individual. We can also include what materials and equipment we might need for an activity, and even the cost of these*

- *In the last meeting with the Social Learning Group, we each started to develop an outline action plan for our groups. These are just some ideas to help us start developing the full plan*

- *We can't be sure that we will complete all the actions in the plan, but we can always change it as we go along. It will be a good idea to look at it again after 3 months and see what changes we need to make, and then add another 3 months to make it a 6-month plan again. In this way we will always have an action plan to lead us*

**Recording the group's responses to the action plan:**
- Record how the group as a whole responds to the action plan. Record how individuals within the group respond. It doesn't matter if the responses are positive (in favour) or negative (against)
- Record the details of the action plan the group develops
- Record the group's ideas to support to implement the plan
- Observe and record how the group is working together

**Reflections:**
- Reflect on the group's response, and how they contributed to developing the plan
- Reflect on the plan: *Is it realist? Is there a good chance of implementing it?*
- Reflect on how you see your role in supporting the group to implement their plan
- Record anything new you have learned about the group during this assignment
- Based on your observations reflect on how well the group is now working together

# Support materials

# Facilitating Community Learning and Good Practices 10

*Source: Umthathi Training Project/ELRC, Rhodes University, Grahamstown*

**A reflection tool for community learning facilitators**

Community development is not an individual activity, but a collective action. However working together is not always easy. One of the big problems facing community learning facilitators and the communities with whom they work is the difficulty people often have in working with each other.  It is quite common for community groups to collapse once the facilitators have moved on, and this undermines the sustainability of all the work that has been done.  Even within the facilitators' organisations it is not unusual for tensions to arise between people, making their work even more difficult.  In this pamphlet we look at the often very small issues that can cause serious problems between people, and discuss how we can deal with these in a ways that do not break up relationships.  One activity that can bring people closer is to learn together, and this can help them work together.  That is why we call this pamphlet 'Working and Learning Together'.

**Understanding the Problems That Can Come Between People**

*Difference*
In a discussion between Umthathi staff and friends from other organisations a number of reasons for people having problems with other people were identified.

Some of these were:
• Different Religious Beliefs
• Different Cultural Background
• Different Education
• Different Tribe or Clan
• Different Nationality
• Different Colour

So here it is all about obvious differences. It is sometimes hard to get on with people who look, sound, think, and behave differently to ourselves. The people in the discussion agreed that this should not be a problem, but admitted that they did sometimes find it difficult to accept difference. People often find some kinds of difference very hard to deal with even in their own families.

> *How do we think about people who are 'different'?*
>
> Do we judge them just because they are different?
>
> How can we make sure that we don't dislike people or fear them because they seem different?
>
> Work with your colleagues to find ways to learn about people and accept them as people just like yourselves

Many people who are suffering from HIV/AIDS are afraid to tell others, even family members, of their status. They don't want people to see them as being different. This is because far too often people like them have been rejected by their families and communities. We hope this situation is improving, but it is still a problem in many areas.

Often people are told by senior members of their communities that they should not like people who are different, and that difference is not good. Pressure is then put on them to behave badly towards people who are different. The attacks on shops owned by people from other countries, calling them *'Makwerekwere',* and sometimes even attacking them and killing them is a result of people being told that foreigners are bad.
This violence towards people who are different has been a problem in society for ever, and comes mostly from fear. People are afraid of what they don't know or understand. And when people are afraid they can do very bad things. A much better approach to difference is to learn about it and understand it. When we do this, we find that differences between people are actually very small, and that all of us are very similar, wherever we come from, and however we look and behave. We can then learn not to be afraid of each other, and not to see each other as bad, but rather as good people just like ourselves, trying to live a good life.

*Similarity*
Of course, most community groups and the facilitators working with them do not have any of the obvious differences discussed here. They are usually very similar in many ways, from similar cultural and education backgrounds, and facing similar problems. But this similarity does not stop problems happening between people. The Umthathi facilitators discussed what problems come between people who are very similar.

• *Differing levels of confidence* – some people are more confident than others and can take control, dominate them, even bully them
• *Fear of being criticised* – some people are afraid to say something in case someone else criticises

what they say, and makes them feel bad

- *Selfishness* – some people care more about themselves than the group. And try to make things happen that are in their interests, not the group's interest
- *Favouritism* – we all like some people more than others, and will prefer to work with these, sometimes pushing out the ones we don't like so much
- *Intolerance* – on the other hand, we can all be very intolerant of other people, even for small things such as how they drink their tea, or how they sit, or how they talk
- *People forced to work together* – there is sometimes the idea that people have to work in groups, even if some don't want to.  Some people are uncomfortable working like this and prefer to work on their own

*How to help people address these issues*
The Umthathi facilitators then discussed how we can help to overcome some of these problems.



Building on their skills, building confidence in abilities – it is important to build everyone's confidence by showing them that they do have skills and abilities, and they can all contribute. People can learn to respect each other's knowledge and skills, and become more (or sometimes less) confident

- *Increase tolerance and understanding* – firstly by recognising that we all have our different ideas about other people, and that this is normal.  Then helping people learn to accept this and be more tolerant and understanding of others
- *Mustn't force people to be what they are not* – people must not feel they have to change, but that they have value as they are
- *Team work and sharing of ideas* – getting people to work in teams and to share and value all ideas from everyone
- *Training* – one outcome is that this can bring people together. Learning helps bring people together as they face the same challenges, especially if openly facilitated.
- *Never force people to work together, it can only be through choice* – if some people really do not want to work with others, that is their right.  They can be encouraged to do things by themselves, but also encouraged to keep contact and share ideas and resources with others
- *Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)* – this is a more formal way to help people work together by having an agreement that clearly says what each person will do

Look at this list of how to help people address problems between people, and for each one discuss:
- How can we make sure we do these?
- What do they mean in terms of how we facilitate?
- What kinds of activities may be useful in helping with this?
- Do we need support for this, and where can we find it?

Discuss your needs with your manager and colleagues, and plan a way forward.

# Guidelines for writing a Co-operative's Constitution

*Source: Business Partners Ltd website: www.businesspartners.co.za*

Provided by *Business Partners Ltd*, South Africa's leading investor in SMEs

*When a Co-operative has a founding meeting, a Constitution must be read and agreed to by all members. This document must be filed with Cipro. Below are some guidelines for what your Constitution should contain.*

1. A co-operative registered in terms of Co-Operatives Act 14 of 2005 must adopt a constitution that complies with section 14.
2. A co-operative where the members are required to hold shares must adopt a constitution that complies with sections 14 and 15.
3. Secondary and tertiary co-operatives must adopt a constitution that complies with sections 14 and 16.
4. A co-operative may, in addition to the matters listed under section 14 (2), adopt any other provision that is not inconsistent with this Act.
5. The Minister may publish, by notice in the Gazette, model constitutions that may be used by co-operatives.

**The constitution of a co-operative must include-**
1. the name of the co-operative;
2. whether it is a primary co-operative, a secondary co-operative, or a tertiary cooperative;
3. the main objectives of the co-operative;
4. a description of the business of the co-operative, including any restrictions on the business of the co-operative;
5. a provision stipulating that each member has one vote in all meetings of the cooperative except in the case of secondary or tertiary co-operatives;
6. the minimum period of notice of general meetings;
7. the place where the registered office of the co-operative is located;
8. the minimum and maximum number of directors;
9. the term of office of directors, which may not be more than four years, and whether a director may be re-appointed for a second or further term of office;
10. the powers and restrictions on the directors of the co-operative to manage the business of the co-operative;
11. the requirements for membership of the co-operative, subject to section 3 (2);
12. the requirements for withdrawal of membership of a co-operative, including the necessary period for the notice of withdrawal and repayment of shares, and any provisions relating to the liability of a member for a specified period after the date of withdrawal, subject to section 23;
13. a provision relating to the manner in which a portion of the surplus that is transferred as a reserve to a reserve fund in accordance with section 3 (e), may be utilised;
14. provision for the distribution of the assets of the co-operative on its dissolution;
15. the financial year of the co-operative;
16. procedures for the application of membership to the co-operative, which should be in accordance with co-operative principles;
17. a provision for the rights and obligations of members;
18. a provision for the transfer of membership, member loan and membership share;

19. the conditions and processes for the termination of membership;
20. the conditions and processes for the suspension of membership;
21. the structure for decision making whereby members can participate in decision making processes in a democratic and participatory manner;
22. provisions for annual general meetings and special general meetings, including the manner in which such meetings are convened, the necessary periods of notice, the election of a chairperson and provisions for the proposal of resolutions that should ensure democratic decision making;
23. a provision for the period of notice for general meetings and must state the conditions and processes to be followed when requesting a general meeting;
24. a provision for the tabling and adoption of resolutions;
25. the determination of quorums for general meetings and must ensure that the quorum provides for adequate member control and decision making;
26. a provision relating to the manner in which voting may be conducted;
27. the conditions under which a resolution in lieu of a meeting may be held and passed;
28. the conditions and processes for requesting a general meeting;
29. a provision for the appointment of directors, on condition that only members may be appointed as directors;
30. the conditions for vacation of office by directors and the filling of any vacancies in a manner that ensures democratic accountability to the members;
31. the conditions and processes for the appointment of the chairperson, vice chairperson and acting chairperson; and
32. the conditions under which a board of directors may delegate functions to a director or committee or manager;
33. a provision relating to the manner in which a portion of the surplus that is not transferred to the reserve fund, may be utilised.

