THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE RURAL COMMUNITIES OF MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The rural nature of most parts of Mpumalanga Province poses a number of human resources development challenges to the people in the rural communities of the province. The high rate of black African people aged 20 years or older who had no schooling (32% in 1996 and 30.1% in 2001) in the province is one such a challenge. The overall unemployment rate in Mpumalanga increased from 18.6% in 1996 to 23.1% in 2001 and 26.3% in 2007 (Statistics SA, 1996; 2001 & 2007), while for black Africans in particular it increased from 20.3% in 1996 to 24.6% in 2001. Since Mpumalanga is a rural province that is populated mainly by black Africans, the conclusion may be drawn that most of the people who are affected by unemployment live in the rural communities of the province.

Research was carried out to investigate the role of the University of South Africa in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga. The institutes/bureaus of the University of South Africa were identified as the target population for the research. A questionnaire was administered to the managers of 21 sampled institutes/bureaus of the University of South Africa.

The colleges at the University of South Africa offer the non-formal, non-subsidised and need-driven training programmes through the institutes/bureaus which are regarded as the delivery arm of those programmes.

The research found that the institutes/bureaus of the University of South Africa had no significant contribution to make towards the development of human resources in the targeted communities and that most of the programmes presented were not targeting the critical developmental needs of the people in rural communities.

The role and involvement of the University of South Africa and other higher education institutions in rural communities should be directed by the genuine developmental needs of people in these communities. The training providers targeting rural areas should be informed by both theoretical and practical considerations towards the provision of training intervention programmes. The identification of training and developmental needs is crucial to a successful intervention for the development of human resources in rural communities.

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The research concluded, among others, that the University of South Africa is lacking in observing the stakeholder role and the strategic partner role of a university in the development of human resources in rural communities. It is however focusing, to a certain extent, on the service provider role. Furthermore, the University of South Africa is not carrying out the service learning practice through which the university students could participate and contribute to the development of human resources in rural communities.

Universities have the knowledge base, expertise, networks and, in most cases, the required resources to make a contribution to the development of human resources in rural communities. The universities should therefore commit themselves to this aspect in order to assist in the development of rural communities. The practice of social responsibility implies that universities should become involved in community development activities in the needy rural communities without a profit intent, but with a community development rationale. Many poor people from rural communities would benefit from the practice of social responsibility by universities.

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OPSOMMING

Vanweë die landelike aard van die grootste deel van Mpumalanga ervaar die plattelandse bevolking in hierdie provinsie talle uitdagings met betrekking tot die ontwikkeling van menslike hulpbronne. Een so 'n uitdaging in die provinsie is die groot persentasie swart mense bo die ouderdom van 20 jaar wat geen skoolopleiding ontvang het nie (32% in 1996 en 30.1% in 2001). Die totale werkloosheidsyfer in Mpumalanga het van 18.6% in 1996 tot 23.1% in 2001 en 26.3% in 2007 gestyg (Statistics SA, 1996; 2001 & 2007), en vir swart mense in hierdie provinsie in die besonder het dit van 20.3% in 1996 tot 24.6% in 2001 toegeneem. Aangesien Mpumalanga 'n landelike provinsie is wat hoofsaaklik deur swart mense bevolk word, kan die afleiding gemaak word dat die meeste van die mense wat deur werkloosheid geraak word in die landelike gebiede van die provinsie woon.

Navorsing is gedoen om ondersoek in te stel na die rol van die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika in die ontwikkeling van menslike hulpbronne in die landelike gemeenskappe van Mpumalanga. Die institute/buro's van die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika is as die teikenpopulasie van die navorsing geïdentifiseer. Die bestuurders van 21 institute/buro's van die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika wat as steekproef gedien het, het 'n vraelys voltooi.

Die Kolleges aan die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika bied die nie-formele, nie-gesubsidieerde en behoeftegedrewe opleidingsprogramme aan deur die institute/buro's wat as die vertakking beskou word wat diens moet lewer ten opsigte van hierdie programme.

Die navorsing het bevind dat die institute/buro's van die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika ten tyde van die ondersoek nie in staat was om enige beduidende bydrae te maak tot die ontwikkeling van menslike hulpbronne in die geteikende gemeenskappe nie en dat die meeste van die programme wat aangebied is nie op die kritieke ontwikkelingsbehoeftes van die mense in landelike gebiede gerig was nie.

Daar word aanbeveel dat die rol en betrokkenheid van die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika en ander hoëronderwysinstellings in landelike gemeenskappe deur die werklike ontwikkelingsbehoeftes van die mense in hierdie gemeenskappe gerig word.

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Voornemende verskaffers van opleiding in landelike gebiede behoort beide teoretiese en praktiese oorwegings in ag te neem wanneer hulle intervensieprogramme vir opleiding beplan en ontwerp. Die identifisering van opleidings- en ontwikkelingsbehoeftes is van kritieke belang in die daarstelling van 'n suksesvolle intervensie vir die ontwikkeling van menslike hulpbronne in landelike gebiede.

Op grond van die navorsing is tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat UNISA nie sy belanghebberrol en sy rol as strategiese vennoot as universiteit in die ontwikkeling van menslike hulpbronne in landelike gemeenskappe nakom nie. Daar word wel in 'n mate aan die eise van die diensverskafferrol voldoen. Voorts kom die toepassing van diensleer, waardeur studente deel kan word van en bydra tot die ontwikkeling van menslike hulpbronne in landelike gemeenskappe, nie tot sy reg nie.

Universiteite beskik oor die kennisbasis, kundigheid, netwerke en, in die meeste gevalle, oor die nodige bronne om 'n bydrae te maak tot die ontwikkeling van menslike hulpbronne in landelike gemeenskappe. Universiteite behoort hulle dus te verbind tot hierdie aspek van hulle sosiale verantwoordelikheid ten einde 'n bydrae te maak tot die ontwikkeling van landelike gemeenskappe. Die toepassing van sosiale verantwoordelikheid impliseer dat universiteite, sonder winsmotief, betrokke behoort te raak by gemeenskapsontwikkelingsaktiwiteite in die arm, landelike gemeenskappe. Baie arm mense in landelike gemeenskappe sal deur die toepassing van sodanige sosiale verantwoordelikheid deur universiteite baat vind.

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

1.1   INTRODUCTION

South Africa experienced its first democratic elections in April 1994. The new democracy raised expectations, especially from that sector of society which was previously marginalised and disadvantaged by the policies of the apartheid system of government. One of the first policies put in place by the new government, which indeed raised expectations, was the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) *(*South Africa, 1994).The effects of the apartheid system had been deeply felt, especially by the rural communities of South Africa. This was evidenced, amongst others, by the establishment of homelands (Mdladlana, 2008), which were primarily composed of rural communities, and characterised by the lack of infrastructure such as proper housing, as well as proper schools, roads, and health facilities (Nel, 1998; Shula, 2006). The rural communities also lacked a developed human resources base.

A high illiteracy rate is common in the rural communities of South Africa. The real implementers of programmes and activities on the development of rural communities should normally be the people from the rural communities themselves, but illiteracy is a major barrier thereto (Newa, 1990). Rural people need to acquire new skills, new attitudes and new technology, and literacy is the primary tool in this acquisition process. Since illiteracy is an obstacle for rural development while literacy is a form of investment, functional literacy campaigns have been introduced in most African countries (Wijetunge, 2000).

Rural communities should be developed so that they can realise and experience that to have a good quality of life does not necessarily mean access to jobs in urban areas, which generally results in the exodus of rural people to cities like Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, in the case of

South Africa. They must be helped to have the potential for self-development. These exoduses, prompted by the need for employment, often bring about a wide range of problems such as sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), HIV and AIDS, general ill-health, imprisonment as a result of involvement in criminal acts, extra-marital activities, and family disintegration. The reality of the matter is that the quality of life of people in rural communities needs to be improved. Institutions of higher education can play an important role in this regard.

This research focused on the role of the University of South Africa in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province.

This chapter has been structured to provide a logical and systematic sequence of the different sections of the chapter. The statement of the problem led to the formulation of the title of the research, which further led to the formulation of the research goals and objectives of the research. The next section, the motivation for the research, is followed by the research design, the methodology and the scope covered by the research. The scope of the research created a platform for the identification of the target group of the research. The last section of the chapter, namely the structure of the research, provides an overview of all the chapters of the research project.

1.2   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Smit (1995) states that the identification of the research problem is the starting point of any research activity. The research problem helps to focus the research and to give direction, thus making it easier for the researcher to guide the process (Uys, 1996). Daellenbach, George and McNickle (1983) emphasise the importance of the problem statement stage in a research project by stating that the ultimate success or failure of a project usually has its roots in the problem identification phase. It means that the background to the research project conceptualises the researched problem. Van Dalen (1979) points out that identifying the exact nature and dimensions of a problem is of major importance in research. It is imperative, therefore, that the problem area of this research be outlined.

Higher education institutions, the private sector, government and all other role players, are expected to contribute to the development of the South African community, particularly the under-privileged rural communities (South Africa, 1997b; South Africa, 2008). Statistical and other information on the condition in rural communities (Marais, 2001; Sekwati, Hirschowitz & Orkin, 2001; South Africa, 2000b) shows that these communities are in urgent need of developmental support which includes, among others, the provision of small business skills, literacy programmes, job creation activities, infrastructure, subsistence agricultural development for food security, and general health awareness. The high rate of unemployment, high illiteracy rate, and poor health standards in rural communities are a cause for concern (Tosterud, 1996). Higher education institutions in South Africa can play an important role in addressing the above-mentioned and related challenges faced by the rural communities.

The University of South Africa (UNISA), which is a distance learning higher education institution, is well-placed to reach a wide range of communities through its mode of education delivery and its facilities at regional service centres throughout the country. The contribution made by some distance higher education institutions in other developing countries set clear trends from which UNISA could measure and benchmark its involvement as the following examples clearly show. The Andhra Pradesh Open University and the Indira Gandhi National Open University, established in India in 1982 and 1985 respectively, are highly involved with informal education and mass literacy campaign programmes targeting rural communities (Tahir, 2001). In Pakistan, one of the original objectives of the Allama Iqbal Open University was to serve Pakistan's rural masses by providing facilities for their educational upliftment across the barriers of time, space, race and class (Tahir, 2001). In Tanzania, the National Correspondence Institute, established in the late 1970s, targeted adults in rural communities who had limited formal education (Mattee, 2000). The Central Radio and Television University, established in the late 1970s in China, is involved with education programmes targeting people in the rural communities of China. Higher education institutions are urged to contribute to improving the quality of life of the society in which they serve (Yuan, 2001). Other best practices are discussed in Section 3.2.

It can be said that the lack of education opportunities and access to development programmes disadvantage the people in rural areas. The majority (61%) of the population of Mpumalanga Province live in rural areas (Statistics SA, 2007) with all the dysfunctions normally associated with quality of life indicators in rural regions, as is shown in Section 1.5 below. The high level of unemployment is mainly found among people in rural areas (Robertson, 1985). All these factors impede the chances of developing skilled or well-trained people and prevent improvement in the quality of life of the people from the rural communities. Since human resources development is one of the issues on the South African government's priority list for skills development, both non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the public and private sector have a role to play towards this national goal (Marais, 2001; South Africa, 2006a). The problems and challenges experienced by rural people as described above initiated the research. The aim of the research was thus to determine the role played by UNISA, a public higher education institution, in the development of human resources in the rural areas of Mpumalanga Province.

The unit of analysis of the research within UNISA was its institutes, bureaus, centres and units. For purposes of this research reference will be made to institutes/bureaus when referring to the various institutes, centres, units and bureaus of UNISA.

1.2.1   **The sub-questions of the research problem statement**

The following questions guided the research:

- From a conceptual and literature perspective: What are the main areas of involvement of universities towards the development of rural communities?
- From an institutional strategic perspective: Does the University of South Africa have strategic directives committing it towards the development of rural communities as required by national policy directives?
- From an empirical-strategic perspective: Is the University of South Africa responding positively to the relevant legislative directives of the

Republic of South Africa towards the development of rural communities (and thereby addressing its commitment also to produce new knowledge in Mode 2 which is briefly explained in 2.2.13)?

1.2.2   Research question

The research question is considered the specific project management question which must be answered by the findings of the research. The research question should be a fact-oriented, information-gathering question. Mouton (2001) emphasises that the research question should be the way in which the research is linked to the research problem. Cooper and Schindler (2001) point out that a research project can have a single research question or a number of research questions. This research project was focussed on one primary and one secondary research question. Firstly, the mission of universities with regard to development and secondly, what is the role of UNISA in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province?

1.3   TITLE OF THE RESEARCH

The title of the research was developed against the background of the characteristics of Mpumalanga Province, especially taking into account that the province consists mainly of rural communities and has high unemployment levels (Statistics SA, 1995; Statistics SA, 2005; also see Section 1.5.1 below). The research was thus entitled: *The role of the University of South Africa in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province.*

1.4   RESEARCH GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

According to Delahunty, Hawkins and McDonald (1998) a research goal is something that one is trying to reach or achieve in one's research. It is the identified aim of an effort, a point marking the end of an enquiry. The research topic forms the basis on which the reach goal is formulated. The formulation of the research goal is usually made clearer through the formulation of further objectives to outline the broader research goal. The goal of this research was to determine and identify the role of UNISA in the

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development of rural communities in Mpumalanga Province. To achieve this research goal, the following objectives were consequently formulated:

- To identify the services rendered by the institutes/bureaus of UNISA in rural communities, in other words the extent to which it was meeting expectations emanating from a Mode 2 of knowledge production
- To establish the views and perceptions of UNISA through its institutes/bureaus on the development of rural communities
- To determine the strategic position and directives of UNISA towards community development
- To provide guidelines on the contributory role that UNISA institutes/bureaus have to play or can play towards the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province
- To test the theory that universities do play a development role

1.5 MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

The aim of the research was to determine the role of UNISA in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. The interest in UNISA was motivated by the following:

- It is the only comprehensive distance learning higher education institution in South Africa.
- UNISA is committed to community upliftment as stated in its mission statement and its social responsibility commitment statement, namely to liberate and develop the human potential of the educationally disadvantaged (University of South Africa, 2005).
- UNISA has institutes/bureaus that create a platform from which it can advance the development of rural communities on a larger scale.
- No research has yet been done in Mpumalanga Province that focuses on the role and contribution of UNISA in the development of human resources in the rural communities of the province.

1.5.1 **The rating of Mpumalanga Province on the human development index (HDI) indicators table**

The human development index level of an area is important in determining its developmental status. A number of socio-economic indicators need to be considered for this purpose. The key indicators for consideration are the population, the household income, the unemployment figures, the literacy levels, the non-urban population, access to electricity and access to piped water.

The socio-economic indicators of Mpumalanga Province revealed a need for a vigorous drive towards community development. Table 1.1 shows the ranking (from 1 to 9) of Mpumalanga, as compared to the other provinces, in terms of a few indicators (Sekwati, Hirschowitz & Orkin, 2001; Seloane, 2001; Johnson, 2001; Marais, 2001).

Table 1.1 Comparison of the provinces of South Africa on selected human development index (HDI) indicators

Indicator	Provinces and their ranking[*]								
	EC	FS	GP	KZN	MP	NC	LP	NW	WC
Population	3	7	2	1	7	9	4	6	5
Household income[**]	9	8	1	3	7	4	5	6	2
Unemployment	2	6	8	5	4	7	1	3	9
Literacy	8	3	2	4	6	5	7	9	1
Human development index	8	5	2	6	4	3	9	7	1
Non-urban population	3	6	9	5	3	7	1	2	8
Access to electricity	9	4	2	6	5	3	8	7	1
Access to piped water	9	4	2	7	5	3	8	6	1
Key to abbreviations of names of provinces: EC = Eastern Cape; KZN = KwaZulu-Natal; FS = Free State; MP = Mpumalanga; GP = Gauteng; NC = Northern Cape; LP = Limpopo; NW = North West; WC = Western Cape									

Note: 1 to 9 represents the position of the nine provinces from the 1st to the 9th position.

Table 1.1 shows that Mpumalanga Province falls in the bottom half of the distribution in all of the selected indicators except the human development index (HDI), where it is in position 4. However, this HDI level is mostly linked to the urban sector of the population. Another important observation is the rural nature of the province: it is rated number 3 with most of its population living in rural communities. Of the just over 3 million people in the province, 61% live in rural communities (Statistics SA, 2007). The high level of unemployment (rated 4 in Table 1.1) in the province is greatly affected by the people in rural communities (Robertson, 1985).

1.5.2 The unemployment levels in Mpumalanga Province

According to Statistics SA (2007) the unemployment rate in the province in 2007 was 26.3%, which was higher than the national figure of 25.5%. It is a cause for serious concern that this percentage had increased noticeably if compared with the 23.1% unemployment rate of 2001 (Statistics SA, 2001). These figures show an increase of 3.2% in the rate of unemployment in the province in a 6-year period. This state of affairs is indicative of the need for stakeholders in development to urgently seek ways of addressing this situation. Universities are not excluded from this national problem.

1.5.3 The educational levels of the Mpumalanga Province population

In the 2001 population survey Statistics SA (2001) found that 27.5% of people aged 20 years of age and older in Mpumalanga Province had no schooling at all and only 5.9% of the same group had had some form of higher education. This age group accounted for 53% of the total population of the province. The results of the research conducted by the National Business Initiative (2000) showed that almost half of the youth of Mpumalanga Province were considered functionally illiterate and unemployed at the time of the research. The results further showed that 73% of the population of the Ehlanzeni Region had passed Grade 12, but they had not acquired any formal skills training. These results showed that even those who had completed the secondary school education level still lacked skills.

Another challenge facing the province is that Mpumalanga is one of the two provinces in the country that do not have a university in the geographical

locality of the province (The other one is the Northern Cape Province). The establishment of the Mpumalanga National Institute for Higher Education (NIHE) is still underway. The primary focus of the NIHE is on formal qualification programmes rather than on non-formal, short courses programmes which are more relevant for the people who do not have a formal educational qualification required for entry into formal university programmes (Pandor, 2006).

The state of human and social affairs in Mpumalanga Province presented a challenge that further motivated the research. The focus of community development in South Africa in the post-independence period has been on issues relating to rural upliftment (Nel, Hill & Binns, 1997). Since human resources development is one of the national imperatives (Marais, 2001), higher education institutions, NGOs, and the public and private sector have a role to play in achieving this national goal.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design, according to Mouton (2001), indicates the type of research that will be undertaken in order to provide acceptable answers to the research problem or questions outlined in the research. Mouton's interpretation of the concept of research design is further confirmed by Cooper and Schindler (2001) who assert that the research design is the plan and structure of investigation so conceived as to obtain scientifically valid answers to research questions. It is clear from both definitions that a research design is both plan- and structure-focused. This means that the design should provide the outline and the configuration of the complete process to be followed during the entire research. The nature of the investigation in this instance necessitated a descriptive design that contained a primarily quantitative approach. Although the research was mainly quantitative in nature the data collection questionnaire included some items that required qualitative responses from the research subjects.

The research therefore required a method that would determine the views and perceptions of the targeted sample. It was necessary for the research to present data of the current situation and to describe in an objective manner what the target of the research was involved with (the current scenario) and

what it was planning to do (future focus). The application of a descriptive survey method was considered suitable for this research than the experimental, case, longitudinal, and other causal approaches (see Mouton & Marais, 1988). According to Treece and Treece (1986) the advantages of the survey method over these other methods are, among others, its objective and practical nature.

1.7   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section focuses on the process that was followed in the research to collect the data. This stage of the research is very important (Turabian, 1996) since the collected data provides the basis on which the findings and conclusions of the research are made. The research necessitated the use of a questionnaire for data gathering.

Due to financial and time constraints and the fact that only one researcher carried out the investigation, other data collection methods were not used which could have enhanced the data collection process. The research questions used in the questionnaire were formulated and refined after a comprehensive review of relevant literature and the theoretical framework of the research (see Chapters 2 and 3). Based on the above strategy, the research focused on conducting a survey by administering a questionnaire to the managers of institutes/bureaus at UNISA. The questionnaire was designed with various factors in mind, as described below.

The questionnaire items were formulated in such a manner that they sought to determine the 'what' and 'how' of UNISA's involvement in the development of rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. They contained quantitative and some qualitative questions, as dictated by the nature of the research. Quantitatively, the research focused on the numerical determinants (Bailey, 1982) of the role of UNISA. In this case the respondents would respond to structured questions, where numerical responses were to be provided. Qualitatively, the research investigated the naturalistic evaluation (Mouton, 2001) of the role of UNISA through the application of a few open-ended questions. In this case the respondents would provide their views and thoughts, as well as their perceptions of rural development in general, and the

role of UNISA in the development of rural communities in Mpumalanga Province, in particular.

1.8 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The broad field of research was rural development within the context of human resources development, and the specific focus of the investigation was within the field of education and training. The research was limited to 21 institutes/bureaus of UNISA which focused on activities that were directly related to community development in one way or another. The research required that the management of the institutes/bureaus be the target to be interviewed. The reason for selecting the 21 institutes/bureaus was that they were the most relevant in terms of their focus areas as outlined in Section 5.3. The geographical scope of the research was restricted to Mpumalanga Province, as motivated earlier in this chapter. At some point in the design of the research the possibility of including perceptions of the communities that were supposed to benefit from the UNISA interventions was considered. It was, however, concluded that extending the design of the research in this way would introduce new information gathering techniques, such as focus groups and in depth interviews, and would broaden the scope of the research beyond that which was normally required for a doctoral dissertation.