**The constitution of a co-operative may include-**

1. the further objectives of the co-operative;
2. the amount of business allowed with non-members, subject to the provisions of this Act;
3. in the case of a co-operative having members in more than one region, the holding of regional general meetings and a conference of delegates;
4. a provision for a member to appoint a proxy to attend and vote at a general meeting on that member's behalf, or for postal votes: Provided that no person may act as a proxy for more than 20 per cent of the members entitled to vote at a meeting, or for such lesser percentage of members stipulated in the constitution of the co-operative;
5. provision for people who want to provide support to the co-operative without themselves becoming members to be appointed as associate members;
6. a provision relating to the manner in which the supervisory committee may be constituted;
7. the conditions under which the board of directors may delegate functions to a director, committee or manager;
8. provisions regulating the appointment of a general manager or executive manager by the board of directors;
9. provision to make rules consistent with the constitution and this Act concerning the holding of meetings or any other matter of procedure; and
10. provision for the settlement of disputes between members of the co-operative, or between a member of the co-operative and the co-operative itself.

**Provisions where members are required to hold shares**

Where a member is required to hold shares in a co-operative upon application or acceptance as a member, the constitution of a co-operative must provide-

1. for the minimum number of membership shares to be issued to each member;

2. for the nominal value of the shares;

3. whether the membership shares are to be issued fully paid up or not fully paid up, and the conditions under which shares are to be paid;

4. for the circumstances under which additional shares may be issued to members;

5. for the maximum percentage of the share capital of a co-operative a member may hold, except in the case of a secondary or tertiary co-operative;

6. for the circumstances under which shares issued to a member may be redeemed.

**Provisions for secondary and tertiary co-operatives**

**(1) The constitution of a secondary or tertiary co-operative must provide for:**

1. the main objectives of a secondary co-operative which must include the provision of sectoral services to the primary co-operatives that are its members;

2. the main objectives of a tertiary co-operative which must include advocating and engaging organs of state, the private sector and stakeholders on behalf of its members; and

3. the number of votes a member has in proportion to the number of primary or secondary co-operatives that are its members.

**(2) The constitution of a secondary or tertiary co-operative may provide for:**

1. the further objectives of a secondary or tertiary co-operative which may include any activity that is not inconsistent with the objectives of any of its members, and which is undertaken for their exclusive benefit; and

2. the further objectives of a tertiary co-operative which may include representing the interests of co-operatives within a sector or region, providing assistance for education and training, establishing a guarantee fund to facilitate external financing of its members, and the establishment of an audit fund to assist members to have their operations audited.

When a Co-operative cannot afford to use the services of an Auditor annually, it must complete a CR8 form (available on the Cipro website) and must choose one of the three options under part 2 of the form. The CR8 form is in the format of an affidavit, which must be provided by the Chairperson of the Co-operative and must be signed by a Commissioner of Oath.

## Some ideas for a Basic Constitution for Community Groups, including for those wanting to become Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs)

*Source: Jongaphambili Sinethemba Project and Department of Environmental Science, Rhodes University*

| Items | Examples |
|---|---|
| **Constitution** | • This Constitution has been agreed by a 2/3 majority of the whole group<br>• This Constitution is effective from………………………………………………………………(date)<br>• This Constitution will be reviewed by a sub-committee elected by the whole group every……….years<br>• Any changes to this Constitution can only be made by agreement of  2/3 of the whole group |
| **Name of Group** | Siyazama Poultry Group |
| **Aims (objectives)** | • To work co-operatively to develop a profitable poultry business, selling chickens to local people and the local shops.<br>• To improve the income and livelihoods of the group members<br>• To support the members and their families in times of difficulty |
| **Powers of Group** | The group has the power to:<br>• Raise funds for group activities<br>• Purchase equipment and materials (as agreed by a majority of the group) to support group activities<br>• Make approaches to local, district and provincial government departments for support for their activities<br>• Accept or reject applications for membership<br>• Remove membership from members not abiding by the constitution<br>• Elect office bearers and sub-committees |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Office Bearers,** their terms of service and main responsibilities | • **Chairperson** – elected every 3 years.  They will be responsible for convening and chairing meetings.  They will be the main representative of the group with other groups and stakeholders.  They will have the casting vote when necessary at any whole group meeting<br>• **Treasurer** – elected every 3 years.  They will have the main responsibility for the management of the group's finances, and will work with a financial committee to do this.  They will produce monthly written statements of all financial transactions and of the balances and present these to the financial committee and the whole group meetings<br>• **Secretary** – elected every 3 years.  They will be responsible for issuing invitations to group and management committee meetings, and for taking and distributing the minutes of group and management committee meetings.  The secretary will keep all membership records and maintain the membership list.  The secretary will work with the chairperson to draft any correspondence to other organisations and stakeholders.<br><br>2 signatures including that of the chairperson and either the treasurer or secretary are needed on all agreements made with other organisations and stakeholders. |
| **Election of Office Bearers** | • Office bearers are elected for periods of 3 years.  To be elected they must gain more than half the votes of the entire membership.<br>• They can only hold office for a maximum of 2 consecutive terms.<br>• Office bearers must stand down immediately at the end of their terms.<br>• Elections for new office bearers must take place 2 months before the end of term of existing office bearers.<br>• Elections must take place within 1 month of any office bearer resigning from or a post becoming vacant for any reason. |
| **Organisation Structures in the Group,** the people in these, frequency of meetings and quorum | • Whole group – all office bearers and members.  This will meet once every 2 months.  Quorum is more than half the members present.<br>• Management committee - 7 people, including the chairperson, the treasurer, the secretary, and 4 ordinary members.  It will meet once every month. Quorum is 4 people.<br>• Financial committee – 5 people including the treasurer and 4 ordinary members.  It will meet once every month.  Quorum is 3 people including the treasurer. One member will be required to take the minutes at each meeting |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Election of Committee Members** | Committee members, other than the office bearers, will be elected by a majority vote of the membership. |
| | Committee members term will be for 3 years |
| | They can only hold office for a maximum of 2 consecutive terms. |
| | Committee members must stand down immediately at the end of their terms. |
| | Elections for new committee members must take place 2 months before the end of term of existing committee members. |
| | Elections must take place within 3 months of any committee members resigning from or a post becoming vacant for any reason. |
| **Removal of Office Bearers and Committee Members** | Office bearers and committee members seen not to be fulfilling their duties properly can be removed from their duties by a 2/3 (66%) vote of the whole group |
| | They may also lose their membership, and this will require a separate vote, also needing 2/3 of the whole group |
| **Decision-making** | Most decisions can only be agreed for the whole group by more than half (51% +) of the whole membership, at a whole group meeting. |
| | Decisions concerning changes to the Constitution, or removal of office bearers or memberships require agreement of 2/3 (66%) of the whole group. |
| | The management committee and financial committee cannot take decisions affecting the whole group, and must take any recommendations to the whole group meetings for group decisions |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Financial Management** | The financial year for the group will run from ............(date) in each year to ............(date) in the following year |
| | The group will have a bank account in the group's name. |
| | The bank and the type of account will be recommended by the financial committee to the whole membership for approval. |
| | The treasurer + 2 financial committee members will be signatories on the account at any one time.  These must be approved by a majority of the membership |
| | 2 of these signatures, including that of the treasurer, will be required for withdrawal of any money from the account, or for the issue of any purchase orders or requisitions |
| | At the end of any signatory's term of office, they must immediately give up their power of signatory and a new signatory must be appointed from the committee and approved by a majority of the membership. |
| | All money going into the account must be recorded by the treasurer and proof of deposit kept with the financial records. The record must include:<br>• The amount<br>• The date<br>• The source (where and who from)<br>• Any particular purpose for  which the money is to be used |
| | All money withdrawn from the account must be recorded by the treasurer and proof of withdrawal kept with the financial records. The record must include:<br>• The amount<br>• The date<br>• The names of the signatories for the withdrawal<br>• The purpose for which the money was withdrawn<br>• Names of members and other to whom the money was given |
| | All purchases must be recorded by the treasurer and the proof of purchase kept with the financial records.  The record must include:<br>• Copies of any purchase order<br>• The amount<br>• The date<br>• The names of the signatories authorising the purchase<br>• The supplier<br>• The items or services purchased<br>• The purpose of the purchase |
| **Group Assets** | All property, buildings, equipment, materials and other assets acquired by the group are owned by the group, not by any individual member or office bearer. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Becoming a Member** (This applies to any new members. Existing people in the group are considered members automatically, but they are still required to sign copies of the constitution) | Any person from...................... village/area involved in the activities with which the group is concerned can apply to become a member.<br><br>They must attend a whole group meeting at which they will speak to the group to explain why they want to become a member.  The group will vote on whether to accept the person as a member or not.<br><br>If accepted a new member must pay a joining fee of R........<br><br>They must sign 2 copies of this constitution.  They will keep one copy and the secretary will keep the other for the membership records, and add the new members name to the membership list. (This applies also to existing members) |
| **Removal of Membership** | Members who do not abide by the rules, or make proper contributions to keeping the group strong, or bring the group into disrepute can lose their membership by a 2/3 majority vote of the whole group. |
| **Members Responsibilities** | All members must abide by the rules of the group.  Signing this constitution confirms that they have agreed to these rules.<br><br>Members must contribute R...... at each whole group meeting<br><br>Members must attend all whole group meetings.  Non-attendance, without good justification (such as illness), will be liable to a fine of R........<br><br>Members who do not attend......meetings in any one year, without strong justification (such as serious illness) will lose their membership<br><br>Members must be actively involved in the group activities, and make contributions of their time and materials as agreed by decisions of the whole group<br><br>Members must be supportive of other members, and do what they can to ensure that the group is strong and conducts its activities successfully |
| **Members Rights** | Members have the right to raise issues at whole group meetings<br><br>Members have the right to stand for election as office bearers and sub-committee members when vacancies arise<br><br>Members have an equal vote on all issues in whole group meetings<br><br>Members have the right to equal benefits from any group activities |

## Constitution template for Community Groups, including for those wanting to become Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs)

*Source: Jongaphambili Sinethemba Project and Department of Environmental Science, Rhodes University*

| Items | Examples |
|---|---|
| **Constitution** | |
| **Name of Group** | |
| **Aims (objectives)** | |
| **Powers of Group** | |
| **Office Bearers, their terms of service and main responsibilities** | |
| **Election of Office Bearers** | |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Organisation Structures in the Group**, the people in these, frequency of meetings and quorum | |
| **Election of Committee Members** | |
| **Removal of Office Bearers and Committee Members** | |
| **Decision-making** | |
| **Financial Management** | |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Group Assets** | |
| **Becoming a Member** (This applies to any new members. Existing people in the group are considered members automatically, but they are still required to sign copies of the constitution) | |
| **Removal of Membership** | |
| **Members Responsibilities** | |
| **Members Rights** | |

## Application for registration in terms of the nonprofit organisations act, 1997 (npo act no 71 of 1997)

To qualify for registration, an organisation must complete the application form and submit it with two copies of their constitution to the Department of Welfare: NPO Directorate. Please read the instructions carefully when completing the application form.

The NPO Act requires certain elements that must be in a constitution. In order to assist organisations in drawing up their constitution, the Department has designed a model constitution for voluntary associations. You can use the model constitution as a guide to check that your constitution has all the required clauses, or you can adopt it. Should you wish to adopt it, please follow the attached instructions. (Annexure A)

On receipt of the completed application form and two copies of the signed constitution of your organisation, the application will receive further attention.

Do not hesitate to contact this office at Private Bag X 901, Pretoria 0001(Tel: 012- 312 7500) for further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely

DIRECTOR: NONPROFIT ORGANISATIONS

**Annexure A**

## MODEL CONSTITUTION

It is important that your organisation has a constitution that is written down. Your constitution says what your organisation does, how it will be structured, and how it will run. It includes the duties of each office bearer. In this way, your constitution guides its members on how the organisation will function. It is a legal document. Most funders want you to give them a copy of your organisation's constitution before they will think about funding it. Banks and building societies generally also want to be given a copy of your constitution before they will let you open an account in the name of your organisation.

To make sure that your constitution meets the requirements for registration in terms of section 12 of the Nonprofit Organisation Act, it must reflect all the elements of this model constitution.

## CONSTITUTION

1. Name

1.1 The organisation hereby constituted will be called **e.g. Masimbambane Pre-School**

1.2 Its shortened name will be **e.g. MP**(hereinafter referred to as the organisation).

1.3 Body corporate

The organisation shall:

• Exist in its own right, separately from its members.

• Continue to exist even when its membership changes and there are different office bearers.

• Be able to own property and other possessions.

• Be able to sue and be sued in its own name.

2. Objectives

(a) The organisation's main objectives are to **e.g. To provide community service to all the** communities regarding STD/HIV/AIDS and other related diseases and their conditions

(b) The organisation's secondary objectives will be to: **e.g. To work in collaboration with other organisations that mainly deal with health transformation and education**

3. Income and property

3.1 The organisation will keep a record of everything it owns.

3.2 The organisation may not give any of its money or property to its members or office bearers. The only time it can do this is when it pays for work that a member or office bearer has done for the organisation. The payment must be a reasonable amount for the work that has been done.

3.3 A member of the organisation can only get money back from the organisation for expenses that she or he has paid for or on behalf of the organisation.

3.4 Members or office bearers of the organisation do not have rights over things that belong to the organisation.

4. Membership and General Meetings

4.1 If a person wants to become a member of the organisation, she or he will have to ask the organisation's management committee. The management committee has the right to say no.

4.2 Members of the organisation must attend its annual general meetings. At the annual general meeting members exercise their right to determine the policy of the organisation.

5. Management

5.1 A management committee will manage the organisation. The management committee will be made up of not less than **e.g.6** members. They are the office bearers of the organisation.

5.2 Office bearers will serve for one year, but they can stand for re-election for another term in office

after that. Depending on what kind of services they give to the organisation, they can stand for re-election into office again and again. This is so long as their services are needed and they are ready to give their services.

5.3 If a member of the management committee does not attend three management committee meetings in a row, without having applied for and obtaining leave of absence from the management committee, then the management committee will find a new member to take that person's place.

5.4 The management committee will meet at least once a month. More than half of members need to be at the meeting to make decisions that are allowed to be carried forward. This constitutes a quorum.

5.5 Minutes will be taken at every meeting to record the management committee's decisions. The minutes of each meeting will be given to management committee members at least two weeks before the next meeting. The minutes shall be confirmed as a true record of proceedings, by the next meeting of the management committee, and shall thereafter be **signed by the chairperson.**

5.6 The organisation has the right to form sub-committees. The decisions that sub-committees take must be given to the management committee. The management committee must decide whether to agree to them or not at its next meeting. This meeting should take place soon afterthe sub-committee's meeting. By agreeing to decisions the management committee ratifies them.

5.7 All members of the organisation have to abide by decisions that are taken by the management committee.

## 6. Powers of the organisation

The management committee may take on the power and authority that it believes it needs to be able to achieve the objectives that are stated in point number 2 of this constitution. Its activities must abide by the law.

6.1 The management committee has the power and authority to raise funds or to invite and receive contributions.

6.2 The management committee does, however, have the power to buy, hire or exchange for any property that it needs to achieve its objectives.

6.3 The management committee has the right to make by-laws for proper management, including procedure for application, approval and termination of membership.

6.4 Organisations will decide on the powers and functions of office bearers.

## 7. Meetings and procedures of the committee

7.1 The management committee must hold at least two ordinary meetings each year.

7.2 The chairperson, or two members of the committee, can call a special meeting if they want to. But they must let the other management committee members know the date of the proposed meeting not less than 21 days before it is due to take place. They must also tell the other members of the committee which issues will be discussed at the meeting. If, however, one of the matters to be discussed is to appoint a new management committee member, then those calling the meeting must give the other committee members not less than 30 days notice.

7.3 The chairperson shall act as the chairperson of the management committee. If the chairperson does not attend a meeting, then members of the committee who are present choose which one of them will chair that meeting. This must be done before the meeting starts.