1.8.1 The relationship between education and training and human resources development

The research was conceived on the basis that education and training are moderators of human resources development which is in turn one of the requirements for the development of rural communities. A mathematical expression of this statement could be formulated as follows:

- Education + training = human resources development < rural community development

The institutes/bureaus of UNISA are seen as the platform and mechanism through which education and training could be provided to rural communities to effect their development. The target of the institutes was appropriate for the research. Figure 1.1 shows the relationship between these components and

their perceived role in the satisfaction of the basic human developmental needs.
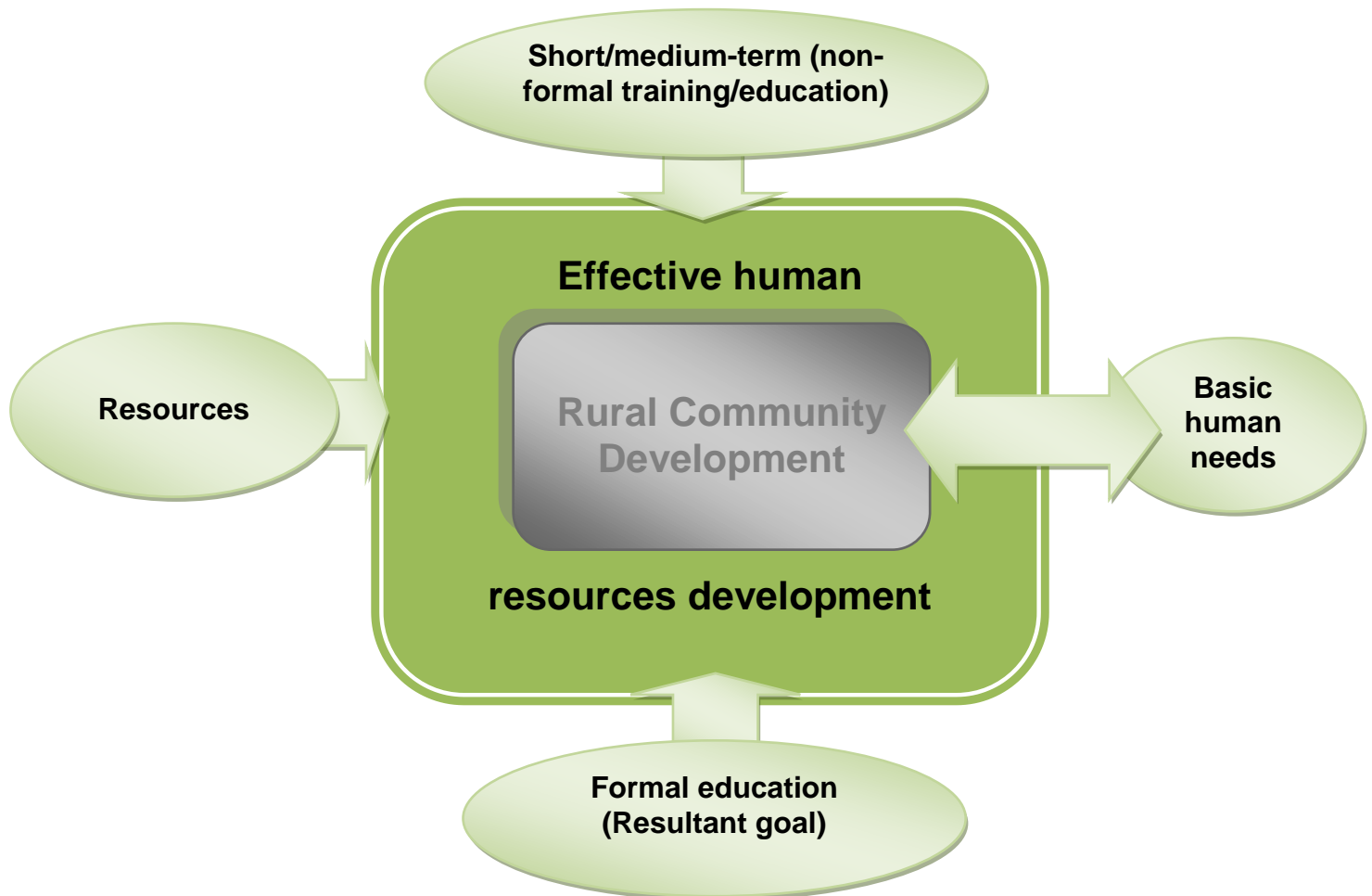
Figure: 1.1 Education and training as necessities for human resources development

The concept 'effective human resources development' (Fig. 1.1) refers to the output as a result of the provision of education, and training as input towards the development of rural communities. This phrase denotes that the development of rural communities should be seen as a subset of human resources development. The availability of resources, as in universities, serves as a primary medium or platform for the development of the rural communities. For sustainable development of rural communities, the input should not only be of a short-term nature, but should focus on long-term goals, thus making it possible for people in the rural communities to embark on formal education at a later stage. UNISA could play a role in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga and contribute to the provision of basic knowledge that would empower the

rural people. In this way they could be empowered to fend for themselves in a number of ways.

1.9 TARGET GROUP OF THE RESEARCH

The research focused on the role of UNISA in the development of rural communities in Mpumalanga Province. As mentioned earlier, UNISA has a number of institutes, centres, units and bureaus. The research targeted the 21 institutes/bureaus that were identified for the purpose of the investigation. The questionnaire was therefore distributed and administered to the managers of the 21 UNISA institutes/bureaus.

1.10 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

The research report consists of the following six chapters:

- Chapter 1 presents the orientation of the research, the research problem which led to the title of the research and the motivation for the research. It further provides the design, the methodology, the scope and the target of the research. The last section covers the structure of the research.

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of literature on the current social and economic needs of rural communities. An overview is given of Mpumalanga Province as one of the most rural provinces of South Africa. The trends regarding the role of higher education towards community development are also considered.

- Chapter 3 provides an overview of the characteristics of a higher education institution that is responsive to rural development. The chapter also provides an 'ecological' model that would guide the role of a university in rural community development.

- Chapter 4 covers the methodological strategy, design, the presentation of the sample, the method used for data gathering, the data analysis and the validity and reliability of data.

- Chapter 5 presents the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

- Chapter 6 offers a synthesis of the findings that emerged from the data analysis within the context of the literature overview and the

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theoretical framework. The chapter also provides the conclusions and recommendations and the limitations of the research.

1.11   CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the background to the purpose and focus of the research. It then presented the problem that led to the research and the design that directed the research. An outline of the process, method, scope and structure of the research was also provided in this chapter.

The developmental challenges of rural communities, particularly in developing countries, require that strategies are continuously developed to address these challenges. It is hoped that research will increasingly become a partner in the development of the approaches and initiatives that would enhance the contribution towards rural development. This research investigated the role of the University of South Africa in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province.

CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF THE KEY CONCEPTS REGARDING RURAL DEVELOPMENT AS APPLIED IN THE RESEARCH

2.1   **INTRODUCTION**

The development of rural communities in South Africa is a national challenge since most of the illiterate and unemployed people in the country are found in these communities (South Africa, 2008). This chapter identifies and elaborates on the key issues that have a direct influence on the development of rural communities. South Africa has, in the past two decades, experienced rapid and widespread changes that were in many cases aimed at addressing the above-mentioned challenges on a national scale. One of the changes was the transformation of the higher education sector in the country.

In its attempt to align higher education and its role in addressing some of the challenges in terms of human resources development, the South African government came up with a number of transformational policies and legislation such as the restructuring and transformation of higher education (South Africa, 1997a), the creation of comprehensive universities (South Africa, 2004a), the mergers of the higher education institutions in South Africa (South Africa, 2002b), the funding of higher education, the establishment of the Council on Higher Education (South Africa, 1997b), developments in technology, as well as new approaches in policy, teaching and learning, and management in the higher education sector. These initiatives have influenced the perceived and expected role of higher education in community development in general and rural communities in particular.

The theoretical framework for the involvement of higher education in the development of rural communities is outlined in the next chapter (Chapter 3). The connection between education and training and human resources development (see 1.8.1) and the essential concepts in rural development have been outlined in the preceding paragraphs.

The conceptual analysis in the following section provides a comprehensive overview of the key focus areas of the research, namely the University of South Africa and Mpumalanga Province. It also gives an outline of the concepts that are essential to rural development.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN FOCUS AREAS AND THE ESSENTIAL CONCEPTS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

This section focuses primarily on the main focus areas of the research, namely the University of South Africa and Mpumalanga Province. The brief discussion of these focus areas is followed by an analysis of the concepts that are central to rural development. The conceptual analysis informed and directed the research design and methodology (Chapter 4) and the focus of the research. The design of the questionnaire used for data collection (Annexure 1) was largely informed by the literature reviewed in this chapter and the theoretical framework dealt with in Chapter 3.

2.2.1 The University of South Africa (UNISA)

The current University of South Africa is a product of a merger of the former University of South Africa, the former Technikon Southern Africa and the Vista University Distance Education Campus (VUDEC) to form a new comprehensive and dedicated distance education institution in South Africa (South Africa, 2002b; South Africa, 2004a). The new institution retained the name University of South Africa (UNISA) for historical reasons. The background of each of the three institutions that formed the new University of South Africa is briefly sketched to elucidate the expected role of the new UNISA.

The University of the Cape of Good Hope, which changed its name to the University of South Africa in 1916, was initially only an examining body. It offered examinations but not tuition and it had the power to confer degrees on successful candidates. The renaming of the institution in 1916 ushered in a number of important changes to the university. UNISA moved its headquarters from Cape Town to Pretoria in 1918, and although it continued to be an examining body, it also incorporated a number of university colleges

which later became fully autonomous and independent teaching universities throughout the country (University of South Africa, 2004, 2008a)

Technikon RSA was established in April 1980 as an autonomous higher education institution under the House of Assembly. It had functioned earlier as the external studies facility of the then Technikon Witwatersrand (SAIDE, 1994). In 1993, Technikon RSA changed its name to Technikon Southern Africa, commonly known as Technikon SA (TSA), to reflect its commitment to playing a key role in the upliftment of vocational education in the entire subcontinent.

During 1978 the then National Party South African government appointed a commission of enquiry to investigate the university needs and requirements of urban blacks in the Republic of South Africa. The commission submitted its report to the government in 1980, the outcome of which was the decision to establish Vista University in terms of Act 106 of 1981 (South Africa, 1981). This university came into being on 1 January 1982 with a central administrative office in Pretoria and decentralised campuses in the main black urban areas. The Vista University Distance Education Campus (VUDEC) was established in Pretoria on 1 April 1982 (University of South Africa, 2004). Its original purpose was to improve the qualifications of teachers by means of distance tuition. Vista University's first academic year began on 1 January 1983.

In January 2004 the former UNISA was merged with Technikon Southern Africa with the incorporated the distance education campus (VUDEC) of Vista University to form the new UNISA (South Africa, 2003a; South Africa, 2003b). The merger brought together vast resources and infrastructure, while consolidating the knowledge bases built up over the years by the three former institutions (University of South Africa, 2004).

The present UNISA consists of five colleges, the College of Law, the College of Economic and Management Sciences, the College of Engineering, Science and Technology, the College of Human Sciences and the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (University of South Africa, 2006). Each college is divided into schools and then academic departments.

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Institutes, centres, units and bureaus (see 5.1), henceforth referred to as institutes/bureaus, are located in the different colleges.

The university has decentralised its learner support services to regional hubs. There are currently five (5) regional hubs throughout the university, namely the Cape Coastal Region (responsible for the Western Cape and Eastern Cape Provinces), the Midlands Region (responsible for the Free State, Northern Cape and North West Provinces), the Gauteng Region (responsible for the Gauteng Province), the KwaZulu-Natal Region (responsible for the KwaZulu-Natal Province) and the North Eastern Region (responsible for two provinces, namely the Mpumalanga and Limpopo Provinces) (University of South Africa, 2009). The North Eastern Region has two regional service centres (RSCs) in Mpumalanga Province, namely the Middelburg RSC and the Nelspruit RSC. These two RSCs provide the university with facilities that are strategically located for servicing people in Mpumalanga Province.

Community participation is part of the mission of UNISA (University of South Africa, 2007). For many years various sections, departments, centres, units, bureaus and institutes (see Table 5.1) at UNISA have participated in community-based projects, often as an integral part of the university's teaching and research endeavours. The university developed a Community Participation Policy in 2000. The main aim of the policy was to outline the university's community commitment and guide the university community in the formation of active partnerships between UNISA and society to ensure the sharing of knowledge and resources for mutual benefit. The following are objectives of the university through the existence of the Community Participation Policy (University of South Africa, 2000):

- To establish a culture of citizenship at UNISA
- To promote and support community projects to build capacity according to the community participation mission of UNISA
- To market community participation at UNISA
- To establish and maintain networking links between UNISA projects and the community
- To promote fundraising support for UNISA and community projects

This section has shown how the current UNISA was established. It has also indicated UNISA's facilities that provide it with the capacity to offer services and support to communities throughout South Africa. It is clear, therefore, that it should have the ability to fulfil the expected and perceived role of a comprehensive distance university.

2.2.2 **The demographic overview of Mpumalanga Province**

Mpumalanga Province is situated in the eastern part of South Africa. It borders Mozambique and Swaziland (see Annexure 2). Mpumalanga Province has a surface area of 79 490 km^2 and currently occupies position six in terms of population when compared with the other provinces of South Africa, with a population of 3 643 435, which accounts for 7.5% of the total population of the country (Statistics SA, 2007). Mpumalanga Province contributed 4.4% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country in 2007. The unemployment rate increased from 18.6% in 1996 to 23.1% in 2001 (Statistics SA, 1996, 2001) and further increased to 26.3% in 2007, which was just over the national unemployment rate of 25.5% (Statistics SA, 2007).

Languages that are spoken in the province are Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Sepedi, SiSwati and Tsonga. The province is made up mainly of areas of the former homelands, namely KaNgwane, Lebowa, KwaNdebele, and Gazankulu and some areas of the former Eastern Transvaal. Since vast areas of the former homelands were rural areas, it is not surprising that 69% of the population of Mpumalanga Province lived in rural areas in 1996 (Statistics SA, 1996). Table 1.1 has indicated that this province is rated seventh of the nine provinces of South Africa in terms of the household income, fourth regarding unemployment levels, and sixth regarding literacy. This shows that Mpumalanga is one of the provinces of South Africa that experience huge human developmental challenges. The present demarcation has divided the province into three regions, namely the Ehlanzeni Region, Nkangala Region and Gert Sibande Region (see Annexure 2). Nelspruit is the capital city of the province and the seat of the provincial government. The economy of the province is mainly dependent on the contribution of its primary and secondary sectors such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing,

and electricity (Duiker Mining, 1999). Mpumalanga also boasts the internationally renowned Kruger National Park.

2.2.3 Rural areas in the context of the South African government

It is interesting to note that there is no clearly accepted definition of a rural area within the South African government context. As an interim measure, the South African government, through its Rural Development Strategy Document (South Africa, 1995c) refers to rural areas as those areas that have the lowest level of services, and the greatest average distance to the nearest service points. These include large-scale farming areas, many – but not all – of the ex-Bantustan (homeland) areas, and small municipalities with little potential to raise their own taxes which would be sufficient to meet the costs of services. This understanding of rural communities by government shows that most of the poor people are found in rural communities. The Anti-Poverty Strategy for SA Discussion Document (South Africa, 2008) refers to people living in poor areas such as rural areas, townships and farms as the people who are most vulnerable to poverty.

Castle (2001) defines rural areas in terms of the sparse human population, thereby focusing on space that translates into distance, and states that such areas are challenged to overcome the distance that requires time and other resources. Castle identifies the following challenges faced by rural people: access to communication, lack of adequate health and education services, poor economic development, unprofitable land use, poor environmental quality, and persistent low income and poverty. Castle's definition, indicating that rural areas have populations spread between sparsely inhabited communities and small and middle-sized towns, is further supported by Illouz-Winicki and Paillard (1998) who define rural regions as regions where the population is spread in sparsely inhabited communities. This definition of rural areas differs from the definition of rural areas in the United States of America where half of the rural land is used for farming (Castle, 2001), since in South Africa about 90% of rural people depend on non-farming activities for a living. Warner (1989) argues that similar problems affect all communities across the rural-urban spectrum. Warner differentiates between rural and urban areas in terms of economic, human, environmental, and institutional resources. The resource needs are dealt with later in this chapter.

The South African government's Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy Document (South Africa, 2000b) provides the following facts about the status of rural areas in South Africa in the year 2000:

- Poverty in South Africa is concentrated in rural areas – 75% of the country's poor live in rural areas.

- Farm workers are among the poorest and most vulnerable households in rural areas.

- Women-headed households are mostly found in rural areas and are particularly disadvantaged.

- The majority of children in rural areas live in households with incomes below the minimum subsistence levels.

- Forty-five percent of South Africa's population live in rural areas. Of this group, 85% live in former homelands.

- Only 11% of rural households have access to adequate housing, piped water and acceptable sanitation.

- Twenty-two percent of the rural population live in abject poverty.

The above-mentioned shows that rural people are dependent on urban-sourced incomes, a fact that has the potential to cause the disintegration of rural families. The urban drift of rural people in search of greener pastures and job opportunities causes a greater shortage of the already practically non-existing human resources (Illouz-Winicki & Paillard, 1998; Kokkranikal & Baum, 2002).

Governments are expected to play a major role in enhancing the development of rural communities. At the time of the Clinton administration, the American government established the Rural Empowerment Zone and enterprise Community Programme which was aimed at revitalising the distressed rural communities (Rushing, 2000). This initiative is an example of what governments need to do to help develop the rural communities. The South African government has launched some developmental initiatives such as the National Public Works Programme, which was established in 1995 to assist in addressing the plight of rural people (South Africa, 1995b). This programme was intended to provide, among others, education and training (both vocational and generic) to unemployed people, especially women, the youth

and rural dwellers, to increase their chances of becoming self-employed and/or entering the formal economy (Hercules, Anderson & Dangor, 1997). Another government initiative was the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) aimed at providing poverty and income relief through temporary work for the unemployed, thus according them an opportunity to carry out socially useful activities (South Africa, 2006b). The Expanded Public Work Programme was launched in April 2004 to promote economic growth and create sustainable development. The immediate goal of Phase 1 of the EPWP was to help alleviate unemployment by creating at least 1 million work opportunities, of which at least 40% of beneficiaries would be women, 30% youth and 2% people with disabilities. This programme targeted especially the poor from rural communities.

The government also initiated the Human Resource Development Strategy (South Africa, 2001c) aimed at, among others, maximising the potential of the people of South Africa, through the acquisition of knowledge and skills, to work productively and competitively in order to achieve a rising quality of life. Another government initiative was the Rural Development Strategy of the Government of National Unity developed in 1995 (South Africa, 1995c). This Strategy was aimed at responding to what were perceived as the five aspects of 'rural reality', namely poverty, agricultural dualism, new local government, poor support services and spatial chaos. Poverty was seen as one of the key challenges faced by the rural areas in South Africa. The government was concerned about this 'reality' to which Nel (1998) alluded as being indicative of the high poverty levels in rural communities.

The very latest development of the South African government was the establishment of a new Ministry of Rural Development and Land Affairs (South Africa, 2009). The creation of a dedicated ministry for rural development shows the level of commitment of government to uplift the living standards of people in rural communities.

These government initiatives indicate that government is concerned about the low standard of living and the lack of skills of many South Africans; notably the rural masses of this country.

2.2.4   **Development and its significance to rural communities**

According to Delahunty, Hawkins and McDonald (1998) the noun 'development' is derived from the verb 'to develop', which means to cause to grow larger, fuller or more mature. According to this definition development has to do with growth in, among others, knowledge and skills (Gamble, 2003). Gegeo (1998) defines development as a process of growth springing from within, which involves a growing individual and collective self-reliance, and focuses not only on material and economic needs, but also on emotional, ethical, and political empowerment. This view is further supported by Nel, Hill and Binns (1997) who state that development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry, but it is about active involvement and growing empowerment. The empowerment implies the development of skills to enable the individuals to be sustainable and stand on their own (Liou, 2000). Pont (1995) defines development as a process of working with individuals or organisations to enable them to cross a threshold, which has qualitative importance to them and their lives. Development is about empowering people to perform a set of tasks at a high standard, where standards are measured by their appropriateness for a specified and yet dynamic social or economic purpose. The involvement of the local rural communities, who are targeted by the development initiatives, is emphasised by Gegeo (1998) who argues that local communities ought to participate in development initiatives that target them. It is therefore necessary for rural community members to have the basic requirements for participation, namely literacy and numeracy skills. The Presidential Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (South Africa, 2000b) refers to rural development as a dimensional concept that focuses not only on poverty alleviation, but also on the change of rural environments. This indicates the crucial role of training in development, particularly rural development. The role of development to uplift rural communities cannot be overemphasised. It is of critical importance that development programmes and/or projects are developed, packaged and sourced to rural communities. Higher education and other development agents need to take this responsibility very seriously in order to assist rural communities.

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2.2.5   **Training as a developmental activity**

It was necessary to pursue the concept of training as a developmental activity in detail since training is one of the important components of human resources development, as indicated by the mathematical expression provided in section 1.8.1. Training is presented in the expression as a contributor to the development of human resources. Training as a teaching activity should be seen as one of the three primary roles of a university (see Figure 3.2).

The focus of the research on the institutes/bureaus at UNISA was directly linked to the concept of training as a developmental activity since the institutes/bureaus are considered to be one of the platforms through which the university can provide the university's community participation training programmes and projects (University of South Africa, 2000). The World Bank (1991) defines development as a sustainable increase in living standards that encompasses material consumption, education, health, and environmental protection. This shows that when people are to be developed, the focus should be on equipping them with the tools to access such development, where training could be considered one of such tools. This could be done, among others, through the provision of skills training, as will be discussed in the coming sections of this chapter. Pont (1995) refers to training as the relatively systematic attempt to transfer knowledge or skills from one who knows or can do to one who does not know or cannot do. The main aim of training is to empower those who participate in the activity with the skills of those who are skilled so that they can apply these acquired skills to their own advantage (Louw & Butcher, 2005). Since higher education institutions are centres of knowledge and expertise, they have a critical role in providing for this activity (Moran & Rumble, 2004). Van Dyk, Nel and Van Zloedol (1992) name some of the principles of training:

- All people are capable of learning. Any normal person can learn something at any time in his/her life.

- People must be motivated to learn.

- Learning is an active process.

- Guidance is important in the learning process.

- Training standards must be set.

According to James (1995) training is a fundamental human right. This means that it is imperative that people should be trained in order to unlock the potential for their development. Training provides the basic elements of growing a successful business (Martorana, 1996). Therefore the provision of training should intend to develop the cognitive ability of people and thus improve their attitudes towards self-development (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001).

2.2.6 **Resources as important components of development**

According to Watson (1972) the term 'resource' refers to a source of supply or support. He refers to resources as a national asset, a useful or valuable possession or quality of a country, organisation or person. This definition is supported by the Kavanagh (2006) which links the term 'resource' to a stock or supply of material or assets that can be drawn upon when needed. Resources are considered an important factor in the empowerment of the needy and marginalised (Christy-McMullin, 2006). All of the above definitions show that a resource is a valuable asset which provides a nation or community with the assurance and potential for survival. Since rural communities are characterised by poverty and a lack of adequate resources, among others, they need support in terms of human, economic, environmental, institutional, and informational resources. These resources were central to the focus of the research since they are primary to development. The following sub-sections deal with each of the identified resources to indicate their importance and contribution in the development of rural communities.

2.2.6.1 Human resources

In the context of this research, the term 'human resources' refers to the human potential which is acquired for the upliftment of an area. When referring to human resources in rural areas, one talks of the available skilled persons in such areas. It must be indicated, however, that in most cases

when the literature refers to human resources development (HRD), it mostly refers to employees within a working environment, such as in the public and private sector (Lindenfeld, 1995; Kruger, Smit & Le Roux, 1996; Garavan, Morley, Gunnigle & Collins, 2001; Christy-McMullin & Shobe, 2007). The focus of this research was on human resources as an asset that can be drawn on to benefit society, and not necessarily on the employees of an establishment/company or industry/business.

Rural areas continue to be hampered by under-investment in the human resources base (Warner, 1989; Saarinen, 2007). Lower educational attainment levels among rural adults place a constraint on both present and future developmental opportunities. The high illiteracy rates are indicative of the urgent need to provide training and developmental opportunities to the rural masses. Since many of the rural poor are children and women, this implies that unless corrective measures are taken, the problem of a human resources shortage in rural areas will continue. The World Bank (1991) has cautioned that safety nets are needed to protect the most vulnerable groups, namely the unemployed rural people, the disabled, and (often) women, who all lack access to public programmes that are linked to employment; and the rural poor.

2.2.6.2 Economic resources

The effects of the shortage of human resources in rural areas have automatically led to the unavailability and/or shortage of economic activities and resources. The high unemployment rate in rural areas and the migration to urban areas have resulted in a poor economic base for rural areas. As a result of minimal economic involvement and activity in rural areas the rural people do not participate significantly in their own economic development.