7.4 There shall be a quorum whenever such a meeting is held.

7.5 When necessary, the management committee will vote on issues. If the votes are equal on an issue, then the chairperson has either a second or a deciding vote.

7.6 Minutes of all meetings must be kept safely and always be on hand for members to consult.

7.7 If the management committee thinks it is necessary, then it can decide to set up one or more sub-committees. It may decide to do this to get some work done quickly. Or it may want a sub-committee to do an inquiry, for example. There must be at least three people on a subcommittee. The sub-committee must report back to the management committee on its activities. It should do

this regularly.

8. Annual general meetings
The annual general meeting must be held once every year, towards the end of the organisation's financial year. The organisation should deal with the following business, amongst others, at its annual general meeting:
• Agree to the items to be discussed on the agenda.
• Write down who is there and who has sent apologies because they cannot attend.
• Read and confirm the previous meeting's minutes with matters arising.
• Chairperson's report.
• Treasurer's report.
• Changes to the constitution that members may want to make.
• Elect new office bearers.
• General.
• Close the meeting.

9. Finance
9.1 An accounting officer shall be appointed at the annual general meeting. His or her duty is to audit and check on the finances of the organisation.
9.2 The treasurer's job is to control the day to day finances of the organisation. The treasurer shall arrange for all funds to be put into a bank account in the name of the organisation. The treasurer must also keep proper records of all the finances.
9.3 Whenever funds are taken out of the bank account, the chairperson and at least two other members of the organisation must sign the withdrawal or cheque.
9.4 The financial year of the organisation ends on eg 31 March 2002 (please cover a full 12 months period).
9.5 The organisation's accounting records and reports must be ready and handed to the Director of Nonprofit Organisations within six months after the financial year end.
9.6 If the organisation has funds that can be invested, the funds may only be invested with registered financial institutions. These institutions are listed in Section 1 of the Financial Institutions (Investment of Funds) Act, 1984. Or the organisation can get securities that are listed on a licensed stock exchange as set out in the Stock Exchange Control Act, 1985. The organisation can go to different banks to seek advice on the best way to look after its funds.

10. Changes to the constitution
10.1 The constitution can be changed by a resolution. The resolution has to be agreed upon and passed by not less than two thirds of the members who are at the annual general meeting or special general meeting. Members must vote at this meeting to change the constitution.
10.2 Two thirds of the members shall be present at a meeting ("the quorum") before a decision to change the constitution is taken. Any annual general meeting may vote upon such a notion, if the details of the changes are set out in the notice referred to in 7.3
10.3 A written notice must go out not less than fourteen (14) days before themeeting at which the changes to the constitution are going to be proposed. The notice must indicate the proposed changes to the constitution that will be discussed at the meeting.
10.4 No amendments may be made which would have the effect of making the organisation cease to exist.

11. Dissolution/Winding-up
11.1 The organisation may close down if at least two-thirds of the members present and voting at a meeting convened for the purpose of considering such matter, are in favour of closing down.
11.2 When the organisation closes down it has to pay off all its debts. After doing this, if there is

property or money left over it should not be paid or given to members of the organisation. It should be given in some way to another nonprofit organisation that has similar objectives. The organisation's general meeting can decide what organisation this should be.

This constitution was approved and accepted by members of
------------------------------------------------------
At a special (general) meeting held on -------------------
Day/Month/Year
----------------- -----------------------------
Chairperson Secretary

**Checklist for required clauses in a constitution for an organisation applying for npo registration.**

*Source: Department of Social Development website:* www.dsd.gov.za/npo

**PLEASE TAKE NOTE**

The same requirements are applicable for the DEEDS OF TRUST of a NONPROFIT TRUST and the MEMORANDUM AND ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION of a NONPROFIT COMPANY

Section 12 (2) of the NONPROFIT ORGANISATIONS ACT 71 OF 1997 REQUIRES THE FOLLOWING PROVISIONS IN THE CONSTITUTION OF AN ORGANISATION THAT APPLIES FOR NPO REGISTRATION.

| |
|---|
| State the Name of the Organisation; |
| State the organisation's main and ancillary objectives; |
| Make provision for the organisation's income and property are not distributable to its members or office-bearers, except as reasonable compensation for services rendered; |
| Make provision for the organisation to be a body corporate and have an identity and existence distinct from its members or office-bearers; |
| Make provision for the organisation's continued existence notwithstanding changes in the composition of its membership or office-bearers; |
| Ensure that the members or office-bearers have no rights in the property or other assets of the organisation solely by virtue of their being members or office-bearers; |
| Specify the powers of the organisation; |
| Specify the organisational structures and mechanisms for its governance; |
| Set out the rules for convening and conducting meetings, including quorums required for and the minutes to be kept of those meetings; |
| Determine the manner in which decisions are to be made; |
| Provide that the organisation's financial transactions must be conducted by means of a banking account; |
| Determine a date for the end of the organisation's financial year; |
| Set out a procedure for changing the constitution; |
| Set out a procedure by which the organisation may be wound up or dissolved; and |
| Provide that, when the organisation is being wound up or dissolved, any asset remaining after all its liabilities have been met, must be transferred to another Nonprofit Organisations having similar objectives. |

Other recommendable relevant clauses that would be include in a constitution are:

| |
|---|
| Specify qualifications for and admission to membership of the organisation; |
| Determine the circumstances in which a member will no longer be entitled to the benefits of membership; |
| Provide for termination of membership; |

| |
|---|
| Provide for appeals against loss of the benefits of membership or against termination of membership and specify the procedure for those appeals and determine the body to which those appeals may be made; |
| Provide for membership fees and matters determining membership fees and other payments by members; |
| Provide that members or office-bearers do not become liable for any of the obligations and liabilities of the organisation solely by virtue of their status as members or office-bearers of the organisation; |
| Provide for the appointment of office-bearers and define their respective functions; |
| Set out a procedure for nominating, electing or appointing office-bearers; |
| Determine the circumstances and manner in which office-bearers may be removed from office and provide for appeals against such removal and specify procedures for those appeals and determine a body to which those appeals can be made; |
| Provide that its office-bearers are not personally liable for any loss suffered by any person as a result of an act or omission which occurs in good faith while the office-bearer is performing functions for or on behalf of the organisation; |
| Provide for making investments; |
| Determine the purposes for which the funds of the organisation may be used; and |
| Provide for acquiring and controlling assets. |

## Application for registration by a nonprofit organisation

*Source: Department of Social Development website:* www.dsd.gov.za/npo

## READ THIS FIRST

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS FORM?

This form is an application by a Nonprofit Organisation for registration. Registration is voluntary. If the Nonprofit Organisation complies with the requirements for registration then the Director for Nonprofit Organisations will enter its name in a register and send it a certificate of registration.

### WHICH ORGANISATIONS MAY APPLY FOR REGISTRATION?

Organisations such as trusts, companies or other associations established for a public purpose whose income and property are not distributable to its members or office-bearers except as reasonable compensation for services rendered.

Nonprofit organisations which were previously authorised or registered in terms of the Fund-raising Act, 1978, are regarded as registered in terms of the Nonprofit Organisations Act, 1997, but are nonetheless required to apply for registration within a specified period after this Act takes effect in order to maintain their registration.

### WHO FILLS IN THIS FORM?

The office-bearer responsible for managing the nonprofit organisation.

### WHERE DOES THIS FORM GO?

To : Directorate for Nonprofit Organisations
Private Bag x901
PRETORIA
0001

### OTHER REQUIREMENTS?

Two copies of the nonprofit organisations' constitution must accompany this form.