2.2.6.3 Environmental resources

Supporting the environment for natural resource-based activities has been a long-standing concern in rural areas. In recent years environmental management has become a key component of rural development as more and more attention is given to protecting clean water supplies, providing safe places to dispose of waste, and maintaining the natural landscape to support

wildlife and recreation (Warner, 1989). In view of the lack of education and appropriate knowledge it is, however, problematic for rural areas to address these increasingly complex environmental concerns. The quality of life is also a critical concern in rural communities. The environmental resources play a major role in the provision of a healthy environment for rural dwellers. Providing education and training on environmental issues to rural communities is a major challenge if the environmental resources are to be developed and maintained. Rural tourism has become a booming industry in recent years. Rural communities have to be equipped with the necessary skills to be able to start, develop and manage this business.

2.2.6.4 Institutional resources

The major problem facing rural regions is access to information as well as to the services of higher education institutions. Their isolation further limits and inhibits rural people from accessing institutional support and services that could contribute to development. For this reason distance education institutions, with their capacity, could play a major role in providing education and training. The University of South Africa, for instance, with its decentralised regional infrastructure and resources, is well-positioned to contribute to education and training in rural areas, hence the focus of this research project on the role of the University of South Africa in the development of the human resources in the rural areas of Mpumalanga Province.

2.2.6.5 Information resources

As shown later in this chapter, literacy plays a major role in the development of human resources. According to Wijetunge (2000) literacy and lifelong learning cannot exist in a vacuum. For literacy to be expanded, reading and writing capabilities and material are required, which means that resources should be available. In Australia and New Zealand it is a common practice to develop literacy centres based on public libraries, where literacy trainers are identified and appointed to positions in public libraries (Timperley & Parr, 2009). When attending classes, learners gradually develop an interest and learn to use the material in the library. A public library that is fully integrated with the literacy and post-literacy educational programme can go further by providing remedial reading, personal counselling advocacy or referral (Newa,

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1990). In Sri Lanka, the Negombo public library, which falls under the local authority, succeeded in providing information for the local fishing community on fishery-related activities such as the changing process in the fishing technology, as well as the conservation of fish stock (Karunawathie, 1998). Similar approaches can be employed in rural areas to focus on such matters as environmental issues, agricultural support information and health advice, thus providing for lifelong learning opportunities for people in rural communities (Angelis & Marock, 2001; Hugo, Boshoff, Traut, Zungu-Dirwayi & Stein, 2003).

Kiplang'at (1999) identifies the problem of inadequate information provision to the rural areas, where most of the population in developing countries live. He pointed out that the shortage of information makes it difficult for rural people to get information in a timely fashion and appropriate format. There is a need for rural areas to be equipped with information and information resources facilities. Institutions of higher education can play a major role in working together with bodies such as public libraries, local schools, churches and hospitals to establish learning centres for the rural people. This would include the development and provision of training content to the illiterate. Talan (2001) reported on the success of the Californian libraries in what she terms "family literacy libraries". These libraries have literacy programmes that are aimed at eliminating families' illiteracy problems. California saw a growth in such facilities from 35 to 77 in 2000. The family literacy programmes target four basic components of family literacy, namely adult literacy, emerging literacy for children, intergenerational activities and parenting. Programmes are developed for these focal points. Institutions of higher education can play an important role in initiating similar programmes in the rural areas of South Africa. Mackay (2001) contends that the provision of education (lifelong learning) must be inclusive and flexible and it must be brought to the people in their own communities, no matter where they are located (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2000; Megwa, 2007). In view of the nature of their tuition, distance learning institutions can form working relationships and partnerships with libraries and community-based infrastructures in this way, to bring education and training to the rural masses. In the USA, Cornell University has participated extensively in providing research and extension programmes, both within Cornell and between Cornell and other state and local institutions,

tracking emerging rural needs and issues, and supporting new research and extension programmes (Warner, 1989).

The nature of distance education is briefly discussed in the next section.

2.2.7 Distance education – a typical UNISA mode of learning delivery

A very basic definition of distance education is that it is learning at a distance. Siaciwena (2000) defines distance education as a system of instructional methods in which teaching is performed without the teacher's presence, where communication between the teacher and the learner is then facilitated by print, electronic, mechanical and other devices. Tahir's (2001) definition adds that distance education is a mode of teaching that includes the use of newspapers, pamphlets, magazines, books, radio, television, film and the postal services as sources of teaching. According to Intelecon Research (2000) distance education is commonly applied to both formal and non-formal learning. Buitendacht (1995) refers to distance education as a vehicle for open learning because it features the elements of student support, recognition of prior experience, open access, freedom of pace, and freedom of space. The other terms that are used interchangeably with 'distance education' are 'lifelong learning' and 'open learning'. Lifelong learning will be dealt with in detail in the next section. The Open University of the Netherlands describes Open Learning in terms of four kinds of freedom, namely free and open access, freedom of place and time, freedom of pacing, and freedom to combine modules from different programmes (Intelecon Research, 2000).

An indication of the flexibility of distance education is that even working people can study while they are full-time employees (Tahir, 2001). Distance education institutions are strategically suited to serve rural people who cannot afford the cost of residential institutions. They can also provide the support needed by the people in the rural communities through their decentralised structures which are part of a fully fledged distance education institution (McLoughlin, 2002). The Intelecon Research (2000) indicated in its report that distance education is often most needed in rural and remote areas, where it is economically challenging to provide for a small number of residents the same depth and range of education opportunities that cities enjoy. Distance education can enhance and complement local resources. Furthermore, the

need for economic development in rural areas makes education all the more crucial, as discussed below.

2.2.8 **Lifelong learning for rural human development**

The world, society and life itself are in a state of flux (Tamkin, 1997). This means that people are exhorted to change faster, to learn more quickly and more wisely, and to adapt to the challenges of the present life. It is imperative that non-learners should be convinced to learn and that learners continue learning (Plested & Dale, 2001). The complex environment that is confronted with rapid change places a constant burden on people to acquire a multiplicity of skills and knowledge, irrespective of their age or social, political or economic status. Learning today is not a luxury limited only to the elite, but a commodity essential for survival. Learning is a process of active engagement with experience (Louw & Butcher, 2005). It is what people should do when they want to make sense of this world. Effective learning will lead to a desire to learn more and thus contribute to human development.

Wijetunge (2000) contends that learning should be a lifelong exercise. He refers to lifelong learning as the learning achieved throughout life – from pre-nursery to post-retirement – the so-called 'womb-to-tomb learning'. Shepherd (1998) stresses that lifelong learning is important because continuous learning is essential for survival. He states that individuals who are not learning could be excluded from academic and hence economic activities and end up disadvantaged. This understanding is further supported by Gamble (2003) whose view is that a growing economy forces the employers to scramble for a skilled work force. Since rural areas continue to be hampered by under-investment in the human resources base (Warner, 1989), the lower educational attainment levels among rural adults constrain both present and future development opportunities. Therefore, lifelong learning has a major contributory role in the development of human resources in rural areas.

Education providers, at all levels, need to focus on the needs of rural people as learners – finding out why, when, and how they prefer to learn, coming up with new learning methods and identifying the basic skills which people need in order to learn better. This means that they should concentrate on developing a culture of learning and enhancing rural people's learning

potential and their ability to access and handle information. It also entails improving their thinking skills, and using the modern educational delivery technologies and tools to provide new learning for people wherever they are (McQuaid, Lindsay & Greig, 2004; Ajuwoni, 2006). Government has an important part to play in understanding and creating the conditions for a true lifelong learning society, particularly in rural areas, so that the nation will prosper economically and mentally. The mental prosperity will lay a foundation for a learning culture. The result of the learning culture will be a community that is susceptible to the acquisition of skills, talents, knowledge and values. There is, however, a challenge to lifelong learning. Lifelong learning cannot be achieved without literacy, since reading and writing are essential for learning (Wijetunge, 2000). The concepts 'literacy' and 'numeracy' will, therefore, be dealt with subsequently.

2.2.9 Literacy and numeracy for rural development

As stated earlier, the real implementers of rural development should be the rural people themselves, but illiteracy is a barrier to achieve this. Newa (1990) supports this notion. The rural people need to acquire new skills, new attitudes and new technology, and literacy is the primary tool in this acquisition process (Wijetunge, 2000; Moss, 2009). There is, therefore, a need to address the problem or challenge that is posed by the illiteracy of rural people. Hercules, Anderson and Dangor (1997) state that, from the human development perspective, poverty is comprised of four main elements, namely illiteracy, short life, exclusion and a lack of material means. This implies that since illiteracy is amongst the main contributors to human poverty, its prevalence is detrimental to human development, which is in most instances the case in rural communities.

The negative impact of illiteracy on human resources development cannot be separated from the effect of poor numeracy skills. The lack of numeracy skills in people from rural communities further compounds their challenges in terms of self-sufficiency.

2.2.9.1 Literacy and numeracy

Literacy, in its purest form, refers to the ability to read and write (Harrison-Walker, 1995; Timperley & Parr, 2009). However, the question is: What level of reading ability constitutes being literate? Torrence and Torrence (1987) state that for years governments' statistics have indicated literacy to mean being able to read at a Grade 5 level. This has in fact become the norm and general practice. Thus illiteracy can be defined as the reading ability below a Grade 5 reading level.

Literacy is, however, no longer an absolute term. Literacy expands to acknowledge the existence of functional literacy and marginal literacy (Fields, 1985; Goddard, 1987; Lee, 1988; Makin, 2003; De Haan, 2005), where functional literacy is defined as the lack of literacy skills and knowledge needed for coping successfully with day-to-day living. A person is functionally literate when he/she is able to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in the groups and community and for enabling the continued use of reading, writing and calculating (UNESCO, 2000). Marginal or borderline literacy refers to having the basic skills needed to be employable, to function independently in society, and to have a positive effect on the literacy of one's children (Lee, 1988). Lee first argued that while functional and marginal literacy are not distinguished operationally in literature, there appears to be general agreement that both exist and that the difference is simply one of degree. What is crucial is that functionally or marginally literate people have a limitation in their reading, writing, speaking and numeracy skills. This means that although they can function, they are not proficient. They may have some reading acuity, but they cannot apply the information in a practical manner (Fields, 1985). Wijetunge (2000) supports this argument in stating that although literacy denotes the ability to read and write it later accommodates and/or adds the attribute of functionality to imply the competency of using the reading and writing ability for the development of the individual as well as the community. Literacy is a factor in the process of development of the self as well as of the community.

Literacy is a basic skill without which few people in a modern industrial society can afford to be (Parsons & Bynner, 1997). It is clear that illiteracy is

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an obstacle to rural development. Its eradication must, therefore, be a component of rural development initiatives. This means that illiterate adults and others who did not have the opportunity in their youth to receive a full elementary education, should be given the opportunity to a form of education for their development (UNESCO, 2000). Literacy must therefore be regarded as a form of investment that accommodates those who did not have the opportunity to attain it. Most African countries have invested in functional literacy campaigns (Wijetunge, 2000). An example of a developing country that has embarked on a vigorous campaign to fight the problem of illiteracy is Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government realised the gravity of illiteracy and static learning. Hence, the education policy reforms have attended to the development of literacy and lifelong learning.

A further complication is that literacy cannot be defined in static terms. It must change as the demands of everyday life change. What once were 'basic employment skills' may be inadequate in today's high technology environment (Lee, 1988). Indeed, many jobs today require a greater level of competence in literacy than in the past, and the majority of jobs that did not require such abilities have disappeared (Dench, 1997; Gamble, 2003; Louw & Butcher, 2005). For example, a cleaner in a factory may need to be able to read whether or not products used in the manufacturing process are toxic. With the advent of information technology and spreadsheet software, many people now have access to numerical information and may be required to work with it, thereby requiring numeracy skills. In their research Bynner and Parsons (1997a) found that a relationship exists between basic skills problems and poor labour market experience. Men with poor numeracy or literacy skills have problems gaining entry to secure employment and in retaining it. Women with poor basic skills have similar problems with labour market entry and are the first to exit from employment. In subsequent research by Bynner and Parsons (1997b) the increasing importance of numeracy was made strikingly clear. Between 18 and 37 years of age a higher percentage of men and women who had poor numeracy and competent literacy were out of full-time employment in comparison with men and women who had competent numeracy and poor literacy (Bynner & Parsons, 1997b). It can be argued, therefore, that numeracy problems appear to reduce employment opportunities (Parsons & Bynner, 1999).

Colleges of further education and training, as well as higher education institutions, should devote time to helping people improve their basic skills (Moran & Rumble, 2004). In higher education institutions scientific knowledge is sought, created, developed and disseminated. It is, therefore, important that higher education institutions embark on a strategy to assist communities with information dissemination. Johnson (1985), Hoy and Berstein (1981), and Bowman (1963) have shown how effective collaboration between USA universities, the business community, farmers and other role players can be of help in the dissemination of information and knowledge to the people. Similarly, the creation and development of the Redbrick University in Britain's industrial heartland in the mid- to late nineteenth century were a consequence of the collaboration between the Royal Society of Arts, the local industries, the local communities and business, to the vast benefit of the communities concerned (MacLeod, McFarlane & Davis, 1997). The South African government has created the environment for literacy development through the enactment of the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Act, No. 52 of 2000. This Act provides for the establishment of ABET centres. Community leadership, institutions of higher education and these ABET centres can further collaborate towards the provision of education and training in rural areas.

2.2.10 Skills training

As shown above, illiteracy and poor numeracy play a major role in restricting access to training and job opportunities (Parsons & Bynner, 1997; Makin, 2003). The question arises: What is the role of training towards the development of rural communities?

This section focuses on the role of training in the provision and development of skills. Kavanagh (2006) points out that the noun 'training' is derived from the verb 'to train', which means to teach a person or animal a particular skill or instruction. Therefore, training aims at changing behaviour. Skills training is not different from any other business activity in that it also needs clear objectives. Skills training should seek to address the identified training needs. Stewart (1993) indicates that training is a process that consists of the identification of needs, designing the training programme, implementing the

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training, and evaluating the outcomes of the training. Figure 2.1 shows the cycle as identified by Stewart.
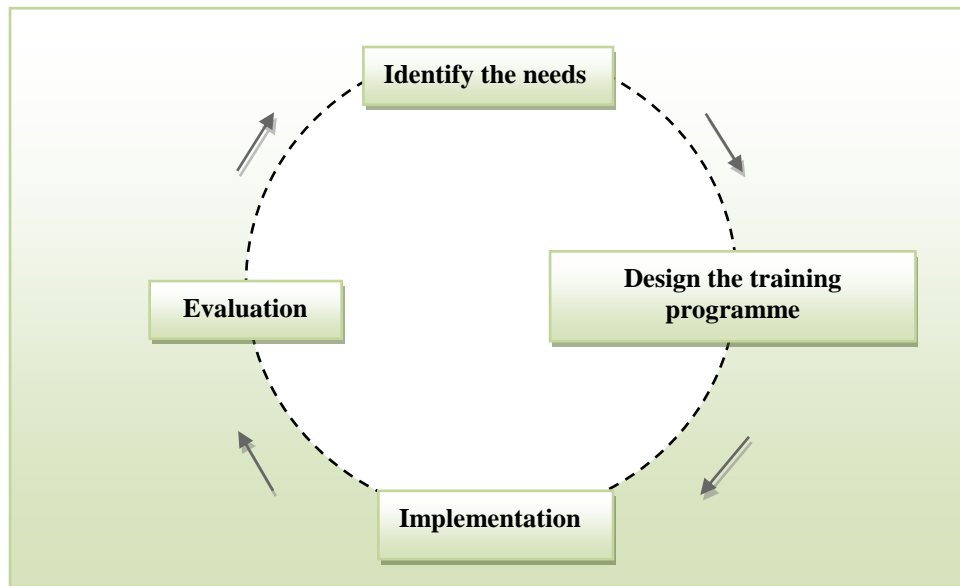
Figure 2.1: Cycle associated with training
Source: Stewart (1993)

This cycle shows that it is important first to identify the needs of the people in order to design a programme relevant to the identified needs. This phase is followed by the implementation phase. After implementation, it is important to evaluate the outcomes of the training to see if the needs have been satisfied. If other needs arose during the evaluation stage, the process will then continue. Stewart (1993) shows the need of training by means of a diagram to indicate what training is expected to achieve (see Figure 2.2). This implies that the effects of training should be measured through the achieved results.
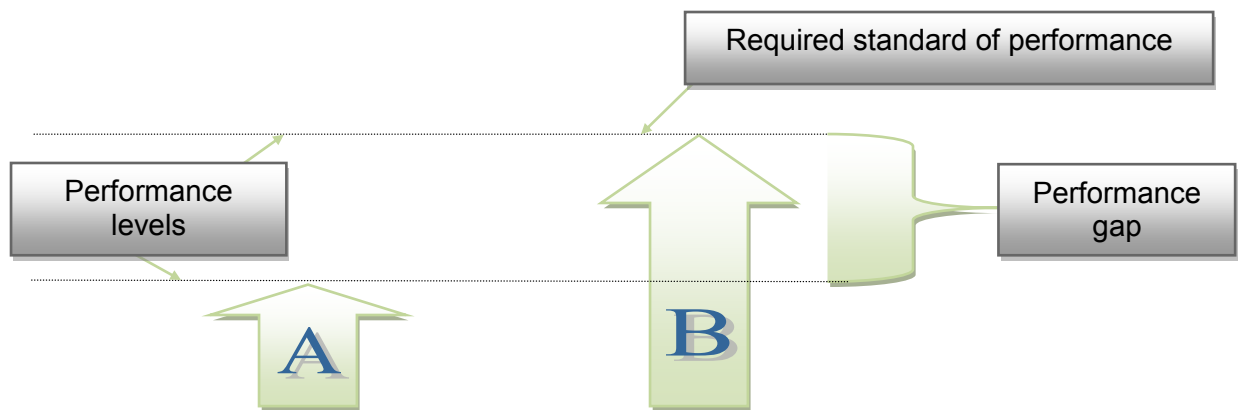
Figure 2.2: Effects of training
Source: Stewart (1993)

Figure 2.2 above shows two structures (A and B) whose performances are not equal. The performance gap between A and B indicates a lack of knowledge and/or skill in A. Kavanagh (2006) defines a need as something which is necessary, a discrepancy or a gap between the way things are and the way things ought to be. This definition supports the reasoning as depicted in Figure 2.2, where the difference in performance levels shows that there is a need for training in order for the knowledge of A to be up to the required level and/or standard. Martorana (1996) refers to training as the provision of skills to grow a successful enterprise, thus closing the gap that, if it exists, may lead to an unsuccessful enterprise.

Chandler (1996) views skills and abilities as a positive moderator of the relationship between experience and performance. This view is shared by Rushing (2000) who views empowerment as the result to be achieved through any developmental endeavour. When people are exposed to skills training, they most probably develop their experience and improved performance. It is, therefore, imperative that rural and unemployed people be exposed to vocational training to develop their experience and improve their performance. Brine (1995) found that the provision of vocational training for the unemployed had grown considerably since the 1970s. Vosloo (1994) however, reported to the contrary when he stated that training efforts in townships for black entrepreneurs were shockingly low. The rural areas were even worse off because the apartheid government had allocated some budget, though less, to the townships in South Africa. In townships, some development structures like the then KaNgwane Economic Development Corporation (KEDC) and the Small Business Development Centres were established in most of the former KaNgwane townships. Funds and limited advice were available to individuals or groups who could apply for funding from these corporations to start small business ventures. However, people in rural areas never had access to these support structures. This is indicative of the major responsibility that role players such as the government, private sector, NGOs and higher education institutions have in terms of training provision. These role players have to play a meaningful role if rural communities are to benefit. The objectives can be achieved through training rural people for development (Fox & Maas, 1997).

In their research Coetzee and Visagie (1995) found that one of the key areas of support to small and medium-sized and micro-enterprises (SMME) is access to training. The need for training then brings the role of the higher education sector into the picture (Kokkranikal & Baum, 2002; Boland, 2007). If people do not access training they will not possess the ability to deal with the SMME as a composite whole (De Coning, 1991). Other researchers have concluded that the training experience and motivation of the unemployed can play a predominant role in innovation (Koning, 1990; Botha, 1996; Dugan, 1997; Boland, 2007; Amine & Staub, 2009). The negative effect of the lack of training was indicated in a survey conducted by Dun and Bradstreet in 1984 as reported by Baumback (1988). This survey showed that 65% of the unsuccessful businesses they had studied had failed because the managers or owners of those enterprises did not have the necessary training to run their business.

James (1995) reported that there is a need for the "missing millions" of adults to be drawn into education and training. This means that those adults who did not get any formal education during their formative years should not be left outside the education for development focus. Billington (1996) stresses the importance for adults to continue learning throughout their lives instead of allowing their skills and knowledge to slide into obsolescence. This implies that it is important to keep up with the development of knowledge. According to O'Keefe (1997) the key to preserving and strengthening the American entrepreneurial work-force lies in the ability to provide training, learning experiences and resources that are easily accessible and readily applicable.

In his empirical research in India and Mexico, McClelland (1985) found that if the achievement motives of individuals are latent, these could be developed with suitable training. The need for achievement, which could be awoken by education, could result in ensuring the success of training. For small business skills training programmes to be successful, basic education and numeracy must be provided first to lay the foundation for the provision of training (Timperley & Parr, 2009). Business can fund institutions of higher education through programmes aimed at providing training for rural people. Then these institutions can come up with possible methods for adult training that would contribute to success. Carrier (1996) examined the effectiveness of

alternative methods for presenting training to entrepreneurs. This, he found, was necessary in view of the different backgrounds from which entrepreneurs come. Since rural entrepreneurs would have a different view of business opportunities from those of their urban counterparts, training methods used in each case would have to be adapted accordingly. However, this does not mean that the methods used would differ completely, because there are no rural or urban methods, but it means that the programme developers and presenters must be conscious of the different views of the two groups.

Tosterud (1996) emphasises that rural South Africans are in desperate need and deserving of training. Innovative methods to deliver training in skills for job creation to rural residents must be delivered and implemented. The emphasis should be on the implementation of the skills training, otherwise it would be meaningless.

Since most of the rural people are either semi-literate or illiterate, the composition of their communities should be taken into account when planning for the provision of training. The training programmes should accommodate all the rural people. Therefore it does not make sense if training programmes with an urban focus are imposed on people in the rural areas. Such training might not work and impressions could be created that the rural people are not successful and/or interested in training. This is also true for the training methods to be used, as stated earlier on. The contribution made by entrepreneurship in rural community development is discussed next.

2.2.11 Entrepreneurship for rural development

Rural community development has often been promoted as a simple grassroots, bottom-up approach to social change, a way of empowering the powerless, of confronting governments about their inadequacies, and of radicalising the marginalised (Chandler, 1996). Entrepreneurship is one of the major contributors to rural community development because it focuses on the provision of opportunities for individual growth and economic development through the entrepreneurial process (Eckhardt & Shane, 2003). Gartner (in Carrier, 1996) refers to entrepreneurship as the creation of new organisations. He argues that with such a definition, entrepreneurship would end when the venture creation stage is completed. Therefore he views

entrepreneurship as a source of innovations and not the exclusive province of new venture creation.

Barnard (1996) defines entrepreneurship as the process whereby an individual does something different to create opportunities for him/herself and the community. Entrepreneurship is a process of creating something different, with value, by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risks, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction (Fox & Maas, 1997). Important aspects of this definition are that:

- entrepreneurship requires that time and effort be devoted to the endeavour;

- risk-taking plays a major role in starting an enterprise that needs financial muscle; and

- this may result in monetary and personal satisfaction if conducted successfully.

This section, intends to determine the role of entrepreneurship in rural community development. This will be done by considering a number of dimensions. Firstly, the views of the South African government on entrepreneurship will be taken into account with the aim of showing how the South African government relates to entrepreneurship, thus making it possible to determine whether higher education institutions have the leeway to consider providing entrepreneurship training to the rural communities. Secondly, the need for governments to regard themselves as entrepreneurs in order to pay the necessary attention to entrepreneurship will be discussed. Thirdly, the connection between entrepreneurship and education will be examined and fourthly, the focus will be on women's involvement in entrepreneurship.

2.2.11.1 The South African government's views on entrepreneurship

It was interesting to note that according to research carried out before South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, entrepreneurs were already hailed as the 'cure-all' for South Africa's ailing economy (Snyman, 1991). In 1995 Trevor Manuel, the then South Africa's Finance Minister stated that:

> Small, Medium and Micro-Enterprises (SMMEs) represent an important medium to address the challenges of job creation, economic growth and equity in the country. Throughout the world, SMMEs are playing a critical role in absorbing labour, penetrating new markets and generally expanding economies in creative and innovative ways. Through an appropriate enabling environment, SMMEs in this country can follow these examples and make an indelible mark on this economy (Barnard, 1996:2).

Barnard (1996) also refers to the words of the then South African President, Mr Nelson Mandela, in his opening address to the President's Conference on Small Business in March 1995 in Durban. At this occasion Mr Mandela emphasised that the Government of National Unity was committed to helping create an environment in which small business can flourish and prosper. Mr Mandela went on to say that the government should do its utmost to encourage an entrepreneurial culture as part of its efforts to rebuild the dignity of the people and restore their pride in hard work. He also stressed the fact that people need the knowledge to be able to run and manage such enterprises, emphasising the need for the provision of education and training for the success of entrepreneurship.

The South African government's efforts to stimulate the small business sector in South Africa have included the promulgation of the National Small Business Enabling Act of 1995. The purpose of the Act was to create the framework for delivering support through a national institutional framework. Key provisions included the following:

- the creation of Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency, a statutory body to support services to SMMEs

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- the creation of a National Small Business Council, a statutory body that acted as the collective voice for SMMEs
- a definition of small, medium and micro-enterprise
- the provision for government to review all proposed and existing laws to consider their impact on SMMEs.

The South African Department of Trade and Industry gave an undertaking to target the high-risk micro-enterprise sector by giving special attention to previously disadvantaged groups – blacks, women, youth, the disabled and rural communities (South Africa, 1995d). The government further emphasised the importance of the provision of education and training to ensure that people are trained in skills, and that they are educated, enabling them to be equipped with the necessary expertise.

2.2.11.2 Government and its entrepreneurship development role

It is clear from the above overview that the South African government realises the importance of promoting entrepreneurship. The South African government is no exception in this regard. The question arises: How can a government focus strategically on the core of entrepreneurship? Research carried out on government's role has shown that government should be an entrepreneur itself (Karayiannis, 1992; Basson in Vosloo, 1994; Land & Corkery, 1995; Fox & Maas, 1997; Amatucci & Sohl, 2004; Bushell, 2008). Basson (in Vosloo 1994) concluded that being an entrepreneur does not mean that government must be run as a business, but that it should ensure that laws which encourage and provide the possibilities for entrepreneurship are put in place. Such strategies include among others the provision of education and training in entrepreneurial skills. Osborne and Gaebler (1992), Fox and Maas (1997), and Basson (in Vosloo 1994) agree that entrepreneurial governments are characterised by the following:

- promoting competition between service providers
- empowering citizens by putting control back into the hands of the communities
- measuring performance of their agencies by focusing on their outcomes rather than their inputs

- being driven by their goals, their missions and not by their rules and regulations
- considering their clients as customers and offering them choices
- offering advice to their customers, thus preventing problems before they occur, rather than merely offering services afterwards
- encouraging people to put their energy into earning and not spending money
- focusing not only on delivering public goods and services, but also on acting as agents who involve all sectors (public, private, and voluntary) in solving community problems
- acting as catalyst governments, steering rather than rowing
- offering education and training to the clients to promote self-development

Governments must therefore be entrepreneurs by nature so that all possible hindrances are eradicated to allow entrepreneurial activities to be encouraged. Governments must fund the entrepreneurship sector to allow it to expand. If the system of funding small business is inadequate, then jobs are not created, products and services are not generated, consumer welfare is not maximised, families are not fed and social dilemmas are not solved (Perryman, 1998). While referring to government and its role in promoting entrepreneurship, it is also important to mention that all role players must contribute. Institutions of learning, NGOs and training agents should join hands and train the rural communities in skills while educating them about the importance of small business ventures. The importance of education and training cannot, therefore, be over-emphasised.

The Stutterheim Development Foundation, an American organisation dealing with community development programmes, hosted 35 representatives from South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, and the USA to share their perspectives on the problems and opportunities of rural communities (Tosterud, 1996). These delegates represented the diverse interests and experiences of agriculture, and of rural and small communities. In their deliberations, the participants identified that the structures, referred to as key partners, have a major role to play in rural community development. These partners include government,

the private sector, NGOs, financial institutions, educational institutions, farmers, non-farming rural residents, and traditional leaders.

While government has a major role to play in promoting entrepreneurship, it is expected that the community of South Africa, as a whole, higher education institutions included, must join hands with government and allow this concept to prosper. The role of education in the development of entrepreneurship, as well as the barriers that are encountered, is discussed in the section below.

2.2.11.3 Education and its role towards the development of an entrepreneurial orientation

This section focuses on the role and contribution of education in the awakening and self-empowerment of people. As indicated earlier, entrepreneurs are not born, but developed (Fox & Maas, 1997). It has been shown that entrepreneurs improve on their activities through the continuous development of the required skills and attainment of new skills (Eckhardt & Shane, 2003; Amine & Staub, 2009). Education has a major role in the development of entrepreneurs. This notion is supported by Kent (1990) when he states that education has, therefore, a central responsibility in identifying and maturing those who can be the change agents in the decades to come, and that it can make a profound difference in the future supply of entrepreneurs. In his address at the education and Training and Rural Human Development Seminar held in Nelspruit in March 2001, the then Premier of Mpumalanga, Ndaweni Mahlangu, emphasised that men and women in Mpumalanga Province can only compete in the global market if they enjoy the benefits of education and training. This indicates the role that education and training can play in the development of rural entrepreneurs.

As reported in the preceding sections, young, up and coming entrepreneurs inevitably experience some barriers in the process of becoming successful entrepreneurs. The findings of Coetzee and Visagie (1995) have shown that these barriers, presented in Figure 2.3, could be removed through the provision of relevant education. Many entrepreneurs fail to realise the success that entrepreneurship can bring to the development of the communities simply because they lack information (Perryman, 1998).
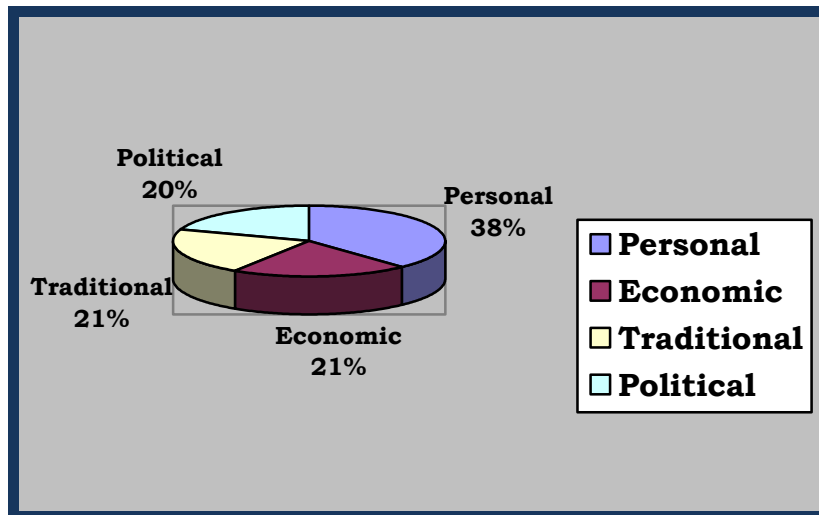
Figure 2.3: Some barriers to entrepreneurship
Source: Coetzee & Visagie (1995)

The barriers to entrepreneurship engagement can be classified in four categories, namely personal, economic, traditional and political (Carr, 2000; Minniti, 2003; Amine & Staub, 2009). From Figure 2.3 it is clear that the most threatening barrier to entrepreneurs is within the person (personal barrier) at 38%, followed by economic, traditional and political barriers at 21%, 21% and 20% respectively. The personal barriers, such as a lack of appropriate skills, poor motivation, lack of entrepreneurial orientation, and illiteracy can be addressed through education, because education aims at the development of knowledge and understanding. The existence of such knowledge would possibly reduce, if not eradicate, most personal doubts and fears. Since these barriers result from a lack of information, they can be overcome through education. Kent (1990) emphasises that entrepreneurship education needs to focus on developing innovations, risk-taking, imagination, information-gathering, problem-solving and decision-making skills. In his research report Mahadea (1993) emphasises that people should prepare themselves by acquiring the necessary education, experience and financial resources for entry into small business. Entrepreneurship Update (1997) reflected on the four key areas on which to focus in order to influence small enterprise development through an educational approach:

- creating a culture that supports small enterprise development in the community in the short, medium and long terms
- creating support for the process of business initiation and survival

- creating support for the development of existing SMMEs
- creating community networks of support for all stages of SMME development

Thotha's (1998) concern is that students and lecturers at the Further Education and Training (FET) colleges have thus far failed to see the subject Entrepreneurship and Business Management as an opportunity to learn skills that would empower them to start their own businesses on completion of their studies. Students from such institutions must be made aware of the importance of entrepreneurship in the economy of South Africa. Vosloo's (1994) view is that entrepreneurship has become a boom industry in progressive universities around the world. The proliferation of courses in entrepreneurship, as well as the establishment of graduate and undergraduate programmes, testifies to the growing enthusiasm in this regard.

Leaders in the field of vocational education, stakeholders, and role players recognise that people should be exposed to entrepreneurship education, and that the leaders should not be considered as the only role players. It is therefore important that the educators recognise the opportunities for entrepreneurship and include concepts about small business creation in all levels of education. Educators must understand this view and make entrepreneurship a lifelong learning process. Entrepreneurship education must target all levels of society. It must be aimed at the masses of the nation, particularly the people in the rural communities. Since the populace of the rural communities is made up mainly of women, it is crucial for their voices to be heard in decisions regarding the development of human resources in their communities. This aspect is attended to in the next section.

2.2.11.4 Women and entrepreneurship

The involvement of women in entrepreneurship could be of benefit for rural development since women in rural areas are mostly unemployed and generally stay home most of the time (South Africa, 2008). According to Silver (1983) entrepreneurs are typically males between the ages of 27 and 34. However, he also indicates that the number of dynamic young women who embark on entrepreneurship is increasing. Coetzee and Visagie (1995) found

that there are many women who will benefit from government funds for their businesses.

Data from the US Bureau of Labour Statistics indicates that in 1969 there were 1.2 million self-employed women in the USA. The figure doubled in 1982, and by 1991 it had reached over 3 million (Dolinsky, Caputo & Pansumarty, 1994). These authors also refer to the 1987 report by the US Bureau of the Census which indicated that, over the same period, the number of female entrepreneurs had increased roughly five times faster than that of self-employed males and more than three times as fast as women who received salaries and wages. However, they, also emphasise the concern that while research attempts have been made to these ends, it is disturbing to note that women entrepreneurship studies to date have been few.

At the growth rate then, women owned 50% of small business in the USA by the year 2000 (USA Census, 2000). Women-led small businesses are the fastest growing segment of venture creation in the US economy (Amatucci & Sohl, 2004). According to Gray (2001) this phenomenon can be related to a global scenario. He contends that women entrepreneurs are a vibrant and growing economic force in the global marketplace. A similar trend is apparent in South Africa. Therefore, the argument that entrepreneurship is a male-dominated business is no longer valid. It is important that people, especially women, should be educated in the possibilities of entrepreneurship and that it is not gender-based, but based on commitment and willingness to succeed. Entrepreneurship training should be seen as having the potential to develop and empower women, particularly rural women. This potential needs to be nurtured and developed to its fullest. Since there is a growth in the participation of women in entrepreneurship activities, entrepreneurship can be considered a possible platform for the empowerment of rural women.

This section has shown that women have both the will and the potential to participate in entrepreneurship, which is one of the main contributors to rural economic development. It has also been shown that a focus on entrepreneurship will benefit many people, particularly women, as they are interested and can succeed in entrepreneurial activities. The development of rural areas can also benefit from entrepreneurship training as a stimulus for

rural development. Local economic development, which is discussed below, has an important role to play in this regard.

2.2.12 **Local economic development (LED) and its role in rural development**

As indicated earlier in this chapter, development has come to mean, among other things, a process that involves economic growth, employment growth and achievement of social objectives such as poverty reduction and other redistributive objectives. Local economic development (LED) is defined as the local solutions sought by local people to their local economic problems (South Africa, 1995d). The South African government's Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (South Africa, 2000b) emphasises the role of sustained local economic development towards improving the lives of rural people. This means that rural people should have the means to solve their economic problems. It is true that the sustained economic growth of a community is possible, when viewed in the context of a non-centralised bio-regional economic development strategy which is based on meeting local community needs.

It is, therefore, necessary that rural people access support and training in LED so that they may understand their potential role in developing themselves economically. Boland (2007) emphasises the role that academic consultants and institutions have to play in shaping local economic development initiatives to target those who need it most. According to Technikon SA (1999) such training should be aimed at addressing the key objectives of the community economics. The following objectives are put forward:

- to achieve greater self-reliance
- to improve local enterprise opportunities for the creation of jobs and wealth
- to attain self-generated sustainable growth
- to maximise human and financial resources
- to understand money and how it moves in the economic system

MacLeod, McFarlane and Davis (1997) describe an experiment to identify processes by which marginalised, economically distressed communities in

Canada and Mexico could access assistance and support from institutions of the knowledge economy to foster the social and technological innovation necessary for their survival. Higher education institutions are well positioned to provide the role that is necessary for the development of knowledge of the people in rural areas in particular. These centres of knowledge economy should contribute to the development of a local sub-economy that supports small communities. This shows that for small economic development to be realised by the poor rural communities, institutions of higher education must play a major role since they have a wealth of knowledge.

2.2.13. **Trends in the role of universities towards community development**

Universities have always been known as independent places of teaching and research – imparting and generating knowledge (Fourie, 2003). Ngcongo (2003) contends that while carrying out their research function, universities should not focus on pure research or research within and on communities, but on research within and with communities. This means that they should carry out research projects with communities participating in the process, thus allowing the communities to benefit directly from the outcomes of the research. Universities have also been imbued with a sense of responsibility for the public good – be it preserving books in libraries, sponsoring art museums, or providing service to local communities. This approach of universities should be strategically mandated by the university leadership: for example, it should be part of the mission statement or a policy directive of the institution.

According to Baird (2001) the place of higher education in community development has changed and evolved, with a role that varies from activist participants to dispassionate analysts. In Australia, universities acknowledge that local and regional action is critical to build sustainable economic and social development in the global economy (Mulroney, 2001). A key approach to bring about this focus is the establishment of partnerships between universities and communities (Fourie, 2003). The partnership can also include community colleges, where possible. Such a consortium, as described by Williams (2002), has a broader perspective, more extensive linkages in the community, and more diverse resources than any single institution. Williams (2002) cites a number of best practices and benefits for community

development activities involving institutions of higher education in consortia or institutional partnerships. They are the following:

- the identification of community needs that can be addressed through consortium initiatives

- the participation in partnerships that increase each institution's capability to respond to community developmental needs

- publishing collaborative activities and achievements in university publications in order to communicate the importance of becoming involved in community development partnerships

- consortia and partnerships involving different types of institutions of higher education that can help by giving services to the community a high priority, thus making new as well as existing services more readily available and accessible to the community

- consortia and institutional partnerships that can facilitate efforts to recognise and reward the community development activities of academic and university staff

- pooling resources from two or more campuses to produce community development programmes that cannot be initiated by one institution alone

The above perceived strategies on the role of universities illustrate a shift towards the Mode 2 orientation to knowledge production. This mode emphasises the original contribution of research being its role towards solving problems for improving the state of a society, community or even an organisation (cf. e.g. Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott & Trow, 1994).

Reid, Hatch and Parrish (2003) state that the partnership is not limited to academic institutions, but that it should also involve local churches, businesses, health care givers, and community leadership structures. Myers (2003) adds that institutions of higher education have recently begun to collaborate with cultural institutions and schools where universities work hand in hand with the schools to improve the learners' understanding of their cultural roots. Universities research the cultural roots and development of the communities where the schools are and provide information-sharing sessions

in the schools. Members of the community also attend such sessions and gain much knowledge about their culture. This shows that engaging in institutional partnerships should not be limited to universities partnering with a fellow university or college, but that it should be an all-inclusive exercise.

Tiamiyu and Bailey (2001) carried out research on the role of university-community collaborations on human services for the elderly and produced a number of recommendations towards the enhancement of university community partnerships:

- Organisations should not wait for other organisations to approach them. They should take the initiative.
- Since there is a need for empirical studies, efforts should be made to document factors that facilitate or hinder organisational relationships between the type of organisational collaboration and the outcome.
- More conferences should be organised by universities and their community partners in order to share information about successful collaborative processes, and about the challenges of collaboration with the public. During such conferences, successful models of collaboration can be disseminated, and organisations wishing to work collaboratively in future will know where to access resources that can help them and where to begin.
- Associations and funding organisations need to foster collaboration between organisations, for example by granting awards to community members who champion collaborative ventures.
- Funding agencies should incorporate in their call for proposals the need for grant seekers to include a component showing how the process of collaboration with others will be evaluated.

Williams (2002) identifies several potential obstacles to successful inter-institutional collaboration. Firstly, turf issues could hamper many institutional relationships in higher education, for example where institutions do not wish to involve others in their activities. Secondly, academic snobbery, or the idea that a community college, for example, should not be an equal partner with a university in a community development project, could be an obstacle. In a partnership, there must not be any 'senior' or 'more prestigious' institution.

Thirdly, institutional self-centredness could be a barrier to collaboration. Collaborating partners must acknowledge and celebrate their institutional differences rather than minimise or deny them. It should be acknowledged that the partnership needs the expertise offered by each participating institution.

Higgs (2002) reflects on the continuing debate in South Africa concerning the role of universities in a democratic, non-racist and non-sexist society. He states that universities would:

- have to begin to accept the responsibility for directing their teaching and research towards the strengthening of communities and the strengthening of their capacities to empower themselves;
- need to play a critical role in identifying and addressing significant social problems;
- have to generate new knowledge towards solving educational, housing and economic problems of needy communities; and
- have to be seen to play a major role in ensuring the development of a more just and equal South Africa.

Nocon, Nilsson and Cole (2004) provide another dimension of the role that institutions of higher education can have with regard to communities. They present the scenario where a university provides supervised students to the community as labour in the specific development programmes. Communities, on the other hand, provide space and equipment where necessary, for participants to use. These authors (Nocon, Nilsson & Cole, 2004) state that this approach has been successfully used across the USA as well as in Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, Mexico, Russia, Spain and Sweden. Ruffins (2002) supports and emphasises the view that individual professors and departments from universities should support community efforts by providing interns or graduate students who specialise in the identified projects that are run in the communities.

Universities can also assist in the development of communities by being involved in service learning. Swick (2001) refers to service learning as a pedagogical strategy that combines authentic community service with

integrated academic learning. He further states that service learning offers students opportunities to contribute to the lives of others in a meaningful way. This implies that distance learning universities, like the University of South Africa, are in a much better position to apply this approach, as they have students in almost all parts of the countries that they serve. Institutions of higher education in South Africa have a unique opportunity to contribute to society. To play this role effectively, they should become active partners in addressing community development, among others, by means of service learning (Fourie, 2003).

Swick (2001) mentions a number of critical conditions for service learning to contribute to sustainable community development. These conditions were taken as a point of departure to evaluate service learning projects at the University of the Free State. The critical conditions are the following:

- a strong focus on community needs
- involvement of the community in the cybernetic cycle of needs identification, planning, implementation and evaluation of projects
- establishing and maintaining effective partnerships
- acceptance of the complexities related to community development
- involvement of disadvantaged groups such as women, youth and the elderly; and
- integrated and iterative processes of learning by and from the community.

One of the best ways for universities to demonstrate their commitment to community service is through participation in the sponsorship of community development programmes (Kezar & Rhoads, 2001). This is true for rural areas in particular, as they lack a financial base. This involvement would ensure that funds are raised for rural development projects.

This section has provided the literary directives on the role of higher education towards the development of communities and rural communities in particular, thus developing their human resources.

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2.3 **CONCLUSION**

This chapter has presented the challenges that face rural communities regarding the development of human resources. The negative impact that illiteracy has in the acquisition of knowledge and skills has been highlighted. The literature has shown that rural people are in urgent need of support with regard to training programmes on a number of aspects such as literacy, lifelong learning, information acquisition, entrepreneurship and local economic development.

This chapter has also shown that if institutions of higher education are proactive and become involved in the provision of support for rural communities, many rural people can benefit from such support programmes. Collaborative ventures between institutions of higher education, business, industry, local government and traditional authorities can alleviate the plight of rural people significantly.

The literature has supported the philosophical stance depicted in Figure 1.2, namely that the provision of education and training can contribute towards developed human resources which, in the case of rural communities, could further contribute towards rural development. The development of rural people will progress from the provision of the basic skills training to access to formal higher education. The provision of the foundation level should, therefore, be regarded as the initial stage or point of departure towards the long-term goal of the development of the human resources in rural areas.

CHAPTER THREE

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INVOLVEMENT IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is on the involvement of higher education institutions in the development of rural communities. In the words of Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa in his opening address at the 2005 Association of African Universities Conference in Cape Town, Higher education in the African setting cannot, and indeed, should not be separated from life itself. It is a natural process by which members of the community gradually acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes appropriate to life in their community, a higher education inspired by a spirit of what is commonly known as ubuntu in South Africa. The President emphasised that universities should focus on the needs of the communities and that they ought to research the needs of rural communities and then seek possible ways of developing such communities.

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) expects the University of South Africa (UNISA), as the only comprehensive distance education university in the country, to play a pivotal role in establishing a network of learning centres across the country (Glennie & Bialobrzeska, 2004). Such centres would hugely increase access to people from rural areas and small town communities.

Since earliest times the role of universities has been teaching, research and service (Fourie, 2003). These three functional roles of universities have a direct bearing on the developmental needs of rural communities. Research, as a search for new knowledge, is primarily a valuable means by which to develop the different areas of focus necessary for rural development. A teaching approach that is focused on the rural arena implies that universities

can develop teaching methods, systems and techniques that are able to target rural communities. The service role of higher education institutions involves the roles that higher education institutions can take in terms of social and economic development within their local communities and/or communities that they service. Higher education institutions have a vast amount of knowledge, skills in the form of its personnel, and resources both financial and physical.

These functional roles of universities are often assumed and used in promotional material, but seldom tested. The present project would afford an opportunity to ascertain in what ways and to what extent theory and practice in fact corresponded.

There are a number of possibilities for the participation of higher education in the development of rural communities. Higher education institutions have, among others, a catalyst role for the social and economic development of rural communities. The participation of higher education institutions in the development of communities should focus primarily on the communities in the locality of the institution. The concept 'locality' here would refer to the community where the higher education institution is physically located as well as the communities that are serviced by the institution. The responsibility of higher education institutions towards the local communities is also emphasised by Yuan (2001) who states that universities are urged to contribute to improving the quality of life of the society in which they operate.