[This is not the original application form, and you may need to download the original from the website]


## 1.ORGANISATIONAL DETAILS

Name of the organisation

_____

Physical address

_____
_____
_____
_____Code _____

Postal address

_____
_____
_____Code _____
_____

Tel (   )_____
Fax (   ) _____
E-mail _____
Date of financial year-end

_____

## 2. PARTICULARS OF OFFICE-BEARERS (If you have more office-bearers than is provided for here, please include the particulars of these bearers on a separate page and attach it to this application)

Name(s)                  _____

Surname                  _____

Address Business    _____
                              _____
                              _____

Residential              _____
                              _____
                              _____
                              _____

ID Number             _____

Contact details       (W) (   ) _____ Fax (   ) _____

                              (H) (   ) _____ E-mail _____

Capacity in Organisation _____


Name(s)                  _____

Surname            _____

Address Business   _____

                             _____

                             _____

Residential          _____

                             _____

                             _____

                             _____

ID Number         _____

Contact details     (W) (   ) _____ Fax (   ) _____

                      (H) (    ) _____ E-mail _____

Capacity in Organisation _____

Name(s)            _____

Surname            _____

Address Business   _____

                             _____

                             _____

Residential          _____

                             _____

                             _____

                             _____

ID Number         _____

Contact details     (W) (   ) _____ Fax (   ) _____

                      (H) (    ) _____ E-mail _____

Capacity in Organisation _____

Name(s)            _____

Surname            _____

Address Business   _____

                             _____

                             _____

Residential          _____

ID Number                 _____

Contact details    (W) (    ) _____ Fax (    ) _____

                   (H) (    ) _____ E-mail _____

Capacity in Organisation _____


Name(s)              _____

Surname              _____

Address Business     _____
                     _____
                     _____

Residential          _____
                     _____
                     _____
                     _____

ID Number            _____

Contact details    (W) (    ) _____ Fax (    ) _____

                   (H) (    ) _____ E-mail _____

Capacity in Organisation _____


## 3. REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTRATION OF THE ORGANISATION'S CONSTITUTION

(1) Compulsory requirements for registration in terms of section 12(2)

(a) Each requirement from (a) – (o) must be reflected in the constitution. If the requirements are not satisfied the director will not register the nonprofit organisation.

(b) Indicate in column 2 where in your organisation's constitution the requirements listed in column 1 are provided for.

| Column 1 | Column 2 |
|---|---|
| REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTRATION | Applicable reference in constitution |
| (a) Organisation's name(s) | |
| (b) Organisation's main and ancillary objectives | |

| | |
|---|---|
| (c) Organisation's income and property are not distributable to its members or office-bearers, except as reasonable compensation for services rendered | |
| (d) Provision for the organisation to be a body corporate and have an identity and existence distinct from its members or office-bearers | |
| (e) Provision for the organisation's continued existence notwithstanding changes in the composition of its membership or office-bearers | |
| (f) Members or office-bearers have no rights in the property or other assets of the organisation solely by virtue of their being members or office-bearers | |
| (g) Powers of the organisation | |
| (h) Organisational structures and mechanisms for its governance | |
| (i) Rules for convening and conducting meetings, including quorums required for and the minutes to kept of those meetings | |
| (j) Manner in which decisions are to be made | |
| (k) Provision made for the organisation's financial transactions to be conducted by means of a banking account | |
| (l) Date for the end of the organisation's financial year | |
| (m) Procedure for changing the constitution | |
| (n) Procedure by which the organisation may be wound up or dissolved and | |
| (o) Provision that, when the organisation is wound up or dissolved, any assets remaining after all its liabilities have been met, must be transferred to another non-profit organisation having similar objectives | |

(2) Optional provisions in terms of section 12(3)

(a) These provisions are optional (i.e. not compulsory) but desirable, as they strengthen the governance procedures in the constitution.
(b) Indicate in column 2 where in your organisation's constitution the provisions listed in column 1 are located.

| Column 1 | Column 2 |
|---|---|
| **OPTIONAL PROVISIONS FOR REGISTRATION** | **Applicable reference in constitution** |
| (a) Qualifications for and admission to membership of the organisation | |

| | |
|---|---|
| (b) Circumstances in which a member will no longer be entitled to the benefits of membership | |
| (c) Provisions for termination of membership | |
| (d) Provision for appeals against loss of the benefits of membership or against termination of membership, the procedure for such appeals and the body to which such appeals may be made | |
| (e) Provisions for membership fees and matters determining membership fees and other payments by members | |
| (f) Provision that members or office-bearers do not become liable for any of the obligations and liabilities of the organisation solely by virtue of their status as members or officebearers of the organisation | |
| (g) Provision for the appointment of office-bearers and tabulation of their respective functions | |
| (h) Procedure for nominating, electing or appointing office-bearers | |
| (i) Circumstances and manner in which office-bearers may be removed from office, provision for appeals against such removal, procedures for such appeals the body to which such appeals can be made | |
| (j) Provision that office-bearers are not personally liable for any loss suffered by any person as a result of an act or omission which occurs in good faith while the office-bearer is performing functions for or on behalf of the organisation | |
| (k) Provisions for making investments | |
| (l) Purposes for which the funds of the organisation may be used | |
| (m) Provision for acquiring and controlling assets | |

## 4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED

The completion of this part of the application form is not compulsory. The Directorate for Nonprofit Organisations seeks this information for administrative, background and research purposes. Your application will not be prejudiced if this part of the application form is not completed.

Date when organisation was established _____

Organisation's area of operation Geographical _____
Sector _____

Is the organisation affiliated to any other body or structure? (If yes, please specify the name and contact details of this
body or structure).

_____
_____
_____
_____

## 5. DECLARATION BY PERSON SUBMITTING THIS APPLICATION

I, the undersigned, declare that I am duly authorised by my organisation to complete and submit this application and

that the information contained in this form is to the best of my knowledge correct.

Name(s) _____

Signature _____

Capacity _____

Date _____


## 6. DUTIES OF REGISTERED NONPROFIT ORGANISATIONS

Once your organisation has been registered it must:

(a) Reflect its registered status or registration number on all its documents – section 16(3).

(b) Keep accounting records – section 17(1)(a).

(c) Draw up financial statements – section 17(1)(b).

(d) Arrange for an accounting officer to prepare a written report – section 17(2).

(e) Preserve its books of account, supporting vouchers, membership records and financial records and documents – section 17(3).

(f) Submit to the Director of Nonprofit Organisations:

(i) A narrative report – section 18(1)(a).

(ii) Details of any changes of its office-bearers - section 18(1)(b).

(iii) Details of any changes of its address at which it will receive documents – section 18(1)(c).

(iv) Details of any changes in its constitution or its name – section19.

**NPO Contacts etc.**

**NATIONAL CONTACT DETAILS**

| **Physical Address** | **Postal Address** |
| --- | --- |
| HSRC Building | NPO Directorate |
| 134 Pretorius Street | Department Of Social Development |
| Pretoria 0001 | Private Bag X901 |
| Tel No: 012 312 7500 | Pretoria |
| e-mail: Npoenquiry@dsd.gov.za | 0001 |

**EASTERN CAPE**

Director: Ms Donna Xolisa Makoboka
Other contacts: Kutazwa Petela, and Zanele Ndlovu

(043)605 5351    (043)605 5231    (043)605 5232

Room 244,
Old Metro Building,
Beaconhill Office Park
KING WILLIAMSTOWN,
5600

## NPOs - Frequently Asked Questions

Source: Government of the Western Cape website: www.westerncape.gov.za

### REGISTRATION

1  WHY THE REGISTRATION OF NONPROFIT ORGANISATIONS?

Registration:-
• improve the credibility of the sector because nonprofit organisations can account to a public office.
• It bring organisations into a system.
• Improve on goverance, transparency and accountability within the NPO sector.
• Allow for information about the sector to be gathered and made publicly avaliable.
• Is a requirement for most of the funding agencies.

2  WHICH ORGANISATIONS CAN APPLY?

Any organisation that is not-for-profit and is not part of government can apply for registration.

3  HOW DO ORGANISATIONS REGISTER?

Organisations applying for registration must:
• Fill in the registration form  i.e. <u>Application for Registration by a Nonprofit Organisation</u>
• Send this application form with two copies of your constitution to the Department.
• Provide any other additional information requested by the Directorate.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE!
That the organisation will only to able to be registered if the constitution covers all the <u>required clauses of section 12 of the NPO Act</u> and application has being fill-in proper.

4  WHAT HAPPENS AFTER ALL THE FORMS AND DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED?

If all is in order then the organisation will be registered within two months of receiving all the correct documents.
• The registration certificate and a certificated copy of the organisation's constitition will posted by registered mail to the postal address as given on the application form.

5  WHAT HAPPENS IF THE APPLICATION IS REJECTED?

• The application will send back to you with advice on how to meet the requirements.
• The application will be given further attention on received and will be registered within two months after receiving the correct documents.

6  CAN AN ORGANISATION APPEAL A DECISION?

An organisation can <u>appeal against the decision</u>.

**HOW CAN A REGISTERED NPO MAINTAIN ITS REGISTRATION STATUS**

7    WHAT HAPPENS ONCE THE ORGANISATION IS REGISTERED?

- The organisation's name and registration number is added to the list of <u>Register of Nonprofit Organisations</u>.
- The registration certificate and a certificated copy of the organisation's constitition will posted by registered mail to the postal address as given on the application form.
- The certificate of registration will have the following details:
- The NPO registration number.
- The date on which the organisation was registered.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE!
- Once the organisation is registered, the name and registration number of the organisation must be reflected on all the organisation's documents.