The University of South Africa (UNISA), which is a distance learning institution, operates in all areas in South Africa, including Mpumalanga Province. UNISA is further strategically positioned in the different areas of South Africa as it has a number of Regional Hubs, Regional Service Centres (RSCs) and Agencies. In Mpumalanga Province UNISA has Regional Service Centres in Middelburg (Nkangala Region) and in Nelspruit (Ehlanzeni Region). These two RSCs jointly render services to areas in the Gert Sibande Region where the university does not have a Regional Service Centre.

3.2   **AREAS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INVOLVEMENT**

Belshaw and Thomas (1984) identify four areas of responsibility for universities towards rural communities. Firstly, universities have a responsibility, and never more so than in the developing countries, to direct a proportion of their research and operational activities towards the needs of the poor, particularly the disadvantaged people in rural communities. This responsibility of a university should be embedded in the university's mission statement. It is the university's mission statement that expresses its focus. In its mission statement the University of South Africa for example (University of South Africa, 2005, 2007) articulates its focus and commitment to community participation:

> The University of South Africa is a comprehensive, open learning and distance education institution, which, in response to the diverse needs of society:
>
> - provides quality general academic and career-focused learning opportunities underpinned by principles of lifelong learning, flexibility and student centredness;
> - undertakes research and knowledge development guided by integrity, quality and rigour; and
> - participates in community development by utilising its resources and capacities for the upliftment of the disadvantaged.

This mission statement shows that the University of South Africa commits itself to responding to the diverse needs of society through, among others, participating in community development. It also commits its resources and capabilities towards the upliftment of the disadvantaged such as people in rural communities.

Moreover, because of the character of the problems which rural communities face, there is a special need for inter-disciplinary research, and a commitment or at least a willingness to work in multi-disciplinary teams which may seem to be a new approach for university staff. The multi-disciplinary nature of the involvement would ensure that the focus of the participants covers at least

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most of the challenges faced by rural communities, such as skills shortage, sustainable economic development challenge, a lack of access to information, health challenges, illiteracy, and food insecurity.

An example of this multi-disciplinary approach is that of Mangosuthu University of Technology, which implements a number of programmes focusing on rural development through its Institute for Rural Development and Community Engagement (IRDCE) (Mangosuthu University of Technology, 2008). The IRDCE is engaged in multi-faceted activities in the development of rural communities in KwaZulu-Natal. It is involved with the provision of support programmes and development of new and innovative methods that address issues pertaining to sustainable rural development within KwaZulu-Natal and neighbouring provinces of South Africa.

Another area of responsibility is participation in activities (research, training, executive work) which may seem to be at an inappropriate level, or in an undesirable location by comparison with university-based work. The research informs the training to be undertaken so that such training is not just training *per se,* but training for development.

Finally, substantial numbers of university staff should devote a significant proportion of their time to rural-focused research and operational work. The operational work includes, among others, community outreach and partnerships, service learning, support in micro project management and evaluation, and advice on project start-ups.

The role of universities should seek to address rural development. The university has a catalytic function in enhancing the developmental focus of rural communities (Nkomo & Sehoole, 2007). Figure 3.1 shows the dynamic catalytic development role of a university in rural communities.

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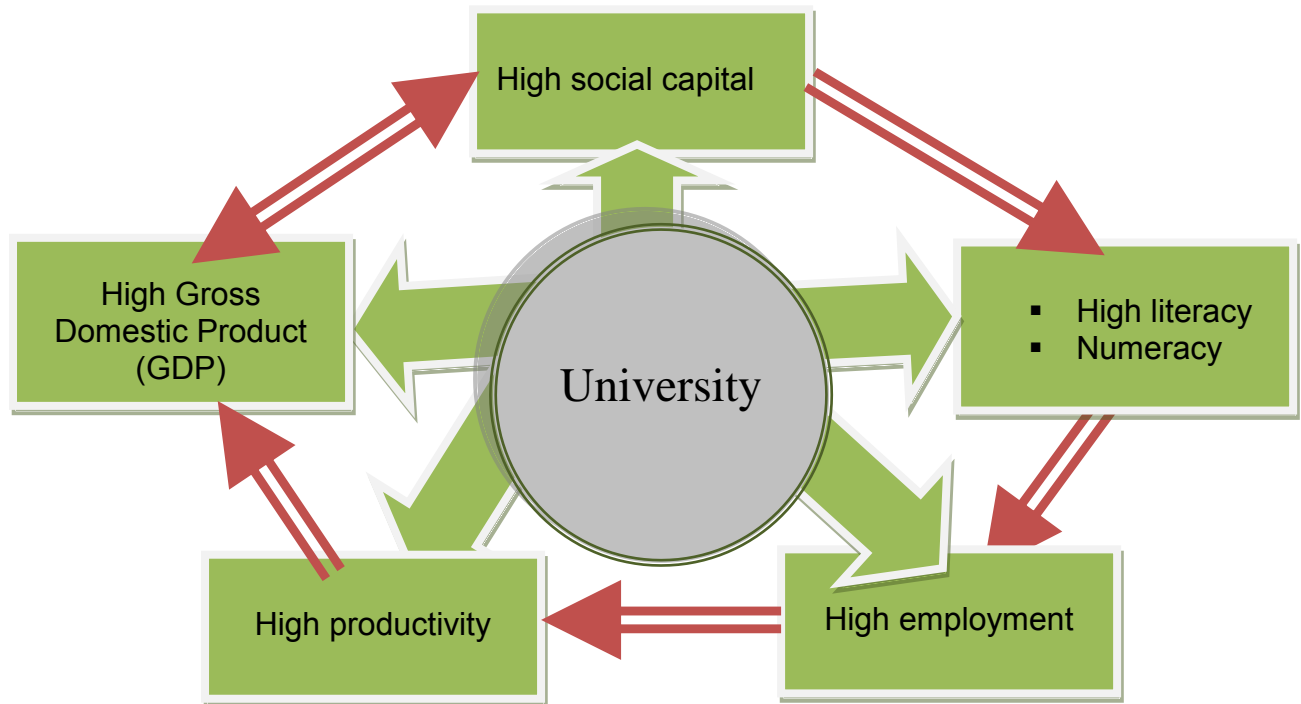
Figure 3.1: The dynamic catalytic condition
Source: Nkomo & Sehoole (2007)

Figure 3.1 shows the multidimensional and multipurpose role of a university. As the university develops the literacy and basic numeracy skills of rural people, their chances of employment are enhanced. The employment opportunities are in both formal and informal employment. High employment opportunities create and lead to high productivity by the rural people, which can then lead to an increased national GDP, since the individual rural communities constitute the national setup. The social capital of the rural communities, being the outcome of the involvement of universities in these communities, is ultimately improved. The university role in the development of rural communities should, therefore, be much broader than poverty alleviation through social development projects and/or programmes. A number of areas which the university should target in assisting in the development of rural communities are discussed below.

3.2.1 **Sustainable development education**

The implementation of the concept 'sustainable development' is of growing international importance. Sustainability as defined in the South African Government's Integrated and Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (South Africa, 2000b) means increased local growth, within a context where rural people care about success and are able to access resources to keep the strategy going. This definition of sustainability is then linked directly to rural development, where the latter is multidimensional and much broader than poverty alleviation through social programmes and transfers (Nkomo & Sehoole, 2007). Rural development emphasises the changing environments to enable poor people to earn more, to invest in themselves and their communities and to contribute towards making rural people less poor, rather than being comfortable in their current poverty. Sustainability and rural development aim at the eradication of poverty in rural communities.

However, the meaning of community developmental needs to be understood in order for people to have an embedded interest in sustainable community development. According to Joppe's (1996) definition, community development entails the process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community, and with its active participation. This definition focuses mainly on the creation of conditions for economic progress. Communities must create conditions that seek to improve their economic situation. In defining sustainable development, Marais, Muthien, Van Rensburg, Maaga, De Wet and Coetzee (2001) refer to those processes through which the quality of life of a community can be improved in a sustainable way to the best possible level. This definition highlights processes that improve the quality of life of the community. The processes refer to activities that seek to develop the self-reliance of the individual. Individuals should therefore be empowered to understand the benefits of sustainability.

Universities have a major role to play by introducing sustainable development programmes into the curriculum across the spectrum of the courses they offer (Wehrmeyer & Chenoweth, 2006). The emphasis on "the spectrum of courses" implies that informal and short courses, which are targeting rural communities, can have a sustainable development focus. Such courses can

be presented through a continuing education mode which does not necessarily require participants to attend formal classes. Wehrmeyer and Chenoweth further contend that the need to increase the penetration of sustainable development education together with the ability of continuing education to reach segments of the population otherwise not presently involved in formal higher education programmes highlights the role that can be played by universities in sustainable development education. Van Rensburg (in Marais *et al.,* 2001) states that by means of sustainable social development, through the restoration of disrupted relationships, a contribution can be made to the return of dignity, entrepreneurial verve and community spirit among ordinary people. Van Rensburg highlights the role of the universities' social scientists towards sustainable development.

People in underdeveloped communities such as rural areas need to understand the concept of the sustainability of projects. If universities are able to enlighten people from rural communities regarding the importance of a sustainability approach, rural people will understand the importance of proper management of their economic development projects and/or endeavours. This role should include training on social issues which aim to build the social fibre of society. This shows that universities have a wide range of involvement in developing the economic empowerment of the rural masses. The Centre for Community Training and Development of UNISA is a strategic vehicle for this university to provide training on sustainable development for the rural communities.

3.2.2 Community engagement and partnerships (CEP)

According to the research by Barnes and Phillips (2000) higher education institutions play a significant role in the process of national economic growth. They are also being encouraged to play an ever greater part in the knowledge-driven economy. These researchers concluded that partnerships between higher education institutions and other organisations offer significant opportunities for adding value in a number of ways towards promoting sustainability. The participation of higher education institutions in rural development projects can be helpful in adding value to such projects. The partners include, but are not limited to, rural leadership, government structures, the local municipalities and other NGO and development agents

that operate in rural communities or target rural communities in their operations. In their endeavour to contribute to rural communities through partnering for development, Nocon, Nilsson and Cole (2004) advise that the university as a partner must be willing to become and stay involved in the projects or activities that seek to develop the community. Should the partnering university be involved in projects and then discontinue its involvement or participation, rural participants are sure to become discouraged.

In the USA, the North Carolina Central University (NCCU) in partnership with the local black churches served as community resources for Project Diabetes Interventions Reaching and Educating Communities Together (Project DIRECT) (Reid, Hatch & Parrish, 2003). Project DIRECT is a participatory research project funded by the Federal Government and sponsored by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. NCCU was contracted by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services to help define and develop the role of the community in Project DIRECT. This project was initiated to increase awareness among black residents of Southeast Raleigh, North Carolina, of the importance of complying with recommended guidelines for exercise, diet, and diabetes self-management. North Carolina Central University had three key roles in Project DIRECT. Firstly, NCCU had to learn about how the project staff and the community understood outreach and to determine which actions they were taking or hoping to take to facilitate their outreach goals. Secondly, NCCU had to demonstrate to the medical community serving Southeast Raleigh the competence of Project DIRECT staff. It also held discussions with the diabetic patients who visited the local health care centres and encouraged them to attend sessions on diabetes education and/or health education. Thirdly, NCCU faculty, graduate and undergraduate health education majors visited the churches regularly. If time permitted they would describe the services offered by Project DIRECT. NCCU faculty also assisted the churches with designing the congregational needs assessment tool and the congregational health action plan. NCCU's participation in the project helped in a number of ways, such as establishing the community's trust in the project. It further brought in expertise on community participation, thus ensuring greater participation of community structures such as the civic leaders, various community organisations, health professionals and the clergy. The involvement of the NCCU in the health care

programmes for the community is an example of how universities could be involved in community development activities.

The University of the Free State in partnership with the Mangaung community, government and the Kellogg Foundation established the Mangaung University Community Partnership Programme to address the developmental needs of the Mangaung community (Fourie, 2003). This is a practical example of how higher education institutions can initiate and develop partnerships with communities they serve with the aim of providing development opportunities for such communities.

3.2.3 Provision of access to information

There is a tendency nowadays to assume that everyone has access to information thanks to the advances in technology and related information centres. However, as Burgstahler (2000) has pointed out, access to information remains a challenge to rural communities, because poor people, such as those who live in rural communities, do not have ready access to the Internet and computers. This challenge is further exacerbated by the development of information sources through the use of information communication technologies (ICT). In defining ICT, Rao (2004) refers to it as the set of activities that facilitate the capture, storage, processing, transmission and display of information by electronic means. This means that the availability of the electronic equipment to rural communities is primary to the use of ICT as an information centre. There is also the challenge of language as a barrier in using the ICT facilities. The technology requires the use and understanding of an international language like English. It is not just the lack of the facilities and equipment to disseminate information to rural communities, but also the challenge of language literacy that is a concern.

Henderson (2005) states in his research on education, training, and rural living for young people in Ryedale, Northern England, that access to education, training work and information or social events in the countryside or rural areas involves lengthy journeys. Rural people have to walk or travel long distances to access information in centres located in urban areas. Only a minority of the rural population find it possible to do so. However, higher education institutions can capitalise on this situation and make good out of it

through seeking possible ways in which information can be made available to rural communities.

The example of the Negombo public library in Sri Lanka (Karunawathie, 1998), mentioned in Chapter 2, is a success story regarding the provision of information for the benefit of rural communities. Similar approaches can be employed in rural areas to focus on environmental issues, agricultural support information, health advices, and many more aspects that can be of help to rural communities. UNISA, being a distance learning institution, is even better situated to become involved in ways that may assist rural people with information access. Through its current partnerships with the public libraries via its decentralised library services UNISA is in an advantageous position to reach many rural people. This approach would seek to provide information that would develop the knowledge base of rural communities and thus empower them through the dissemination of information.

The problem of inadequate information provision to the rural areas, where most of the poor population in developing countries live (Kiplang'at 1999; Dao, 2004), is a cause for concern. Although it is widely recognised that information is an important factor in agricultural and rural development, this sector has not received sufficient information (Okiy, 2003). Most people in rural communities do not only find it difficult to access adequate information, but they are also challenged by the format in which information is provided. Farmers, for example, need to have access to agricultural information and the experiences of others in similar situations if their agricultural efforts are to succeed. The challenge for universities is not only to provide access to information but also to ensure that the information is decoded into codes and formats that would make it easy for the mostly illiterate people from rural communities to understand. This would call for partnerships between local public libraries and universities to find ways in which the information can be simplified for those who would not access it in its ordinary format.

Another avenue that UNISA could employ in the dissemination of information is via the use of local radio stations. In his research on the challenges of utilising information communication technologies for the small-scale farmers in Zambia, Kalusopa (2005) found that some of the small-scale farmers in the rural areas of Zambia themselves felt that the radio and television were a

good tool for the transmission of information related to their information needs. This means that most rural people do have access to a radio. Having radio programme slots in local radio stations to share information and disseminate important educational and project-related support information could be of great value to those who need the information. Such information could include but not be limited to health education, agriculture and farming information, basic legal information, skills training, entrepreneurial training and support, family care, and social and life skills.

The low penetration of computer technology into most rural areas poses a challenge to those who have to disseminate information to rural people but concentrate on the use of such technologies. As stated earlier on in this section, the information to be shared with rural communities can seek to address among others, issues on agricultural development for rural communities. The ICT can bring about new information resources and open up new communication avenues for the rural farming communities (Kalusopa, 2005). The available ICT infrastructure of UNISA in its regional service centres in Mpumalanga Province is an appropriate means by which UNISA can help with information dissemination to local and neighbouring rural communities. As stated earlier on in this section, UNISA's cooperation with the local municipal public libraries throughout Mpumalanga Province is another avenue through which UNISA can cement its role in information dissemination to rural communities.

3.2.4 **Provision of literacy training**

Kiplang'at (1999) contends that rural development demands that rural people have access to information in forms and formats they can understand. This is a challenge faced by rural development agencies that drive rural development strategies and also seek to bring development projects and programmes to rural areas. These rural development projects and programmes should be coded in formats that are compatible to the capabilities of people from rural communities. The current widely accepted approach of using information communication technologies (ICTs) to package, keep and disseminate development information brings a challenge to rural development initiatives. According to Rao (2004) the language used to access information from the ICT services is foreign to most rural communities. Since the information is

mostly written in English, it is critically important that rural people's basic English language skills are developed to enable them to access information through the use of ICT.

The research carried out by the Commission for Africa (Zijp, 1994) found that most information is disseminated to rural communities in written form, making it difficult for those with low literacy skills to access it. These findings show that the point of departure for rural development should be to empower rural people with literacy capabilities. This empowerment can only be done through literacy skills training. Literacy training would entail a number of focus areas that seek to address the capability of those who are below the basic levels of knowledge acquisition. The 2000 World Education Report (UNESCO, 2000) calls for a focus on what it terms 'functional literacy'. Functional literacy is attained when one has acquired a level of reading and writing to engage effectively in everyday activities in one's culture or group. The report further challenges the limiting of basic reading and writing to the mother tongue of the participants. It is advisable to offer literacy opportunities in a second language since the issue of a second language has come to be recognised as a key problem in much of Africa and many parts of Latin America and Asia (UNESCO, 2000). These findings provide a background for universities, and UNISA in the case of this research, in their role towards the development of literacy potential for rural communities. The report also calls for the application of both informal and non-formal forms of training for out of school youth and adults in rural areas. In their research on numeracy and employment, Parsons and Bynner (1997) found that numeracy skills, competence in basic accounting, basic information technology application, and computational skills are important to the creation of job opportunities and/or self-employment capabilities. The research further showed that numeracy skills are key to women who are involved in selling and clerical jobs. The research also found that their numeracy skills levels are lower than those of their male counterparts. Through some of its institutes and bureaus, such as the Centre for Accounting Studies, Centre for Business Management, Bureau for Business Studies and the Academic Literacy Research Unit, UNISA is well suited to provide business and accountancy-related interventions to develop the skills these women need.

Figure 3.1 showed the relationship between high literacy levels and employment opportunities. The figure shows that as the university empowers rural people with high levels of literacy and numeracy, the opportunity for employment, both formal and informal, employment is enhanced. Informal employment translates to entrepreneurship development and self-employment possibilities which open up opportunities for job creation for fellow local individuals.

Another area of focus arising from universities' involvement in literacy training is in issues related to basic literacy in environmental and sustainable development (Wehrmeyer & Chenoweth, 2006). The focus should be mainly on awareness creation regarding the role and contribution of the environment in the development of society, especially in rural areas where the natural environment is mostly still in its natural form. This is more practical in Mpumalanga Province where the natural resources still play a key role in attracting tourists. It must be noted that both environmental and sustainable development are dealt with in detail in other sections in this chapter.

3.2.5 Service learning for community development

Throughout the ages universities have been involved primarily with teaching, research and service (Weigert, 1998; Humphreys & Conlon, 2003). Service has always been seen as a university's key role; one that focuses on rural support and development. While service learning is derived from the service function of a university, the research and teaching roles also have a bearing on community development. Figure 3.2 shows the three primary university roles that underpin community development, as applied by the Centre for Rural Development of the SNDT Women's University in India (Shah, 2006).
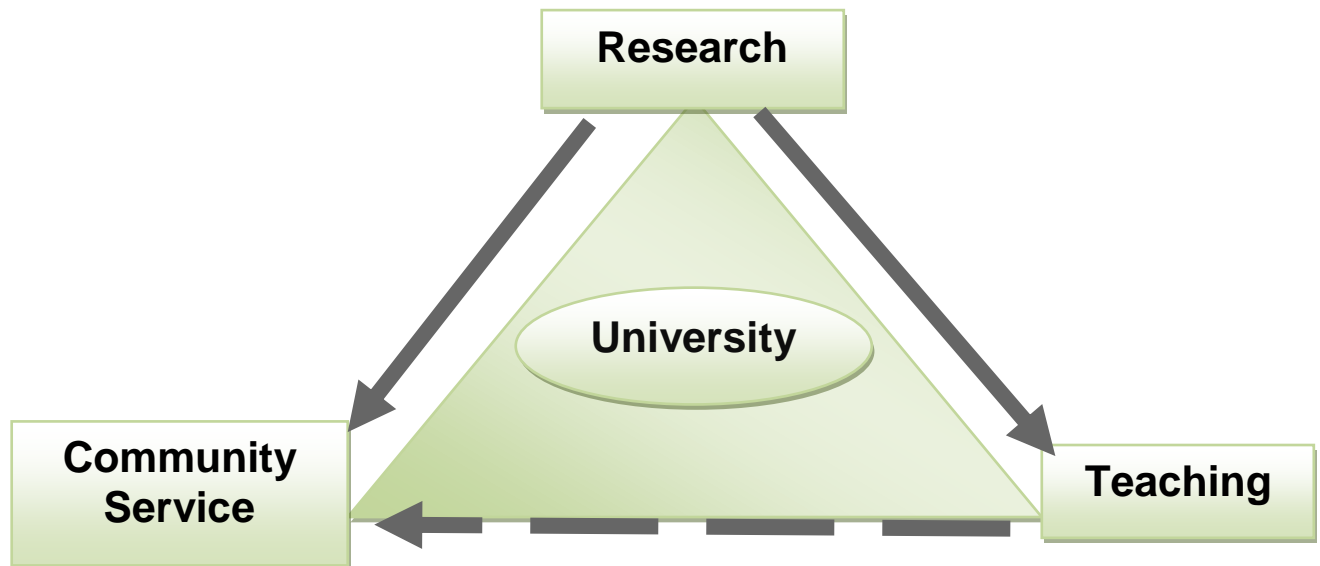
Figure 3.2: Primary university roles
Source: Adapted from Shah (2006)

The figure shows that the university primarily has research, teaching and community service as its three core functions. The bold arrows in the figure, moving from research to the other two roles, show that research is fundamental to the other roles. Research provides the information needed to carry out the other functions. Teaching, on the other hand, is linked to community service through the dotted arrow simply because the teaching function has a contributory role to the community service role, though not at the same level as research. The community service role of a university entails, among others, gender sensitising, legal literacy, vocational training, human rights issues, health programmes, entrepreneurship orientation and training, opportunities for income generation, participation in local government, and family counselling services. The teaching role of a university with a community development focus covers communication, and community sensitising strategies. The research function covers theoretical policy-related and applied research and participatory action research focusing on community development issues.

Swick (2001) defines service learning as a pedagogical strategy that combines authentic community service with integrated academic learning. He contends that service learning offers students opportunities to contribute to the lives of others in a meaningful way. According to Fourie (2003) service

learning can be seen, in a South African context, against the background of the 1997 White Paper on Higher Education Transformation and the Higher Education Act of 1997 which envisaged the establishment of a single coordinated higher education system that not only promotes scholarship and research, but also responds to the developmental needs of the South African society. According to these documents higher education institutions in South Africa are required to play a significant role towards the development of society, especially of the needy, who are mainly people in the rural communities of South Africa. The University of the Free State subsequently embarked on a service learning programme in the Mangaung Community (Fourie, 2003). The involvement included community development, health services, education and training, youth development, and administration.

Another example of practical service learning is that of Unidad Academica Campesina, a rural college in the mountains of Bolivia. Its division dedicated to fund-raising, the Carmen Pampa Fund (Smeltekop, 2008), supports the college's initiatives in its activities aimed at eradicating poverty in its local rural communities. Postgraduate students at Unidad Academica Campesina do research projects for their theses that address the real problems of the area.

Universities and colleges have a variety of resources. All have the potential to assist local communities in solving their problems and to meet the needs of community members. Higgs (2002) supports the view that the university needs to play a critical role in identifying and addressing significant social problems. He contends that a university is a social institution whose purpose is to meet the needs of society and that higher education institutions ought to focus their activities on addressing the challenges faced by society.

Fourie (2003) concluded the research on service learning for sustainable community development by emphasising that South African universities should take the following aspects into consideration in the planning and establishing of service learning projects: the social benefit, the educational benefit, skills acquisition, behavioural changes, and capacity building.

In his research of service learning, personal development and social commitment, Ngai (2006) found that the service learning programme of the

Chinese University of Hong Kong yielded positive results in terms of the beneficial nature of service learning for both participating students and the target communities. The participating students came from a variety of fields including the sciences, arts, social sciences, medicine, engineering, business administration and education. Over 90% of the participating students reported that the programme had enhanced their personal development and social commitment. Several students emphasised the importance of service to the community and stated that they would continue in their placement beyond the original service period or seek a volunteer position in future. These findings show that a university's service learning programme can result in a long benefit period for the communities. The willingness of students to engage themselves for longer periods in communities that they serve is beneficial to such communities.

While service learning focuses on the students who carry out projects in communities during their studies, the Roger William University in Bristol, Rhode Island in the USA requires of its professors to do community service (Tackach, 2004). Community service at the Roger Williams University is actually one of the areas on which the professors are assessed. Tackach (2004) suggests that academics at higher education institutions should commit themselves to community service. He mentions the following possible ways in which academics can apply themselves with regard to community commitment:

- Lecturing at public libraries, museums, Rotary clubs, and other venues where the public gather
- Participating on panels at theatres and concert halls during post-performance discussions
- Writing articles for local newspapers and magazines for the general public
- Conducting research and writing grants for non-profit community organisations

Higher education institutions should encourage and allow their academic staff to be involved in the development of needy groups, such as rural communities. The involvement of university academics would not only benefit

the communities, but the institutions would also benefit from having their good name made known in the communities.

3.2.6 **Local economic development support for community development**

The concept of Local Economic Development (LED) should be understood within the broader Community Economic Development (CED) concept. In most cases CED initiatives frequently emerge from crisis situations such as a closure of a plant or a company that has to lay off employees. In trying to address the prevailing situation that has a negative effect on members of a community, programmes and/or projects are initiated to support the affected individuals. In this case CED has an inward focus whose objective is to help consumers become producers, users become providers, and employees become owners of enterprises (Joppe, 1996). This focus of community economic development provides a broader platform for the economical development of the individuals within a community. The term 'community' here refers to the principle of shared goals and common purpose. 'Community' in this sense must be seen beyond the boundaries of a municipality. A community can overlap and stretch beyond the political demarcations of a municipality. It must be regarded as a coherent entity with a clear identity and a commonality of purpose. The sharing and support for the good of the community members are key elements of a community. The social values and norms of the particular community become important in defining it. In his chapter in Shragge (1993) Nozick provides five basic principles that underlie CED, namely economic self-reliance, ecological sustainability, community control, meeting individual needs and building a community culture. Local economic development, on the other hand, becomes the subset of community economic development. It focuses on the locality of the activities towards the development of a particular community.

According to Belshaw and Thomas (1984) the emergence of rural development as an alternative basis for the attainment of satisfactory levels of economic development for the national economy was a result of a series of empirically-based studies conducted during the 1960s and 1970s. The studies elucidated the critical role of, among others, entrepreneurship, rural tourism, and subsistence agricultural development in the process of long-run

rural economic growth. It is necessary for higher education institutions to provide training and support in entrepreneurship, rural tourism and agriculture to ensure the development of the local economy in rural communities. Humphreys and Conlon (2003) identified three distinctive roles that higher education institutions have regarding the development, support and promotion of local economic development activities in rural communities. These roles of higher education institutions are mentioned below and related to certain appropriate universities.

- A higher education institution as a stakeholder – the institution assumes a direct engagement with the economy. It can cement this role as part of its mission statement. A mission statement of any organisation depicts the organisation's path and direction to get to its strategic vision. UNISA has stated clearly as part of its mission statement that it *participates in community development by utilising its resources and capacities for the upliftment of the disadvantaged.* This mission statement is a progressive one with regard to the perceived and/or intended involvement of UNISA in and commitment to rural community development.

- A higher education institution as a strategic partner – the institution carries out advocacy for human resources development. The distance learning and delivery mode of UNISA puts it in a strategic position to partner with a number of organisations and community structures that focus on the development of rural communities throughout South Africa, which will therefore include the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province.

- A higher education institution as a service provider – the institution embarks on building the intellectual capital through skills training for development. The establishment of institutes/bureaus in the colleges of UNISA is an indication of UNISA's intention to provide community development services to all members of society, including rural people. Another example of this role is that of the University Brigades of the Universidad Veracruzana in Venezuela. The University Brigades carry out community development work in the most rural impoverished and marginalised communities which is comprised by the indigenous populations of Venezuela (Arredondo & De La Garza,

2006). This university displays its commitment to the development of rural communities through its involvement in those communities.

The University of South Africa has a total of 34 institutes/bureaus (University of South Africa, 2008b) of which 21 focus on the provision of short courses, non-formal and informal training programmes of the university which are relevant to community development initiatives. These 21 institutes/bureaus create a viable platform for UNISA to serve the community development role of the university.

3.2.7 Entrepreneurship development – a strategy for community development

The promotion of entrepreneurship and rural development through productive activities is directly related to improving the general living conditions of communities (Kaushik, Kaushik & Kaushik, 2006). In support of the view of Fox and Maas (1997) that entrepreneurs are not born, but developed, it shows that activities and projects that focus on the development of entrepreneurs should be encouraged and prioritised.

Training in entrepreneurship has become part of universities' community development strategies and/or focus. An outline is given below of the roles of some universities towards the development of entrepreneurship activities and/or projects for the uplift of the rural communities.

The Mrs Helena Kaushik Women's College, established in 1999, has been promoting entrepreneurship ever since in rural Rajasthan in the Jhunjhunu District of India (Kaushik, Kaushik & Kaushik, 2006). The focus of the college is primarily on women in this rural district. This college's commitment to the development of the rural women is clearly indicated through the mission statement of the college which is worded as follows:

> Mrs Helena Kaushik Women's College will strive to prepare young women in rural India to achieve excellence in all their endeavours, and to be visionary and effective leaders in their chosen profession and vocations in the service of their communities, India and the world.

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The college has produced many graduates who are becoming entrepreneurs and business executives. The Centre for Rural Development of the SNDT Women's University in India (Shah, 2006) aims to enhance the earning capabilities of rural women through vocational/skills training courses, thus building their entrepreneurship orientation. The skills include banking knowledge and the management of small enterprises.

The Centre for Business Law of the University of the Free State (University of the Free State, 2008) is running an Entrepreneurial Law and Skills Development Programme which seeks to develop the entrepreneurship skills of members of its service communities.

UNISA has institutes, bureaus and centres whose mandate is inclusive of entrepreneurship training and development. Among those centres is the Centre for Business Management and the Bureau for Business Studies. It is the responsibility of these establishments to provide entrepreneurship training to communities for the development of the human resources in such communities.

Literature has clearly indicated that rural empowerment through entrepreneurship development can be achieved through the development of innovations, acquiring the necessary entrepreneurship education, skills in starting own businesses, and having knowledge on how to acquire financial resources (Kent, 1990; Mahadea, 1993; Thotha, 1998). Universities have a wide range of roles towards the development of entrepreneurship for communities in rural areas.

One form of entrepreneurship that can play a significant role in enhancing community development in the rural communities is tourism. The following section examines rural tourism and the role of UNISA in advancing this form of community development.

3.2.8 Rural tourism and its contribution to rural community development

It is difficult to provide a globally accepted definition of rural tourism as no internationally accepted definition of rural tourism exists (Lebe & Milfelner, 2006). According to Lebe and Milfelner (2006) rural tourism is the activities of

persons travelling to and staying in rural areas for a period of time. It is only logical to link rural destination to the definition of rural tourism. The destinations are areas that are separately identified and promoted to tourists as places to visit, where enjoyment of the countryside and countryside activities is a primary motive (Lebe & Milfelner, 2006). This definition introduces an important aspect that should be considered as the concept of rural tourism is embarked on. The aspect in question is that of destination identification and marketing of available services.

Rural tourism is seen as a possible vehicle through which people in rural communities can participate in the sector of tourism. It therefore has a potential to contribute to economic development of rural communities, since economic development implies both more output and changes in the technical and institutional arrangements by which it is produced and distributed (Spitzley & Wolman, 1996). It therefore implies that rural tourism can be improved through paying attention to the changes in functional capacities of those who could be involved in it.

There is a challenge to create, develop and improve the orientation of people in rural communities towards tourism in general and rural tourism in particular. The general concern of proponents of tourism development is not about the development of this industry but making tourism more acceptable to local residents (Blackstock, 2005). The local residents' orientation, awareness and acceptability of the tourism industry in the respective communities are important. Universities can contribute in addressing this area toward the promotion of tourism at local level in rural communities. The commoditisation of the countryside and related products (Ilbery & Kneafsey, 1998) is an attempt to encourage people from the countryside to participate in the tourism sector. The rural products need to be valued by the rural people themselves. Rural people have to be encouraged to see their products as commodities that can promote their economic development. Once they attach value to their products they will be able to promote these products to visitors who are potential tourists. The commoditisation of the rural products is explained by Ray (1998) as a culture economy approach to rural development. This approach consists of strategies to transform local knowledge into resources for the local territory. The challenge through this approach is to ensure that people in rural communities are kept abreast and well grounded in their local

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knowledge base. Being abreast in their local knowledge requires, among other activities, a well researched indigenous knowledge resource to be availed to the local people. Universities are best suited and equipped to research the local culture and document it for the rural people.

In the case study of tourism development in rural Brittany in Western France, Kneafsey (2001) identifies traditional foods, regional languages, crafts, folklore, local visual arts and drama, literary references, historical and pre-historical sites, landscape systems, and the flora and fauna as a range of cultural markers that can be targeted for local rural tourism development. Alexander and McKenna (1998) also refer to rural tourism as a multi-faceted activity which is not just farm-based but includes nature holidays, eco-tourism, walking, riding, adventure, sport, health tourism, educational travel, heritage tourism and ethnic tourism. Universities can embark on research projects that target these areas to uncover information that can be used for tourism purposes. Another area that is valued and needed by tourists is that of the real or authentic holidays in a clean and natural environment (Collardelle, 1994, as quoted by Kneafsey, 2001). Universities could play a role through the provision of training on environmental issues which could include awareness of community cleanliness.

An important analysis of the development of tourism is based on Ray's (1999) four modes of the development of tourism within the culture economy landscape. Figure 3.3 denotes this landscape.
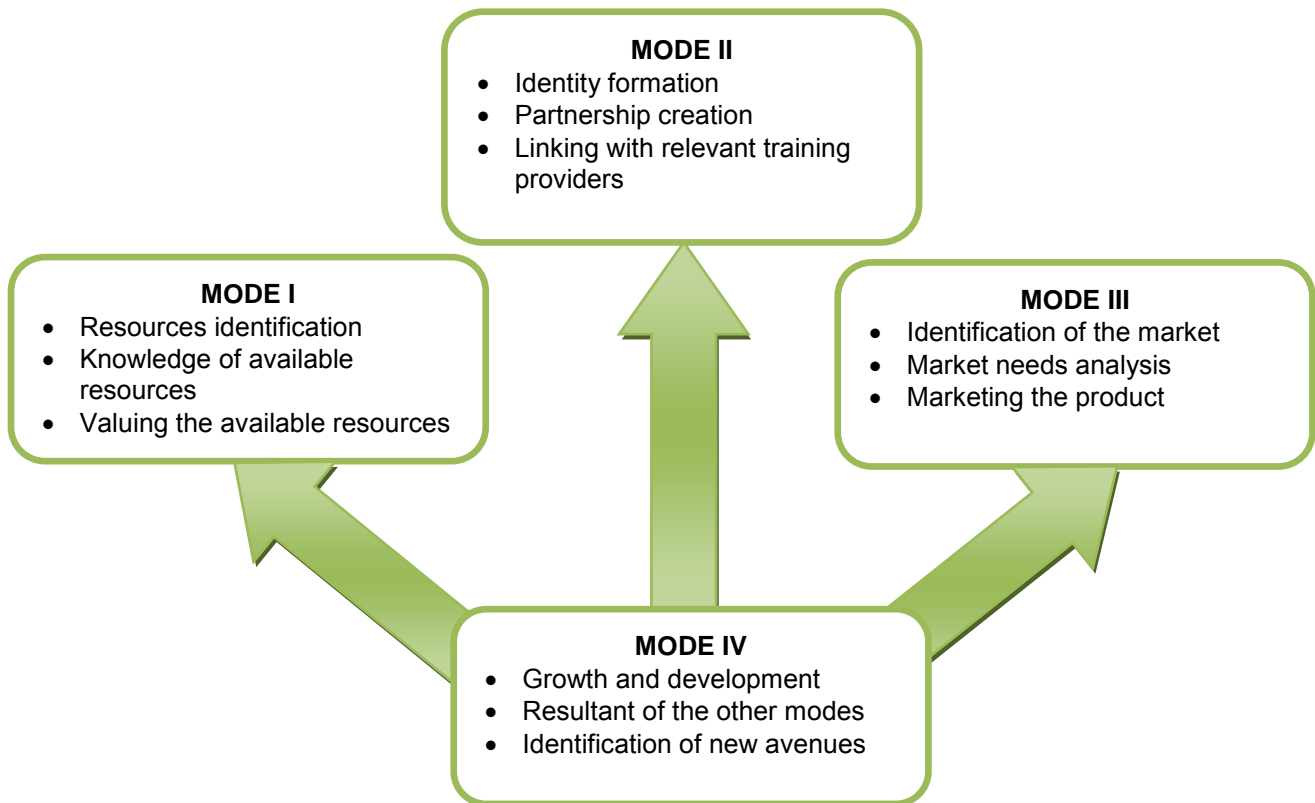
Figure 3.3: Modes of the culture economy landscape
Source: Adapted from Ray (1999)

Mode I represents the commoditisation of local culture and the creation of resources. This mode entails the stage and activity where the local culture and resources are valued as a potential for local development through tourism. The role of universities in this mode is that of providing orientation training to rural people in the value that is added by the local culture to the development of tourism. Mode II involves the construction/development and promotion of a new identity within the territory through the involvement and partnerships with existing organisations or development agencies. The institutes and bureaus of UNISA are strategically suited to play a role in this mode of the culture economy. They can be partners within the local rural communities to provide the necessary training and/or support for the promotion of their identity within their territory. Mode III relates to marketing and promoting themselves internally to the community, business, groups and local bodies. The marketing role has to be developed for the local people to be able to sell their product to people. This mode entails the potential market's knowledge of the rural communities' products. Ray sees Mode IV as

the focus on the range of paths for development. It entails the complete development of the culture economy of rural communities, as indicated by the arrows in Figure 3.3. These arrows show that this mode links the other three modes. It demonstrates the capacity of the culture economy in the development of local tourism. A university should encompass the four modes in supporting tourism development for the rural communities.

Rural communities have to be equipped with the necessary skills to be able to start, develop and manage the rural tourism business. UNISA can, through its institutes and bureaus, be involved in the identified areas of rural tourism development. As a distance learning institution UNISA is well suited to reach many rural and remote areas of Mpumalanga Province in performing this role.

The important role of subsistence agriculture in rural development is examined in the next section.

3.2.9 Subsistence agriculture as a rural development strategy

Poverty and food insecurity are among the most pressing social issues in South Africa and the sub-Saharan region. About half of the South African population subsists below the poverty line, many of whom are subject to chronic food insecurity (Lemke, Jansen van Rensburg, Vorster & Ziche, 2001). The greater masses of these affected people are usually found in rural areas. In their research on the nutritional status of South Africa, Vorster, Oosthuizen, Jerling, Veldman and Burger (1997) found that pre-school and primary school children in rural areas are particularly affected and are stunted as a result of chronic under-nutrition. Women in rural family settings play a vital role in providing food through subsistence farming. The training needs of rural women in subsistence agriculture cannot be over-emphasised.

Rural communities generally face significant challenges associated with a lack of resources, facilities and economic empowerment. The lack of economic development and the ensuing poverty and shortage of food in such communities is a serious cause for concern.. The primary need for rural communities is to be able to produce food for their own consumption. If they can be able to put food on the table, then they will be able to focus on other possible ways of self-empowerment.

The importance of quality food production has become a key issue in Scotland's rural future (Burnett & Danson, 2004). These authors emphasise that the future of rural communities depends on the quality of food that is produced for rural consumption. It is important that rural communities have the necessary skills to produce their own food. Rural people need to understand the concept of sustainable subsistence farming. . For farming to be upheld the farmers need to master crop rotation techniques. Universities have to play a major and leading role in this regard.

The South African Communist Party Leader, Blade Nzimande, who is now the Minister for Higher Education and Training, in his speech on transformation of higher education institutions in South Africa at the University of Zululand's graduation ceremony in Ulundi, called on universities to focus on building agricultural cooperatives and training of small-scale farmers including the promotion of household-based farming aimed at subsistence (Gale, 2003). Nzimande called for the university to utilise its resources to assist in the empowerment of the rural areas of particularly KwaZulu-Natal, one of the most important areas that the university services. Since UNISA services communities throughout South Africa, its focus on rural communities, including Mpumalanga Province, would be in line with this call by Nzimande.

The University of Fort Hare, through its Agricultural and Rural Development Research Institute (ARDRI), is involved in a number of activities that promote sustainable community development through specialised research and collaboration with other stakeholders (Agricultural and Rural Development Research Institute, 2008). ARDRI uses a multi-disciplinary team working closely with the rural households to identify the problems and constraints and then adapts and tests alternative solutions designed specially for their conditions. ARDRI does not bring ready-made and tailor-made solutions for the perceived agricultural needs of the rural communities. It involves the rural communities in finding possible ways to address their agricultural needs. Burnett and Danson (2004) also emphasise the fact that it is not a wise idea to bring ready-made development packages to rural communities.

The establishment of the Centre for Rural Development at the University of Venda for Science and Technology has provided the university with a vehicle

for contributing directly to the development of sustainable agricultural activities in a number of rural communities in Limpopo Province (University of Venda, 2008). The provision of agricultural skills is a key role of a university towards the development of a knowledge base for self-support mechanisms. Yin (2006) found that rural people of Oreqon in China did not know which agricultural activities they should perform in which month. This finding shows that rural people should be empowered through training on the different crops that should be planted in the different seasons. In addressing this challenge for rural people, UNISA can embark on collaborations with agricultural centres and colleges to develop rural communities.

The development of subsistence agriculture in rural communities is seen as an important aspect in addressing the problem of food security for rural communities. Food security seeks to provide methods and appropriate techniques for the production of basic foods. Rural communities need support to acquire knowledge regarding increased agricultural production. Kiplang'at (1999) found that the key to increased agricultural production ultimately lies with the ability to disseminate relevant information to the farming community to facilitate the effective adoption of the new production techniques. Universities have a vast amount of knowledge that must be disseminated to the rural communities to empower them with the necessary farming methods, systems and techniques. One aspect that needs particular attention is environmental management.

3.2.10 Environmental management

Supporting the environment for natural resource-based activities has been a long-standing concern in rural areas. In recent years environmental management has become a key component of rural development as more and more attention is given to protecting clean water supplies, providing safe places to dispose of waste, and maintaining the natural landscape to support wildlife and recreation (Warner, 1989). As stated earlier in the chapter, food security is important for rural communities. The consumers are encouraged to eat fresh, natural food from fresh, natural resources and they need to understand the connection between food and nature (Burnett & Danson,

2004). The importance of the environment for the upliftment of rural communities in terms of food production must be recognised.

The United Nations (UN) calls for ensuring the sustainability of the environment as one of its Millennium Development Goals (Bulman, 2004). The development of each of the UN goals requires that ordinary people be capacitated through learning on a massive scale. In his address to the 3rd Pan Commonwealth Forum in 2000, Sir John Daniel, then President of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), emphasised that traditional approaches to education and training cannot cope with the challenge and that there is a need to bring in the power of open and distance learning to tackle the problem. In South Africa, UNISA, being the only distance and open learning university, is widely expected to assist in addressing the relevant problems faced by rural communities.

In their research on the role and effectiveness of continuing education training courses offered by higher education institutions in furthering the implementation of sustainable development, Wehrmeyer and Chenoweth (2006) found that the Centre for Environmental Strategy at the University of Surrey ran four different short courses on environmental issues. The following courses were on offer:

- Introduction to Environmental Issues
  A one-day course focusing on the introductory framework outlining the key principles and core issues relating to environmental issues
- Practical Environmental Management
  A two-day course aiming to familiarise the participants with the practical aspects of managing the environment
- Governance for Sustainable Development
  A two-day course aiming to highlight the importance of and social responsibility in the pursuit of sustainability development and to explore the role of civil society in environmental advocacy and decision-making

- Global Environmental Issues

  A three-day course aiming to introduce participants to a broader range of environmental issues that have international, regional, national, and local dimensions

These training programmes are key to the promotion of environmental development in rural areas. Rural communities' understanding of the importance of the environment and its management will ensure that the environment in rural areas is kept in its natural state. The environment can only be appreciated if it is valued. It is important that rural people are empowered with programmes that will develop their understanding of the value added by the environment in their daily living.

The concept of rural tourism is directly linked to environmental management. A successful endeavour in the management of the environment in rural communities will give rise to an attractive tourism business in the rural communities. This link between rural tourism and the environment creates a complementary approach towards the development of rural communities. It is the role of universities to create rural communities' awareness of the importance of environmental issues. UNISA has the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences which is well resourced on environmental issues. This College is the platform through which the university can enhance its role in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province in terms of environmental development and support (University of South Africa, 2007). The environment and the health promotion strategy cannot be separated. A hazardous environment presents many health challenges. The role of managing the environment should be emphasised within the broader rural development spectrum, which would include health education, as explained in the next section.

3.2.11 Provision of health education for human development

Investment in health, education and nutrition are increasingly recommended parts of a national investment strategy (Serageldin, 1996; Hugo, Boshoff, Traut, Zungu-Dirwayi & Stein, 2003). Nations are expected to ensure that

their strategic objectives and aims include matters of health, education and nutrition. The strategy on health should focus primarily on education and awareness. Higher education institutions also have a role to play in the health awareness campaigns offered globally.

The main health challenge faced by the present generation is the scourge of HIV and AIDS. Research by Yates, Pridmore, Kuhn and Xerinda (2004) aimed to increase the understanding of how open learning and distance education might support and extend the work of existing infrastructure to mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS in South Africa and Mozambique. These researchers report that distance education needs to improve the ability of educators to empathise with young people affected by HIV and AIDS and provide psychosocial, guidance and counselling support. They also call on distance education institutions to work in collaboration with the local community radio stations to disseminate information to communities, in particular rural communities. Another area of participation regarding the HIV and AIDS problem is the provision of care support structures to enhance the knowledge of home-based care.