8    HOW LONG WILL THE ORGANISATION BE REGISTERED FOR?

The organisation will be registered until:
- Its registration is cancelled in terms of the NPO Act;
- The organisation itself <u>voluntary de-register</u>
- The organisation <u>dissolves (close down).</u>

PLEASE TAKE NOTE!
that it is a <u>criminal offence</u> to operate under the false pretend of being a registered NPO.

9    WHAT ACCOUNTING RECORDS AND REPORTS DOES REGISTERED NPO NEED TO KEEP?

Once registered, the organisation must:
- Keep details and proper financial records;
- Within six months after the end of its financial year, it must draw up financial statements that show income and expenditure for that completed year, and a balance sheet showing its assets, liabilities and financial position;
- Two monts after completing its financial statement it has to produce a written report.
- Registered NPOs have to keep records of all their financial transactions over five years.

10   WHAT REPORTS AND INFORMATION DO REGISTERED NPOS HAVE TO PROVIDE?

All registered NPOs have to give written copies of the following documents to the NPO Directorate:
- A report of the NPO activities together with the financial statements and the accounting officer's report within nine (9) months after the end of the organisation's fianancial year.
- The names, physical business and residential addresses of all the office bearers of the organisations within one month if they changed and after they take up their positions;
- The NPO physical address and should be within South Africa;
- One month notice before the organisation changes its physical address.

11   ONCE REGISTERED, CAN THE  NPO CHANGE ITS CONSTITUTION OR NAME?

Registered NPOs can change their constitution or name and when the organisation does this it must send to the Directorate:-

- A copy of the resolution and a certificate signed by a duly authorised office-bearer confirming that the resolution complies with its constitutions and all relevant laws;
- Where the NPO has resolved to change its name, the original of its current certificate of registration.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE!
in the event of a name change, a new registration certificate will be issued in the new name of the NPO.

12  WHAT HAPPPENS IF THE REGISTERED NPO DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE NPO ACT?

If a registered NPO fails to comply with the requirements of the NPO Act, the Directorate will:

- Notify the NPO of its non-compliance and give it one month to comply and the NPO must give written prove that it does comply, failure which:-
- The Directorate will ask the South African Police Service to investigate criminal charges against the office bearers and others within the organisation;
- Cancel the registration of the NPO.

13  WHAT HAPPENED IF AN ORGANISATION WANTS TO DE-REGISTER OR CLOSE?

- If a registered NPO wants to deregister it must send the NPO Directorate written notice of this along with its reasons. The NPO still has to send the Directorate reporting documents up to the point at which it deregistered.
- If a registered NPO is going to close down, then it has to let the Directorate know, in writng, within one month after closing. It must also send the Directorate all the documents to prove that it has closed down, as well as reports up to the time when it did so.
- The Directorate will cancel the organisation's certificate of registration and let the organisation know about this in writing.

14  WHAT ARE CRIMINAL OFFENCES UNDER THE NPO ACT?

It is an offence to:
- Claim to be registered with the Directorate when the organisation is not;
- Use another NPO registration number and details
- Give the Directorate false information about the affairs of your NPO

PLEASE TAKE NOTE!
that people found guilty of such offences could end up being fined and/or imprisoned.

## The Non-Profit Organisations Act 71 of 1997

The NPO Directorate within the Department of Social Development registers organisations under the Non-Profit Organisations Act No. 71 of 1997. The primary purpose of this Act is to encourage and support organisations in a wide range of work they do by:
- Creating an enabling environment for NPOs to flourish.
- Setting and maintaining adequate standards of governance, accountability and transparency.
The Act provides a voluntary registration facility for NPOs.

### WHAT IS AN NPO?
A non-profit organisation is defined as: a trust, company or other association of persons: (a)

established for a public purpose, and (b) the income and property of which are not distributable to its members or office bearers except as reasonable compensation for services rendered.

## WHICH ORGANISATIONS CAN APPLY FOR NPO STATUS?

Any organisation that is not for profit and is not part of government can apply for registration; that is:
- Non-governmental organisations (NGO).
- Community-based organisations (CBO).
- Faith-based organisations (FBO).
- Organisations that have registered as Section 21 companies under the Company Act 61 of 1973.
- Trusts that have registered with Master of the Supreme Court under the Trust Property Control Act 57 of 1988.
- Any other voluntary association that is not for profit.

The directorate can only register an organisation that has a constitution or any other founding document.

## HOW LONG DOES THE REGISTRATION PROCESS TAKE?

It would take about two months to process the entire registration. Immediately on receipt of application, an acknowledgement letter is send to the organisation; thereafter, a registration certificate follows if the application meets the requirements of the NPO Act.

## HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Registering a non-profit organisation is free of charge.

## HOW DO ORGANISATIONS REGISTER?

By submitting to the NPO Directorate:
- A complete application form (obtainable from the department).
- Two copies of the organisation's founding document ie a constitution or a deed of trust or memorandum and articles of association.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR REGISTRATION?

There are many benefits to be gained from a system of registering non-profit organisations. It:
- Improves the credibility of the sector because NPOs can account to a public office.
- Brings organisations into a formal system.
- Helps the sector to get organised.
- Helps in finding ways of getting benefits like tax incentives and funding opportunities.

## Checklist to building good financial management practices within nonprofit organisations

*Source: Department of Social Development website:* www.dsd.gov.za/npo

Every registered nonprofit organisation is **obligated** in terms of section 17 of the Nonprofit Organisations Act, 71 of 1997, to maintain its financial transaction records accordingly to the standards of generally acceptable accounting practices.

Office Bearers (governing body members) are obligated to ensure that the organisation keeps proper books, records and that annual accounts are prepared as financial statements to be submitted to the Directorate of Nonprofit Organisations, nine months after the financial year ends of the organisation.

This checklist enlists basic elements for an organisation to work towards building good management practices. Financial management in organisations involves the management and recording of the flow of money. This includes all money coming into the organisation (income) and all money flowing out (expenditure).

Proper financial systems are necessary feature of any well managed organisation-whether for profit or non profit in nature. Good financial management practices for nonprofit organisations is especially important as they play an essential part in helping to instil confidence in potential donors and beneficiaries that the organisations' assets are secure and that they are managed in an efficient manner. Effective financial management control gives a sense of confidence in the entire nonprofit sector and increase attraction of the sector to potential donors.

While the vast majority of people are honest, organisation still need to take steps to avoid putting people in situations where they might be tempted to defraud the organisation. The lack of proper guidelines may cause harm to the reputation of the organisation. Proper financial management ensures the protection of interest of the organisation's beneficiaries, its employees and governing body members themselves.

This checklist is not intended to set-out an exhaustive listing on how best to build good financial management practices within nonprofit organisations. Organisations should still always seek professional advice as much as possible from registered professional financial service providers when dealing with organisational financial matters.

The checklist articulates basic elements on good financial management that an organisation can use to develop its own internal financial control mechanism. The checklist is specifically aimed at medium to small nonprofit organisations especially community based organisations. These basic guidelines, however, can also form a framework for larger organisations to consider when developing financial control systems.

These specific elements on good financial management follow here:

### GENERAL

Check that actually tasks of approving and managing the finances are shared, so that no one single person can control all aspects of financial management process.

Check that your financial policies require more than one single employee or governing board member to be able request, approve, make payments and withdraw money from the bank.

Check that bank reconciliations are done by someone who does not sign the cheques, have access to cash nor records cash transactions.

Check that the financial records are reviewed regularly by people other than the person who is responsible for maintaining the records.

Check that your governing board receives regular, preferable a monthly, financial report and a list of all cheques drawn by your organisation.

Check that salary records are kept (locked in a filled cabinet) for all staff, detailing attendance and leave entitlements.

Check that you have an annually audit.

## MANAGING BANKING

Check that signatories take their responsibilities seriously. Remember, signatories are responsible for any cheques they sign.

Check that signatories never sign black cheques. Cheques should only be signed once they have been written out in full.

Check that your cheque book is not left lying around. It should always be kept locked in a safe place.

Check that you never issue uncrossed cheques, unless it is a cash cheque. Always cross cheque payments *'Not Tranferable'*.

Check that you never withdraw money from your savings account. Always transfer money from the savings account into the cheque account.

Check that you always bank any money promptly, such as money generated from donations, sales or fees.

Check that monthly bank reconciliations are undertaken and any discrepancies (differences either over or under) are immediately investigated.