The role of universities in the fight against the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS, especially in rural communities, is shown by the roles and involvement of various universities. The Centre for Rural Development of the SNDT Women's University in India has, as part of its commitment to raising awareness among communities, conducted health awareness for all. This included, among others, training the rural community on HIV and AIDS awareness programmes (Shah, 2006). The Health Centre and the Guidance and Counselling Centre of the North West University conduct workshops in the surrounding rural communities in the Mafikeng area of the North West Province. The workshops cover important health issues such as HIV and AIDS as well as breast and cervical cancer (North-West University, 2008). Blade Nzimande emphasised at the University of Zululand that, ideally, no student should graduate from the university in future, irrespective of the field of study and study discipline, without knowing something about, among others, the strategies to combat HIV and AIDS (Gale, 2003).

Health education should not be limited to issues of HIV and AIDS. Although HIV and AIDS is posing the greatest challenge to society, there are other health issues that affect rural communities. In their research on the relationships between cognitive variables, health perceptions and knowledge, and health behaviours in a sample of rural communities, Misra and Aguillon (2001) found that the enhancement of health education in rural areas can lead to improved health behaviours and help in attaining the goals set for health. The areas that should be targeted through health education include, but are not limited to, nutrition or food habit, physical activity, family planning and general health knowledge (Yin, 2006). Food is seen as a source of satisfaction but when not monitored carefully can become a source of danger as school-age children develop obesity problems when poor eating habits are not altered. Singleton, Achterberg and Shannon (1992) studied the role of food and nutrition on young children's health perceptions and found that children could identify and comprehend the effects health and nutrition have on their bodies. This finding means that children are receptive to education regarding health habits at this early stage in life. It should also be mentioned that the early development of practices such as patterns of exercise and healthy eating habits is paramount for a healthy childhood as well as for quality of life in adult years (Misra & Aguillon, 2001). It has also been shown that parents should be educated on nutrition and eating habits so that they can transfer this knowledge to their children, thus laying a good foundation for healthy living. Physical activity is another area which is of great concern in ensuring a healthy community.

Glendinning (1998) emphasises the social aspect of health in his findings on the links between family life, self-esteem, health-related behaviour and health lifestyles. His research on rural communities found that perceived family life has clear implications for well-being in youth. Families should be capacitated in these social and health areas. The promotion of basic health practices is important in the development of a healthy society. In collaboration with schools, local clinics, health care centres and other related community centres universities can embark on a vigorous health education campaign. UNISA, through its Institute for Social and Health Sciences, is in a good position to cement its role in health promotion in rural areas.

Section 3.2 has provided a number of areas that are critical to the development of rural communities. The section further outlined how other institutions of higher education have been involved in communities to either support or provide some training interventions that have benefitted the targeted communities. The cited involvement of the universities in the development of rural communities provides a basis for other universities to consider as part of their contribution towards community development. The information on the areas of university involvement outlined in this section have been primary in the formulation of the items for the questionnaire (Annexure 1) which was used for data collection in the research. The information was also used as the basis and background for the analysis of the findings of the research that are reported in Chapter 6.

3.3   **THE POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE LANDSCAPE**

The report of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) on Higher Education and Social Transformation (Reddy, 2004) poses challenging questions for the South African higher education institutions with regard to their role in the development of society. The crucial questions are: How best can the existing resources and capacities of universities be utilised towards the development of society? How can higher education institutions be more responsive to social and political goals? What should be the nature of limits to universities' autonomy in the context of state funding and the pressing socio-economic pressures on the democratic society? These questions require a policy and legislative directive for the determination of the imperatives for higher education to respond to the societal developmental needs.

The Department of Education, through the White Paper on the Transformation of Higher Education (South Africa, 1997a) set out broad national goals for the higher education sector. In these national goals community engagement is cited as an integral and core part of the role of higher education. Emphasis is also placed on the need for higher education to demonstrate social responsibility and their commitment to community support through making their resources, expertise and infrastructure available to community service programmes. The National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa (South Africa, 2001a) has identified the enhancement of responsiveness to regional

and national needs, for academic programmes, research, and community service as one of the priorities for higher education institutions. This priority for higher education is further supported by the Department of Education's Concept Document: Creating Comprehensive Universities in South Africa (South Africa, 2004a) where it outlines the national policy goals and objectives for the creation of comprehensive universities in South Africa. One of the goals and objectives of the creation of comprehensive universities is to ensure that universities have an enhanced capacity (because of the broader range of expertise and foci) to respond to the social and economic needs of the region in general and industry and civil society in particular. This directive for a comprehensive university entails that there should be flexibility on the part of the university which is characterised by the institution's ability to meet the human resources needs of the local context through its training programmes and to contribute to the development of communities it serves through the application and extension of its knowledge and expertise (South Africa, 2004a).

The Higher Education Act of 1997 states that it is desirable for higher education institutions to respond to the needs of the Republic and of communities serviced by the institutions. According to this directive higher education institutions should put systems and mechanisms in place to identify the needs of the communities. They should then establish ways to respond to the identified needs. Some of the needs and/or challenges faced by the South African society, with specific reference to rural communities, and the expected role of higher education are spelled out in the Discussion Document: Towards an Antipoverty Strategy for South Africa (South Africa, 2008:59):

- Closer attention needs to be paid to the kinds of skills required to cope with constantly changing rural and other labour markets. Education for rural people needs to connote skills for diversified rural development.
- Vocational agricultural secondary education should adjust to rural development.
- Higher education should adjust to new needs in rural development and enable their graduates and others to keep abreast of advances. These include offering teaching and training in areas such as natural resource management and rural development with off-farm employment.

- The provision of training to rural communities to complement other support related to agricultural assistance.

The above and other related policy documents, such as the White Paper on Science and Technology (South Africa, 1996), very clearly argue in favour of a Mode 2 orientation to publicly supported knowledge production. In fact, this mode is even explicitly identified by name in some of these documents. Within these policy contexts it directly and indirectly follows that the present research also addressed the extent to which UNISA caters for a Mode 2 orientation to knowledge production, at least in terms of the work of the institutes/bureaus surveyed.

In its Founding Document (2001), the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) identified knowledge-based community service as one of the three areas required for the accreditation of programmes and quality assurance of higher education. This led to the HEQC's incorporation of community engagement and the service learning component into its national quality assurance systems. The document: Criteria for Programme Accreditation of the HEQC (Higher Education Quality Committee, 2004) provides the minimum requirements for higher education's programme design (Criterion 1) and the teaching and learning strategy (Criterion 5). Criterion 1 requires, among others, that higher education institutions take into consideration the needs of students and other stakeholders when designing their programmes. Criterion 5 expects of higher education institutions to take into account the importance of appropriate teaching and learning methods. Service learning is thus embedded in the expectations of these criteria as it would assist in addressing the needs of the community as a stakeholder and as a method of teaching and learning. It is therefore expected of higher education institutions to embark on community engagement and service learning to display adherence to the policy directives of the HEQC's quality assurance requirements.

The Council on Higher Education (2006) reported that some higher education institutions have developed institution-wide policies and strategies for community engagement, allocated resources for the implementation of these strategies and developed academic programmes that include community engagement, particularly in the form of service learning. The University of South Africa developed its Community Participation Policy as early as 2000

(University of South Africa, 2000). The policy has clear strategic imperatives in the form of the vision and mission for community participation and academic citizenship. The vision is to build capacity in the community through strategic partnerships between UNISA and the community in the spirit of academic citizenship and in keeping with the core business of the university, namely research, tuition and community participation. The mission states that "through focussed and structured projects and programmes, UNISA shares resources, skills, and knowledge with the community to contribute to the growth, development and reconstruction of our country" (University of South Africa, 2005:7). Both the vision and the mission of this policy provide a clear guideline for the university's expected involvement in community participation. The mission commits the university to using its resources and knowledge base for participation in the development of communities. The policy further states that 'community participation' is preferred to 'community service' since it refers to an equal relationship in which all participants stand to learn from each other. The policy stipulates that it recognises and supports the wide variety of community-based projects which form, to a greater or lesser extent, an integral part of the teaching and research endeavours of various academic and administrative departments, centres, institutes, units, and bureaus. This implies that the university would embark on community participation projects and/or programmes through the departments and institutes, centres, units, and bureaus. It must be noted that the policy also states, as one of its basic principles, that all community participation projects are entered into by UNISA staff on a voluntary basis. This basic principle is seen as a loophole on the part of the university in its endeavour to embark on community development strategies. The fact that community participation is considered a voluntary exercise does not hold the university responsible and accountable to this cause. The statement also refers to participation as a response to the expressed needs of communities. This statement can be seen to imply that the university will expect communities to come to the university with identified needs for the university to assist in. This reactive approach would be detrimental to communities such as rural communities where people may not be able to identify the needs and to contact the university for assistance and/or support. Lastly, the policy is not vocal about rural communities. The fact that it is silent on this crucial area in community development may justify the possible marginalisation of the rural communities. The model for the involvement of higher education in rural development which is discussed in

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the following section has a direct link to the directives of the policy and legislative landscape dealt with above.

3.4 **AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL FOR THE INVOLVEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

This research focused on some of the strategic and operational factors that influence the environments of higher education institutions as a basis for describing their role in the development of rural communities. It follows that the research had to be embedded in a theoretical framework that would show the relevant areas of involvement and their interrelationships. After different options had been considered, it seemed that an ecological model was appropriate to satisfy this requirement. An ecological model could be defined as the presentation of an establishment and the performance of the aspects that are a collection of interacting factors within a particular area (Safra & Aguitar-Cauz, 2007). Table 3.1 below presents the ecological model that depicts the factors that influence the role of higher education in the development of rural communities.

Table 3.1: An ecological model for the role of higher education in rural development

Aspects influencing the role	Imperative directives
Strategic imperatives	i. Policy and legislation ii. Vision and mission iii. Organisational strategic plan iv. Tuition, research and community engagement v. Infrastructural facilities and resources vi. Management and leadership vii. Organisational structure viii. Institutional human resources development (staffing and staff development)
Operational imperatives	i. Programme alignment ii. Community-based research and development iii. Integration of community service learning and education and training iv. Alignment of the performance management system to incorporate community development v. Designing of learning programmes vi. Adherence to quality assurance requirements

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The aspects or factors that have a direct influence on the role of higher education are the institutional strategic and operational imperatives. The strategic imperatives determine and outline the mandate of the institution. These imperatives further commit the institution to its activities and the focus areas it identifies as of strategic importance (University of South Africa, 2000). A good example is that of the establishment of strategic alliances (Williams, 2002) which requires the strategic position of the institution to be clearly outlined. The national and societal needs and the legislative focus also play a role in determining these imperatives. The operational mandate, on the other hand, presents the institution with a functionality directive. It then directs and commits the different and individual activities carried out by the various departments of the institution, usually on an annual basis. Table 3.1 has provided the different ecological directives which determine and inform the basis of both the strategic and operational imperatives that direct the institution in its operations.

3.5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The theoretical framework provided the starting point for the research by posing a few theoretical questions (Mouton, 2001), namely:

- What are the most plausible theories or models on the role of higher education in community development or participation?
- What are the trends in the higher education sector regarding institutional participation in community development programmes and/or projects?
- Why should the University of South Africa be involved in the development of rural communities?

It is clear from these questions that the need to understand theory would assist in providing answers to the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of the role of higher education in the development of communities in general and rural communities in the case of this research. The preceding paragraphs of this section have provided the theoretical analysis answers to these questions. Figure 3.4 outlines the roles that a university has to play in community development. These expected roles of universities informed the design of the questionnaire (Annexure 1) used in the collection of data. The interpretation,

analysis and synthesis of findings in Chapter 6 were also directed by these roles.
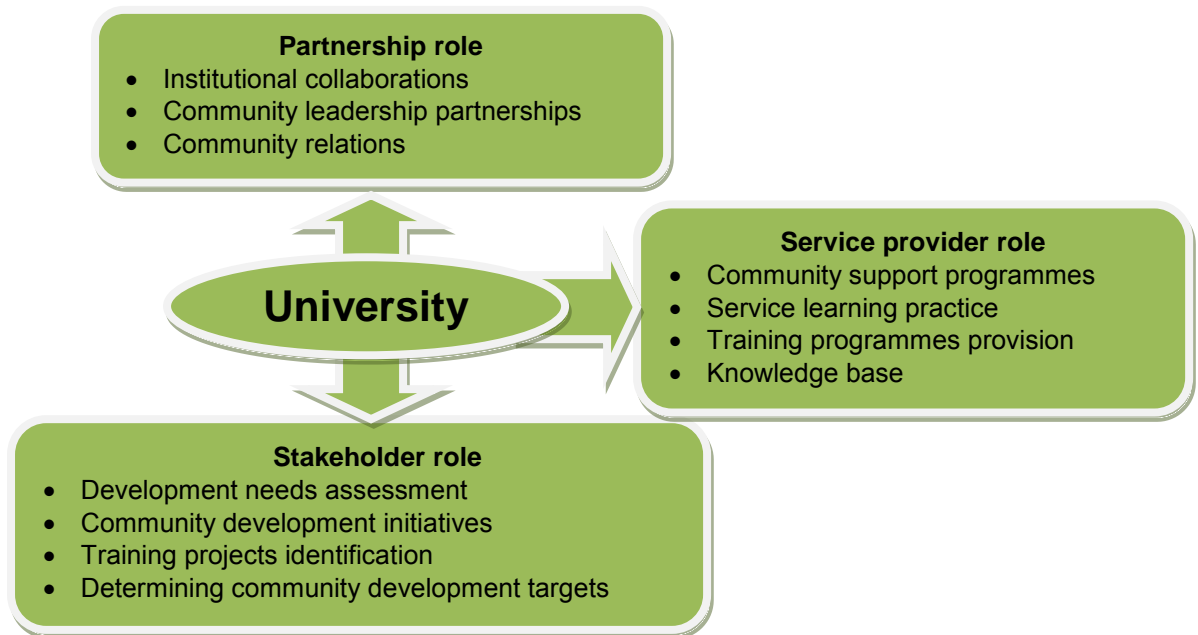
Figure 3.4: The university's community development role model

This model shows that universities have, among others, three distinct roles in rural development, namely the stakeholder role, the service provider role and the strategic partner role. The model also shows that universities should have an interactive and cross-function when carrying out the activities of these respective roles. It means that there should be a compounded approach that does not segregate and separate these functions as ones that stand alone. This is shown in the following theoretical framework analysis where the detailed outline of these roles is presented in an all-inclusive approach. It was necessary to present the theoretical background in a manner that shows the link between these roles, thus emphasising their relatedness.

Higher education institutions have over the years been regarded as the exclusive centres of knowledge that focus on the relatively privileged middle and professional class (Chris, 2002). This perception has since changed drastically. The focus of universities has shifted towards involvement in community development, and an approach that has since emerged is that of collaboration between them and the community. Myers (2003) states that collaboration suggests a mutually beneficial relationship based on the

contributions of individuals to a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts. The collaboration requires a sustained commitment of the partners. Institutions of higher education have to engage themselves in partnerships with community leadership structures for the development of their communities.

There has been a shift from the 'ivory tower' that is interested only in teaching and research to institutions that are increasingly becoming involved in their surrounding communities (Ruffins, 2002). Williams (2002:33) states that "[b]y forming strategic alliances, colleges and universities from different sectors of the higher education community can take community development to new levels". Williams (2002) emphasises the benefit that can be accrued by institutions of higher education if they can embark on partnerships. Such partnerships could include other universities, colleges, community centres, churches and NGOs.

Reid, Hatch and Parrish (2003) report that most African-American people are turning to the church for information about services that are of value and importance to them. These findings presented a challenge for North Carolina Central University to seek support from the clergy and key community leadership so that the university could reach these people. A collaborative partnership was developed between the church and the university to focus on health issues, with diabetes as the main focal point. This partnership enabled the university to render the needed support to the community. Funding agencies are also encouraging university-community collaboration. The emphasis of the collaboration has been mainly on the planning and implementation of community development programmes (Tiamiyu & Bailey, 2001).

Another theory on the role of universities related to what Zlotkowski and Williams (2003) call socially responsive knowledge. They contend that university faculties should be able to educate future citizens about their civic as well as their professional duties. Civic duties entail community responsiveness. In other words, the province of liberal learning as traditionally understood will not, in and of itself, result in the kind of civic literacy that communities need.

Trends have developed in a number of areas where higher education is focusing on the development of human resources in disadvantaged communities. As shown earlier in this section, community partnerships are becoming the focal point of universities towards community development. In the USA, the Portland State University established the office of community partnerships, which reports to Academic Affairs (Zlotkowski & Williams, 2003). This office focuses mainly on partnerships with communities that are primarily serviced by the university. These partnerships involve a number of projects that seek to develop the communities. The trend is for community colleges to respond to emerging social needs by taking on a new role before the larger society is aware of the need or of the work that is already being accomplished by community colleges (Gaskin, Helfgot, Parsons & Solley, 2003). This shows that institutions of higher education consider responding to the developmental needs of society as of critical importance. The University of Wisconsin started an extension service that moved the knowledge and expertise of the university out into the community (Witte, 2000). This extension idea was first applied in the area of agriculture, where local communities were supported by holding daylong classes in these communities. Many economists agree that in terms of development it is the human resources of a place, whether it be a nation, region or town, not its capital or natural resources, that ultimately decides the character and space of its development (Humphreys & Conlon, 2003). Institutions of higher education should respond to the trend towards developing human resources as a key to the advancement of communities.

This research was also informed by the expected role of institutions of higher education towards the development of human resources in the disadvantaged communities. Previously, teaching, research and service were regarded as the three core functions of a university (Shah, 2006). It has since been understood that these roles are linked and that they provide support for community involvement and participation. The general public, political leaders, policy makers and academics are calling for universities to focus on the developmental needs of communities. Fourie (2003) states that the South African government has supported the establishment of a single, coordinated higher education system that not only promotes scholarship, but also responds to the developmental needs of the South African society. This means that the research and teaching role of the university should be

expanded and applied from the universities into the community. The implication is that universities should be involved in community service and that they should not be disengaged from the real problems in society, but rather, should open up possibilities, through research and teaching, for greater social relevance. Higher education has an opportunity unique in its history to contribute to society. To fulfil this role effectively, institutions of higher education should become active partners in addressing community development, among others, by means of service learning (Witte, 2000). This role would show that universities understand and thus commit themselves to community participation for development.

The involvement of institutions of higher education in the development of human resources in disadvantaged communities has many benefits for such communities. Some of these, according to Fourie (2003), are the following:

- Social benefits

  These include support schemes for victims of rape and sexual abuse, the provision of recreational facilities for children in the community, and the empowerment of school learners with social, life and health skills.

- Educational benefits

  These benefits relate to education in the community. They primarily result in support to school children on subjects like mathematics and science.

- Knowledge and information

  These support schemes contribute to the acquisition of knowledge. Universities provide information to the community in the form of books with topics of interest and articles, as well as stories for children. The provision of knowledge and information on technical skills is a specialised role of the university that benefits communities.

- Skills acquisition

  Skills such as first aid, treatment of minor ailments, and vegetable production are some of the skills that could be acquired.

- Behavioural changes

  These benefits refer to long-term outcomes related to changes in the behaviour of community members, such as better utilisation of

resources, assuming responsibility for their health practices, and more responsible sexual practices.

- Capacity building

  The building of capacity in the community in various areas is another benefit for communities. This is both a short- and long-term benefit. A number of benefits linked to capacity building include, among others, empowerment in various spheres of life, such as mental and physical health, sexual behaviour, family planning, food production, and leisure management. The capacity building initiatives enhance sustainability in the broader community.

Theory has provided a direct link between the title of the research and the directives of the literature. The research project focused on the role of the University of South Africa in the development of human resources in the rural areas of Mpumalanga Province. The trends and roles presented earlier on emphasised the need to determine what have been the roles of the University of South Africa in the rural communities.

Tackach (2004:33) emphasises the importance of involvement of higher education institutions in community development by stating that

> [c]ollege and university professors should consider taking a more public role that carries them, with greater frequency, beyond the iron gates or concrete pavements of their own academic institutions into the public sphere – not merely for high-income consulting but with the goal of educating the general public.

This statement is a call for institutions of higher education to be involved in the development of communities that are in need, such as rural communities.

3.6 **CONCLUSION**

Chapter 3 focused on the role that universities should play in the development of communities in general and rural communities in particular. The areas of involvement by higher education were clearly outlined. The ecological model further provided the institutional imperatives which are critical in outlining the

mandate and then the commitment of the institution to its focus areas. The ecological model assisted the research in further providing the understanding of the factors both internal (such as the vision and mission statements) and external (such as legislation and government policies) which have a direct influence on the activities and operation of the institution. The chapter also presented the theoretical framework model that provided the background reference for the research as well as the areas for consideration in the development of the data collection questionnaire. The theoretical framework also advanced the necessary understanding for the expected role of higher education in the development of the rural communities. The interpretation, analysis and synthesis of the findings as reported in Chapter 6 were informed to a greater extent by the content of this chapter; hence reference is made to sections in this chapter and Chapter 2 in the synthesis of the findings in Chapter 6.

In conclusion it can be stated that this chapter provided the basis upon which the role of UNISA as the focus of this research and as outlined by the research questions in the previous chapters was measured.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

A research design entails the development of strategies to be followed in carrying out a scientific inquiry (Wagenaar & Babbie, 1992). Mouton (2001) refers to a research design as a plan or blueprint on how the researcher intends to conduct the research. It involves specifying precisely what the researcher aims to investigate and which most efficient and effective strategies should be used. This chapter, therefore, provides the methodological process and plan of the research project. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3 led to and informed the process to be considered during the research. This chapter accounts for the research process and the methodology through which the research question stated in Chapter 1 would be addressed.

As this chapter reports on the design and methodology of the research it further presents the research paradigm and approach applied by the researcher in carrying out the research. It offers a detailed outline of the process followed during this phase of the research.

4.2   METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND STRATEGY

There are a number of approaches to research, but the five basic ones are the historical, the survey, the experimental, the case, and the participatory/action research approaches (Groenewald, 1986; Treece & Treece, 1986; Meyer, Mabaso & Lancaster, 2001; Mouton, 2001). The nature of research question determines the paradigm and approach to be used. A paradigm, as used in social science, is a perspective or frame of reference, or a mental window, from and/or through which researchers view the social world (Bailey, 1978). Since the aim of this research was to determine the role of UNISA in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province, the nature of the research required an approach that would be able to accumulate the data that would determine the activities,

developmental programmes and/or projects that UNISA provided or sought to provide in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province.

For this purpose, the survey approach was considered to be suitable since it provided for the collection, recording and analysis of questionnaire data (Treece & Treece, 1986). The survey approach was appropriate for this research, since it was of a descriptive nature and neither experimental, historical, nor action focused.

4.2.1 The survey approach

According to Mouton (2001) surveys are studies that are usually quantitative in nature and that aim to provide a broad overview of a representative sample of a large population, thus resulting in a high degree of representation. Surveys do not necessarily require planned interventions such as providing a training course to a sample of the population (Meyer, Mabaso & Lancaster, 2001). This explanatory background on surveys, therefore, differentiates between surveys and experimental designs, as the latter aims to provide a causal research even in the case of a small number of cases (Mouton, 2001), like a pre-test-post-test control group design (for example, see Maminza, 2000). As opposed to case studies, which can be regarded as in-depth investigations (Treece & Treece, 1986), surveys are used where the focus of the research is on a community or group of people. It is evident, therefore, that a survey approach was best suited for this research project that intended to describe the role of UNISA in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province.