Check that you never cash personal cheques from petty cash.

## MANAGING RECEIPTS

Check that you always issue serially numbered receipts (with the name of your organisation) for all cash received.

Check that you keep all cancelled receipts. These are still a part of your financial records.

Check that receipts books are kept in a safe and locked place.

Check that you keep a written record of any donations or pledges to the organisations.

## MANAGING EXPENDITURE

Check that all expenditure and payments are approved in writing by the person nominated by your governing board.

Check that you use a purchase order for all purchases.

Check that you always obtain quotes before you purchase equipment and other services and file them with the purchase order.

Check that once the purchase has been approved that competitive quotes are obtained before the item is purchased. Many organisations have a policy that if a purchase is over R3,000, three quotes should be obtained first.

Check that when you receive goods or services that they are in working order. Check that the quality of the goods or services you have received are the same as those you ordered.

Check that you fill in the guarantee and post it to the manufacturer.

Check that you make all payments for goods and services by cheque.

Check that you receive an invoice for your purchases and that you file this along with all the other documentation relating to the purchasing.

Check that you monitor your budget against expenditure to ensure that you can afford the purchase you are making.

Check that the funds are available before you make the purchase and that the necessary person/people approved the expenditure.

## MANAGING PETTY CASH

Check that when payments are made with cash, petty cash vouchers and receipts are submitted.

## MANAGING ASSETS

Check that you have established an assets register and that you regularly maintain it.

Check that all equipment and other items listed on the assets register has an identification mark or number. This can be a sticky label which is attached.

Check that you protect against loss and theft of equipment. Take out the necessary insurance.

Check that you use log books for motor vehicles.

Check that you follow-up on any advances you may have given and get them reimbursed as quickly as possible. For example, if you give an advance for travel to a workshop, ensure that once the person returns they reconcile the advance.

Check that you are receiving money by the due date. If there are overdue amounts owed to your organisation, chase them up.

Check that your financial reporting deadlines are adhered to according to your contract with each funder.

Check that your grant payments are received according to the time line contained in your funding contract.

## MANAGING THE MONTHLY FINANCIAL CHECK

Every month your bookkeeper and treasurer (or two other people nominated by your organisation) should review the operations of the previous month. Specifically, they should:

Check what cheques were made out for cash and what they were for?

Check if there were they any `odd' or unusual payments.

Check the wages book and all other payments.

Check which items are running over or under budget and ask and why.

Check which funds were received and whether they were deposited

Check the bank reconciliations.

Check that any other money received (such as donations, sales, membership fees) was deposited.

# How to register a co-operative

(in terms of the co-operatives act, 2005)
*Source: CIPRO website: www.cipro.gov.za*

**A.** Obtain documents from CIPRO. How can you contact us?
• Visit our offices at Block F, DTI campus, corner Essellen and Meintjies
• Streets, Sunnyside, Pretoria.
• You could visit the CIPRO website (www.cipro.gov.za).
• Write to the Registrar of Co-operatives, Private Bag X237, Pretoria, 0001.
• Phone the Customer Contact Centre of DTI at 0861-843-384.

**B.** A **CR5-FORM** (RESERVATION OF NAME) is optional, but preferable. The fee for reservation of name is **R50-00**. If you do the name reservation on the website, please complete a **CK7 form**, and type the word "Co-operative" under Comments.
If you choose not to reserve the name, remember to send at least 5 alternative proposed names for your co-operative.

**Important rules to keep in mind when choosing a co-operative name:**
• The name must always indicate what the main business objective of the Co-operative is. For example a co-operative that does Catering, the name must have a word like Catering as part of the name.
  • If the co-operative does multiple objectives the main objective must still appear as part of the name but words like "Multi-Purpose" or " Other Projects" could also form part of it.
• The words "Primary /Secondary / Tertiary Co-operative Limited" must always appear at the end of the name.

**C. DOCUMENTS FOR APPLICATIONS:**
Have a founding meeting of members, during which the documents mentioned hereunder must be completed and then be posted to the Registrar of Co-operatives or be delivered by hand to the CIPRO Lodgement section on Ground Floor at Block F:
• **A MODEL CONSTITUTION**. Two copies must be submitted. One copy may be a photocopy of the original. Please note that constitutions will **not** be retyped and reprinted during the registration process. Therefore it is very important that the parts that are completed by hand are written neatly and legibly. The constitution will be registered as it is submitted.
• A **CR 1-FORM** (Application Form);
AND
• A **CR4-FORM**, **Part I, Section A (**Appointment Of Auditor) This form must be completed by the Auditor (i.e. a Chartered Accountant). When completing the Auditor's details, his/her details must be identical to the details registered at the professional body. Information provided will be verified with the applicable professional body.
OR
• A **CR8-FORM \*** (Exemption Of Certain Auditing Requirements For A Given Period). See note hereunder (*).
  When a Co-operative cannot afford to use the services of an Auditor annually, it must complete a CR8 form and must choose one of the three options under part 2 of the form. The CR8 form is in the format of an affidavit, which must be provided by the Chairperson of the Co-operative and must be signed by a Commissioner of Oath.
  When completing Option 2(a) or 2(b) the Auditor or Accounting Officer's details must be identical to the details registered at the professional body. Information provided will be verified with the applicable professional body.

**\* Note: When completing a CR8-form:**
**Options on CR8-form:**

**Option 2(a)** of the CR8-form, means the co-operative will use the services of a Auditor (i.e. a Chartered Accountant), but the period for which the audit will be done, will be longer than 12 months (e.g. 18 months, 24 months), but not longer than 3 years. The Auditor's details must be completed on the CR8 form. A letter of consent by the Auditor on his/her business letterhead must also be attached to the CR8).

**Option 2(b)** of the form CR8-form means the co-operative will use the services of an Accounting Officer registered with one of the professional bodies listed on page 5 of the CR8-form. A letter of consent by the Accounting Officer on his/her business letterhead must also be attached to the CR8

**Option 2(c)** of the CR8-form means the co-operative will use the services of a person or organisation that is qualified to carry out the audit of a co-operative. A letter of consent by the person / the person at the organisation that will do the audit of the co-operative must be attached to the CR8. Furthermore a certified copy of the person's Qualifications must be attached.

*Note: All registered Co-operative must submit a form CR4 or CR8 annually, with their annual returns, for authorisation.*

D. Register as a CIPRO Customer on the CIPRO website to obtain a Reference. Pay the application fee of R215-00 directly into the CIPRO bank account, or at our offices, or on the CIPRO website (www.cipro.gov.za) with a credit card.

*TIP: Before considering registering a Co-operative, visit your local SEDA Office (i.e Small Enterprise Development Agency) for the following services:*
• Pre-Incorporation & Co-operative Management Training
• Assistance with business planning.

**METHOD OF PAYMENT TO CIPRO**

**MANNER OF PAYMENT OF FEES**
Revenue stamps are not a valid form of payment for prescribed fees as was the case under the previous Co-operatives Act, 1981.
All fees payable pursuant to the provisions of the Co-operatives Act, 2005, must be paid either by means of –
• direct deposit or electronic transfer at any bank into the CIPRO bank account
• Visa, Mastercard or American Express credit card payment into CIPRO bank account; or
• cash or debit card payment at the CIPRO Office.

Particulars of the CIPRO account are as follows:
**Bank** : ABSA
**Account Type** : Deposit Account
**Account Name** : CIPRO:Companies Division
**Account Number** : 4055 68 1017
**Branch Name** : Van Der Walt Street Branch

**IMPORTANT NOTES ON PAYMENT:**
To enable any person to perform any transaction with CIPRO, he or she must first register as a

customer with CIPRO and obtain a customer code. This is a once off process and the Customer Code (Client Reference) will have to be used as reference number in all transactions with CIPRO. Should any further transactions requiring payment of any fee be required this Customer Code may be used. This registration may be performed on the CIPRO Website, www.cipro.co.za, and also at the CIPRO Offices in Pretoria, all SEDA Offices countrywide and at the Offices of the Departments of Economic Affairs/Development in all Provinces.

Any fee payable under the Co-operatives Act, 2005, must be paid only after registering as a customer and must be done in advance prior to lodgment of any form stating the customer code as the CIPRO reference. Payments can be done via direct deposit at the CIPRO offices or at any bank. The reference number on the bank deposit slip must read as follows:
customer code + deposit date + transaction number of the day **(e.g. 8Rocky2504200801) (customer code + DDMMYYYY + transaction number)**.

When lodging any document requiring payment of a prescribed fee, proof of payment of that fee (deposit slip containing customer code) must accompany the documents.

## LODGMENT OF DOCUMENTS
Until further notice all applications for registration of new co-operatives must, together with proof of payment of the prescribed fee (copy of deposit slip or other proof of deposit), be lodged with CIPRO directly or posted to the Registrar of Co-operatives, Private Bag X237, Pretoria, 0001, or be couriered to CIPRO at its physical address, Block F, DTI Campus, Meintjies Street, Sunnyside, Pretoria.

## HOW TO RESERVE A NAME FOR A CO-OPERATIVE
(In terms of the Co-operatives Act, 2005):

NOTE:
Payment by revenue stamps has been abolished from 2 May 2007.
Name reservation is optional.
If you choose to reserve a name, first reserve the name, before you apply for registration of the co-operative. It is preferable to reserve a name.

**A.** Obtain form CR 5 from CIPRO. How can you contact us?
• Visit our offices at Ground Floor, Block F, DTI campus, corner Essellen and Meintjies Streets, Sunnyside.
• You could visit the CIPRO website (www.cipro.gov.za).
• Write to the Registrar of Co-operatives, Private Bag X237, Pretoria, 0001.
• Phone the Customer Contact Centre of DTI at 0861-843-384.

**B.** Have a meeting of members, during which the alternative names for the co-operative is discussed and decided on.
• A **CR5-FORM** (RESERVATION OF NAME) must be completed. The fee for reservation of name is an additional **R50-00.**
• Posted form CR 5-form to Name Reservations, CIPRO, P.O. Box 429, Pretoria, 0001, or delivered by hand to the CIPRO Lodgement section on Ground Floor at Block F.
• If you do the name reservation on the **website**, please complete a **CK7 form**, and **type the word "Co-operative" under Comments.**

**C.** Register as a **CIPRO Customer** on the CIPRO website to obtain a Reference/Customer code. **Pay the reservation of name fee** of **R50-00** directly into the CIPRO bank account, or at our offices, or on the CIPRO website (www.cipro.gov.za) with a credit card.

[This is not the original application form, and you may need to download the original from the website]

**CR 5**

Client Ref: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐                    R50

## REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
CO-OPERATIVES ACT, 2005
**APPLICATION FOR RESERVATION OF NAME
OR TRANSLATED FORM OR SHORTENED FORM OF NAME**
(Regulation 11)

. Proposed Name                    or Translated Form                    or Shortened Form
*(Indicate with a cross)*

| In order of preference | For Office Use |
|---|---|
|  | approved/not approved |
|  | approved/not approved |
|  | approved/not approved |
|  | approved/not approved |
|  | approved/not approved |
|  | approved/not approved |
| Reservation is valid for three months ||

B. Is the proposed name associated with a person, co-operative or a company? If so, what is the name and number (if a co-operative or company) and the nature of the association (e.g. member, director etc).

_____
_____
_____

C. Main object/business of the co-operative/proposed co-operative

_____
_____

Name of Applicant (print):
_____

Address to which form must be returned (if not lodged electronically):
_____
_____

Signature of applicant _____

Date: _____

_____

**Important information applicable to all co-operatives once registered**

*Source: CIPRO website: www.cipro.gov.za*

**RECORD KEEPING BY CO-OPERATIVE & ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

RECORD KEEPING

1. A registered co-operative must keep (in terms of the Co-operatives Act, 2005) at its offices the following:
   [a] Its Constitution, including any amendments thereto.
   [b] The minutes of General Meetings in a Minute Book.
   [c] The minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors in a Minute Book.
   [d] A **LIST OF MEMBERS / REGISTER OF MEMBERS** setting out-
      [i] the name and address of each member.
      [ii] the date on which each member became a member.
      [iii] if applicable, the date on which a person's membership was terminated.
      [iv] the amount of any membership fees paid, the number of membership shares owned and the number and amount of member loans.
   [e] A **REGISTER OF DIRECTORS** setting out-
      [i] the name, address and identity number of each director, including former directors.
      [ii] the date on which such directors became or ceased to be directors.
      [iii] the name name and address of any other co-operative, company or close corporation where both present and former directors are, or were, directors or members.
   [f] A **REGISTER OF DIRECTOR'S INTEREST** in contracts or undertakings.
   [g] Adequate **ACCOUNTING RECORDS**, including records reflecting the transactions between each member and the co-operative for the purpose of calculating the patronage proportion.

2. The co-operative must keep its accounting records-
   [a] for a period of five years after the end of the financial year to which they relate, in the case its main object involves its members conducting transactions with it.
   [b] for a period of three years after the end of the financial year to which they relate, in the case its main object does not involve its member conducting transactions with it.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION OF CO-OPERATIVE

3. Subject to paragraph 4 below, members of the co-operative may examine the records referred to in paragraph 1 above during normal business hours of the co-operative and may make copies thereof after payment of a fee.

4. Subject to the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000, the Board of Directors may, for a reasonable period of time, refuse information relating to any commercial transaction of the co-operative if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the disclosure may be to the disadvantage of the co-operative.

5. Where the constitution of a co-operative provides for the establishment of a supervisory committee, the supervisory committee must determine whether the Board of Directors is entitled to withhold information in terms of paragraph 4 above.

# Understandings and skills training plan

Source: JONGAPHAMBILI SINETHEMBA PROJECT, Department of Environmental Science, Rhodes University

Organisation Name:...............................................................................
Social Learning Facilitator:.................................................................

| Type of Training | Number of People (names) | Preferred Timing | Possible Training Providers | Possible sources of funding and other assistance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

## Action Plan Template

Group Name...............................................6-month Action Plan
(Dates.......................................)

Source: *JONGAPHAMBILI SINETHEMBA PROJECT*, Department of Environmental Science, Rhodes University

| Action | Date(s) | Responsibility | Materials/Support needed | Date Completed |
|--------|---------|----------------|--------------------------|----------------|
|        |         |                |                          |                |
|        |         |                |                          |                |
|        |         |                |                          |                |
|        |         |                |                          |                |
|        |         |                |                          |                |
|        |         |                |                          |                |
|        |         |                |                          |                |
|        |         |                |                          |                |
|        |         |                |                          |                |
|        |         |                |                          |                |
|        |         |                |                          |                |
|        |         |                |                          |                |

## Reflections

Source: JONGAPHAMBILI SINETHEMBA PROJECT, Department of Environmental Science, Rhodes University

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. What have you learned? | |
| 2. What have you learned that was new? | |
| 3. What did you like? | |
| 4. What did you not like? | |
| 5. What would you like to be improved? | |
| 6. What did you learn new about the group you are working with? | |

# Questions for discussion at Problem Solving Course Review

Source: *JONGAPHAMBILI SINETHEMBA PROJECT*, Department of Environmental Science, Rhodes University

1. **Course Structure**
   a. Was 6 months for the course the right length, or too long, or too short? Why?
   b. Were the workshops long enough, or should they have been longer? Why?
   c. Would you have been able to spend more time in the workshops or not? Why?
   d. Was there enough time between workshops to do the tasks properly, or not? Why?
   e. What were the main challenges you faced in attending the course?
   f. How could we help in overcoming these challenges?

2. **Course Content**
   a. Did the course cover the right things to help you work with your groups?
   b. What other things do you think the course should have covered?
   c. Which were the most useful parts of the course (Discussions, Tasks, Visits to groups)?
   d. Were the tasks useful for you and for your groups?
   e. Which were the most useful?
   f. How could we make them more useful?
   g. Were the materials (guidance, example documents etc.) useful to you?
   h. How could we make them more useful?

3. **Course Facilitation**
   a. Did you understand everything that was happening and that was discussed in the course?
   b. Which parts did you not understand well?
   c. How can we make sure that everyone does understand everything that is happening?
   d. Did you feel free to say what you wanted in the workshops?
   e. How can we make sure that everyone is comfortable in saying what they want?
   f. Did you feel that you were listened too, and that the facilitators responded to what you said, and to your concerns?
   g. What could the facilitators do to respond better to your concerns?

4. **Course Impact**
   a. What was the main impact of the course on you yourself – did it help you? How?
   b. What was the main impact of the course on your groups – did it help them? How?
   c. What could we do to make these impacts stronger?
   d. What did you expect from the course but did not get?
   e. Did you find that the course was too difficult, too easy, or just right?

5. **Course Future**
   a. Do you think the course would be useful for other people in your community and in other communities? How?
   b. What kind of people would it be most useful for?
   c. From your experience would you encourage other people to do the course?
   d. What would you say to them to encourage them?