In survey research, the researcher selects a sample of respondents from a population and administers a standardised questionnaire to them. A questionnaire, normally used in surveys, can be a written document that is completed by the respondent. This can be done through an online questionnaire, a face-to-face interview, or a telephone interview. Hardyck and Petrinovich (1975) refer to a survey as the process of systematic data collection carried out on the basis of drawing samples from the population and interviewing or administering questionnaires to the individuals in the samples. In this research a questionnaire was designed and administered to the institutes/bureaus of UNISA.

4.2.1.1   Strengths and advantages of the survey approach

It was important to have a clear understanding of the consequences of the research approach that was chosen for this research project. It was also imperative that the advantages and disadvantages of the chosen approach be noted. An understanding of the 'good' and the 'bad' of the approach assisted the researcher in deciding on the specific approach. The decision whether to continue with the selected approach, to combine it with other approaches for supplementary purposes, or to select a completely new approach would be based on the advantages and/or disadvantages of the chosen approach. The following are advantages of surveys as stated by Treece and Treece (1986), Opperman (1995), and Goree and Marszalek (1995):

- A survey provides the researcher with an opportunity for creativity regarding, among others, the area to be surveyed, and the methods to be used for the extraction of data.
- In a survey the researcher can cover a broad area with the research.
- Surveys are relatively objective, since they produce quantitative data (Mouton, 2001), rather than subjective opinions.
- Since this approach concentrates on a definite sample, the boundaries of the applicability of the findings can be defined.
- Surveys are practical as they define the objectives and scope of a study beforehand and the dangers of project-creep are less likely.
- Because of the nature of the methodology (sampling and questionnaire design), the reliability and validity of the results of surveys can be determined and thus normally minimise the dangers of unsupported interpretations and conclusions.
- A survey is a way of gaining insight into the present. It probes attitudes, reveals problems, and uncovers strengths in the sample. It can therefore be considered to be enlightening.
- Surveys are relatively inexpensive, especially in the case of self-administered surveys.
- Surveys are useful in describing the characteristics of a large population. No other method of observation can provide this general capability.

- Surveys can be used from remote locations by using mail, e-mail and a telephone.

- Many questions can be asked about a given topic, thus giving considerable flexibility to the analysis.

- There is flexibility at the instrument development phase in deciding how the questions will be administered.

- Standardised questions make measurement more precise by enforcing uniform definitions upon the participants, thus also facilitating comparisons across groups.

These are some of the advantages of the survey approach which motivated the researcher to use it in this research project.

Although surveys have many advantages, there are a few disadvantages or limitations (Mouton, 2001), as indicated below.

4.2.1.2 Limitations and disadvantages of the survey approach

The researcher was aware and cautious of the various limitations and disadvantages of the survey approach. The following are the most important ones.

- Surveys are sometimes criticised as being 'surface level' analyses – as opposed to in-depth ones – and for being very sample- and context-specific (Mouton, 2001).

- Surveys offer little control over extraneous factors since the researcher is not necessarily working with a single independent variable, just as there may be more than one dependent variable.

- As opposed to direct observation, surveys, excluding some interviews, can seldom deal with context (Goree & Marszalek, 1995).

It is clear that the strengths of the survey approach outnumber the limitations. The researcher was not ignorant of these limitations, but saw them as challenges that were to be overcome to ensure the validity and reliability of the research.

4.2.2 **Quantitative and qualitative research**

There is a need to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative research in order to show the reason for choosing to use any of the two approaches. Mouton and Marais (1988) describe quantitative research as an approach in the social sciences that is more formalised as well as more explicitly controlled, with a range that is more exactly defined, and that, in terms of the methods used, it is relatively close to the physical sciences. In a qualitative approach, on the other hand, procedures are not as strictly formalised, while the scope is more likely to be undefined, and a more philosophical mode of operation is adopted. Treece and Treece (1986) cite some characteristics of the two approaches as shown in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Characteristics of quantitative and qualitative research

Quantitative research	Qualitative research
Assumes the meaning and more frequently uses one source.	It is concerned with meaning and multiple sources.
Is concerned with the amount.	It is concerned with the nature and form.
Quantitative research is product-oriented.	Qualitative research is process-oriented.
Surveys are quantitatively focused.	Observation is mostly identified with qualitative research.
It usually concentrates on what can be described in numbers.	It deals with aspects of reality such as what can be perceived by the senses.
Quantitative techniques focus on what people do. They consider behaviour as an end in itself.	Qualitative research pays attention to the action (the 'how' part).

An example of differentiating between these two approaches could be where, in a given locality, the quantitative researcher determines the number (quantity) of people who have an IQ of 90, while the qualitative researcher would determine how it feels to be considered as having a below-average intelligence. The qualitative approach takes into account the views, feelings, values and outcomes.

This research project focused on determining the role of UNISA in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. This involved determining the activities (the 'what') of the university through its institutes/bureaus in the province. The questionnaire used for data collection was limited to quantitative information, but it also included some qualitative items that required qualitative responses (see items 2.10, 4.6, 4.7,

4.8, 4.11, and 4.13 in the questionnaire). The inclusion of qualitative questions in the questionnaire enriched the research by providing a complementary and comparative base for the analysis of data.

4.3   UNIT OF ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF THE SAMPLE

Uys (1996) defines a unit of analysis as the 'who' and 'what' to be explored, described, studied and defined by the research. He further states that the unit of analysis could refer to individuals, groups, organisations (UNISA in the case of this research), or social artefacts. This definition of the unit of analysis is further supported by Mouton (2001) who also refers to the unit of analysis as the 'what' of the research. Mouton states that the 'what' could mean an object, a phenomenon, an entity, a process or an event. Bailey (1978), on the other hand, refers to the unit of analysis as the objects of the research project which are most often an individual person, a club, an industry, a city, an organisation, a country or a state. Therefore the unit of analysis refers to what the researcher wishes to investigate. The sum total of all the units of analysis is thus called a population or universe (Mouton & Marais, 1988; Uys, 1996). According to Wagenaar and Babbie (1992) it is typical of social scientists to research individual people as their unity of analysis. Although they do so in aggregate form, they also research social groups such as families and organisations. Even though the unit of analysis may be a group, characteristics of the group may be derived from the characteristics of individual members.

This research focused on the role of the University of South Africa in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. Thus the university, through its institutes/bureaus, was the unit of analysis for this research. The University of South Africa has 34 institutes/bureaus (see Table 5.1). These 34 institutes/bureaus were therefore the target population of the research.

It would be ideal to study the whole population or universe to give more weight to the research findings. Often, however, it is not possible to include all the elements of the population hence a need arises to settle for a sample (Bailey, 1982). A sample, according to McBurney (1994), is a subset of the population. Sampling affords the researcher the capability of describing a

larger population based on only a selected portion of that population (Wagenaar & Babbie, 1992).

For the purpose of this research it was necessary to select a sample from the 34 institutes/bureaus at UNISA based on their relevance to and/or association with community development, which was the focus of the research. Twenty one institutes/bureaus were selected as a sample for the research since they were found relevant to the purpose of the research (see Table 5.2). The number of institutes/bureaus sampled for the research translated to 62% of the population, which is a good representation of the population.

4.4 METHOD USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

Groenewald (1986) states that surveys have become synonymous with the use of indirect observation, namely questionnaires and interviews. The survey nature of this research project required the use of a questionnaire for data collection (see Annexure 1).

There are two types of questionnaires, an open-ended or unstructured and a closed-ended or structured questionnaire (McBurney, 1994). An open-ended questionnaire allows the respondents to answer in their own words, thus providing qualitative responses, while a closed-ended questionnaire limits the respondents to the alternatives determined in advance by the designers of the questionnaire. This usually yields quantitative responses (Tshikwatamba, 2000).

The questionnaire used for this research consisted mainly of closed-ended items which thus entailed a quantitative approach. However, it was not exclusively of a quantitative nature, since a number of open-ended qualitative items were also included in the questionnaire to enhance the research through diverse types of responses.

4.4.1 The questionnaire

The questionnaire was an operationalisation of the expected role of the university in the development of rural communities, namely the stakeholder role, service provider role and the partner role (see Figure. 3.4) in the

theoretical framework. In other words, what the theoretical framework posited as the role of universities in the development of rural communities was operationalised by means of the questionnaire. Questions were formulated in a way that would verify whether what the theoretical framework argued as the factors that influence the role of universities were real. In the literature review, the analysis found that services provided by the higher education sector as well as the perceptions, evaluation of the involvement, and the policy context were important aspects to be considered when assessing the role of higher education in the development of human resources in rural communities.

The questionnaire consisted of the following four sections:

- **Background information**

  It was important to know the background of the respondents so that the reliability of the responses could be guaranteed. This provided the researcher with a background against which to determine whether the respondents knew the institutes/bureaus on which they provided responses. This section was comprised of four question items.

- **Services provided by the institutes/bureaus in rural communities**

  This section aimed at ascertaining whether the institutes/bureaus do indeed provide services to rural communities, particularly in Mpumalanga Province. This component of the questionnaire consisted of a total of 13 main question items.

- **Views on the development of rural communities**

  The section on the views on the development of rural communities was necessary to determine the perceptions and attitude of the respondents towards the concept of rural development in general. This section consisted of 6 rating scale items.

- **Institutional policy landscape information**

  The policy landscape was an important factor in determining whether the University of South Africa does indeed value the importance of the policy as a strategic imperative that provides direction and mandate towards the functioning of the institutional departments and/or

divisions. This part of the questionnaire consisted of 18 main question items.

The questionnaire was balanced in its formulation and construct as it covered all the aspects of the research question as stated in Chapter 1 (see 1.2.1). The questionnaire had a total of 41 main question items. It also had a number of follow-up qualitative questions. The length of the questionnaire allowed for a maximum time of about 30 minutes to complete.

4.4.2 Piloting of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was piloted before administered to the respondents in order to avoid the use of an untested tool that could almost, without exception, yield unnecessary, slightly off-target and even irrelevant information (Rossouw, 2003). A pilot of the questionnaire (De Vos, 2002) was conducted on a small set of individuals with insight into UNISA institutes/bureaus and UNISA regional facilities and services (see Annexure 3). The questionnaire was piloted on two people from institutes/bureaus and two managers from the regional centres of UNISA. Subsequently, it was clear from the responses and the feedback received that the respondents correctly understood and interpreted all the items.

4.4.3 Administration of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed to the managers of 21 institutes/bureaus that were sampled for this research (see Table 5.2).

A letter authorising the researcher to distribute the questionnaire to the managers of institutes/bureaus was provided by the Vice-Principal: Research at UNISA (see Annexure 4). It was necessary to get permission (see Denscombe, 1998) to administer the questionnaire to the managers of institutes/bureaus, since the time and resources of UNISA would be used for this purpose. An introductory letter from the research supervisor (see Annexure 5) was also included with the questionnaire so that the respondents would be assured of the authenticity of the research.

The questionnaire was forwarded to the managers via email since it was easy to use such a system and it also provided a means by which to follow up and control the returning of the completed questionnaires. In some instances reminders were sent to respondents. The exercise yielded successful results since there was a 100% return rate.

4.5   DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Analysis of data involves the breaking up of data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships (Mouton, 2001). According to Wagenaar and Babbie (1992) data should be converted into numerical codes in the case of analysing quantitative data. It is important to take into account that, as suggested by Meyer *et al.* (2001), an appropriate statistical procedure must be chosen for analysing data. These authors emphasise that the statistical procedure should be chosen before the data collection exercise is carried out. The data was analysed by means of a computer excel spreadsheet.

As shown in Chapter 5, the data was presented in manageable forms and quantity. This was done through the reduction of data to manageable, interpretable proportions (Groenewald, 1986). The reduction of data was important for two reasons. Firstly, it was important for the researcher to have a summary of collected data, as it would be cumbersome for the reader if the researcher were to report on the total volume of collected raw data. Secondly, only the important findings were reported. It was, therefore, important to capture the data from all the individual questionnaires onto a summary data sheet.

4.6   RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF DATA

A questionnaire normally allows for testing both reliability and validity (Treece & Treece, 1986). According to Serakan (1992) reliability refers to the extent to which the scores obtained may be generalised over measuring occasions. Mouton (1996) refers to reliability as the requirement that the application of a valid measuring instrument to different individuals under different sets of circumstances should lead to more or less the same observations. Therefore, reliability emphasises consistency. Validity of a measuring instrument means that the instrument measures what it purports to measure, and that the

researcher's conclusion is correct and that it corresponds to the actual state of reality (McBurney, 1994). Huysamen (1976) defines the validity of a measuring instrument as the extent to which such an instrument serves the purpose for which it is intended. He adds that sociological researchers frequently make use of questionnaires (also referred to as report inventories) for measuring the dependent variables of interest. Such questionnaires, like the present one, frequently consist of multiple-choice items, each listing a set of alternative responses in conjunction with a particular topic.

In the case of this research, the reliability and validity of the questionnaire were ensured in the following ways: Firstly, the researcher formulated the items only after a careful study of the literature, including relevant policies, making sure that the items used the standard terminology and could be interpreted in the intended way by respondents familiar with the subject matter. In this way, content validity of the questionnaires was addressed. Secondly, the questionnaire was piloted to ensure that it would not yield unrelated and incorrect results from the respondents. Thirdly, a type of qualitative convergent and discriminant validation was done by inspecting the recorded data for, on the one hand, inconsistencies in the responses to items that should have evoked similar responses, and similarities in responses to items that should have elicited divergent responses, on the other hand. This check and balance mechanism, which was also applied through the use of qualitative open-ended items, was another way of ascertaining the consistency of the responses provided for some of the closed-ended quantitative items.

An additional form of validation was introduced that had not originally been provided for in the planning of the research. This took the form of drawing up an outline of the role of some institutes/bureaus of the University of Pretoria in the development of rural communities. A detailed account of this overview is provided in sections 5.6 and 6.4.

4.7   **CONCLUSION**

This chapter confirmed that the nature of the research that was undertaken required a survey approach. As reflected earlier on in Chapters 1 and 2, the research project focused on the role of UNISA in the development of human

resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. Chapter 3 presented the theoretical framework for the research which provided the background against which the research design was formulated. This chapter indicated that a quantitative method in data collection, complemented by qualitative items, was required for the research. Therefore, a structured questionnaire was used as a data collection tool.

Chapter 4 further offered an overview of and justification for the unit of analysis for the research project, and described the data collection and analysis process. The last section of the chapter addressed the data reduction process and explained the format in which the findings were to be presented in the following chapter. This chapter, which dealt with the methodology of the research project, can be seen as the driving chapter of the research in the sense that it was this chapter that described and directed the processes thus providing the scientific plan for the empirical part of the research project.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports on the results of the investigation. It analyses, presents, and interprets the findings of the research project. The research problem is reiterated in this chapter, so that there is a direct link between this chapter and the preceding chapters.

Data analysis is the culmination of a long process of research question formulation, instrument construction, and data collection. It is necessary to analyse the data in order to properly answer the research questions, and to further present the results of the research project to the readers in an understandable and convincing form. This exercise entails breaking down the data into constituent parts to obtain answers to the research questions (De Vos, 2002). The chapter further presents the research findings and the interpretation thereof. The findings should illustrate whether UNISA, through its institutes/bureaus, is playing a role in the development of human resources in rural communities as depicted by the research's theoretical framework.

5.2   RESEARCH PROBLEM

This research project was motivated by the high unemployment, low levels of skills, low health standards, illiteracy, and relatively low level of the human development index (HDI) in Mpumalanga Province, particularly in the rural communities of the province. This led to the enquiry on the role of the University of South Africa in the development of human resources in the rural communities of this province, hence the research question: What is the role of UNISA in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province?

The distance education mode of operation of UNISA was seen as a platform for UNISA to be involved in the development of communities that are far away

from its main centre or campus. UNISA also has the knowledge and human resources to provide the required knowledge skills to empower rural communities in terms of human development. The existence of institutes/bureaus within the organisational business architecture of the university further provided UNISA with the avenue to embark on programmes or projects that would seek to assist in addressing the human development needs of the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. It was on the basis of this question statement that the managers of institutes/bureaus at UNISA were sampled for the data collection process.

5.3   **SAMPLE**

As stated in 5.2, the research aimed at determining the role of UNISA in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga. In Chapter 3 it was explained that the focus of higher education in the development of rural communities should be on human development skills programmes. The focus area of the institutes/bureaus at UNISA provided the basis on which the institutes/bureaus were identified as the target for this research. Table 5.1 lists the 34 institutes/bureaus that exist at UNISA while Table 5.2 lists the 21 institutes/bureaus that were sampled from the total of 34 institutes/bureaus. Their focus areas are also provided.

Table 5.1: List of UNISA institutes/bureaus

Institute/bureau	Focus area
Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Institute	• Conducts training on ABET programmes to adults • Has approximately 200 tutors countrywide
Institute for Social and Health Sciences	• Crime, violence and injury lead programmes • Research on psychological ramification of HIV and AIDS in communities • Inequality, social difference and knowledge production
African Centre for Arts, Culture and Heritage Studies	• Research, documentation, and preserving of previously neglected arts, culture and heritage (indigenous knowledge) • Educating, training and empowering the previously disadvantaged communities • Capacity building through employment opportunities and training in marketing and managing cultural resource/products • Advice and consultation in all areas of cultural resource management
Centre for Community Training and Development	• Offers community training programmes • Provision of opportunities for individuals to gain access to and succeed in lifelong learning

Table 5.1 (Continued): List of UNISA institutes/bureaus

Centre for Business Law	• Provision of short courses programmes • Provides consultancy work for big business • Supports the College of Law on academic development
Centre for Development Studies	• To promote a process of participatory, people-centred sustainable development in society • To contribute in the struggle against mass poverty by confronting social, environmental, political and economic issues • To promote optimal levels of development literacy and to establish, maintain and expand community development through community service, community education and research
Centre for Industrial and Organisational Psychology	• Presenting short courses and workshops on themes to meet the needs of the communities • Presenting customised programmes and workshops for individuals and groups • Providing community services • Undertaking psychological and human resources research
CB Powell Bible Centre	• Focuses on community education on Biblical issues • In partnership with a Radio Pulpit community building initiative, offers workshops on various aspects including prison ministry • Seminars and workshops on various topical matters are held in cooperation with congregations and organisations throughout South Africa
The John Povey Centre for the Study of English in Southern Africa	• Focuses on teaching, publishing, research and community service • Aims to meet the needs of the wider community • Seeks to play a more active role in the community
The Legal Aid Clinic	• Service to the community (Educates and informs the public about the law and legal procedure) • Provides legal advice to local government, businesses, and other clients
Centre for Anthropology and Archaeology Museum	• Focuses academic anthropology and archaeology development • Provides support for the academic programmes on anthropology and archaeology • Conducts research
Centre for Pan African Languages and Cultural Development	• Focuses on African languages training
Institute for Applied Communication	• Offers non-formal short courses and services to public and private organisations • Promotes community service • Provides trainees with access to formal programme of the University
Centre for Applied Psychology	• Development and presentation of short learning programmes in accordance with needs of clients such as health mental workers, organisations, and communities • Organising skills training workshops • Dissemination of information • Rendering preventative and curative services to the community at both individual and group levels
Centre for Peace Education	• Facilitates peaceful coexistence, the empowerment of citizens and social well-being • Promotes constructive, creative and cooperative approaches to conflict resolution and the reduction of violence • Promotes knowledge of peace education and conflict resolution in the community
Bureau for Counselling, Career and Academic Development	• Assists with career choices, study skills, job searching skills, and personal counselling • Provides training and development opportunities • It has staff in the regional centres who serve the regions

Table 5.1 (Continued): List of UNISA institutes/bureaus

Children's Literature Research Unit	• Support to UNISA's community involvement through community service projects, seminars, conferences and exhibitions • Running Project Literacy
Academic Literacy Research Unit	• Promotion of interest in, awareness of and insight into academic literacy • Focuses on reading skills for mathematics, family literacy projects, reading projects
Centre for Public Administration and Management	• Offers various short training programmes to national and provincial governments, NGOs, CBOs and communities. • Established to meet the capacity building needs of government at all levels and of the community leaders • Ensures improved skills capacity, customer and community participation
Centre for Peace Action	• Develops, provides and evaluates community-based violence and injury prevention programmes • Consolidates communities for best practices in safety promotion • Assists communities in the preparation and submission of applications for Safe Community Status • Provides ongoing technical and training assistance to safe communities
Centre for Accounting Studies	• Supporting UNISA in the execution of its community-based task of tuition, research and community service • Fulfilling UNISA's social responsibility towards the South African business community
Centre for Business Management	• Offers a variety of short course programmes, such as Business Communication, Financial Management, and General Management and Entrepreneurship. • Can also offer in-house programmes
Bureau for Business Studies	• Provision of NQF Level 4 programmes • Provision of Entry Level Computing to communities in partnership with community centres
The Corporate Social Investment Directorate	• The fundraising arm of the university • Focuses on community engagement projects • Facilitates communication and linkages with partner communities
Centre for Corporate Citizenship	• Provision of education and training • Conducting research and creating a platform for information sharing • Mainstreaming of corporate citizenship into business management curricula
Institute for Gender Studies	• Development of theoretical and practical understanding of gender equality in the process of social transformation • Facilitates links between intellectuals, policymakers, and practitioners in gender equity issues • Conducts academic research, academic teaching and facilitates applied community projects and training
Institute of Foreign and Comparative Law	• A research institute with full department status • Serves the information needs of students, the legal profession, governments as well as private and commercial clients • Undertakes comparative law studies on various aspects of private, commercial and public law in African states
UNISA Music Foundation	• Organises and present the UNISA International Music Competitions • Regarded as one of the university's most important public relations exercises
Centre for Human Rights	• Focuses on human rights in Africa, socio-economic rights and gender issues • Works in collaboration with the Centre for Human Rights of the University of Pretoria. • Runs students' volunteer programme • Provides consultancy work on human rights issues

Table 5.1 (Continued): List of UNISA institutes/bureaus

Centre for Indigenous Law	• Promotes and facilitates research in the field of indigenous law • Staff members of the centre come from various departments within the College of Law
Institute for Science and Technology Education	• Promotes inter-college collaborations in the field of Mathematics, Science and Technology • Coordinates the integration, tuition and development of all modules of formal and non-formal Mathematics, Science and Technology programmes • Undertakes research and development across the colleges
Bureau for Market Research	• Provides research services to the university with specific focus on market needs, client satisfaction surveys, students' needs for services, etc. • Consulting for other external clients on research such as opinion surveys, etc.
Institute for Curriculum and Learning Development	• Provides training for academic staff on learning and curriculum development issues • Supports staff on study material development
Institute for Open and Distance Learning	• Focuses on ODL as a UNISA business model and training of UNISA staff on ODL imperatives • Custodian of the UNISA ODL Policy

Table 5.1 lists all the institutes/bureaus that are found at UNISA. A closer look at the focus areas of these institutes/bureaus shows that a number of the institutes/bureaus focus on in-house activities. This means that they were established to provide support to the university in its activities. Examples of such institutes/bureaus are the Institute for Learning and Academic Development (ICLD) which focuses on providing academic support to the academics in the different colleges, the Institute for Open and Distance Learning (IODL), which was established to assist the university in finding its identity and developing its processes within the ODL environment, and the Bureau for Market Research (BMR), which focuses on supporting the university to understand its market and the market's needs. The BMR conducts surveys that seek to inform the university about the needs of its clients and the satisfaction of the clients. As shown in the table the BMR also provides consultancy work on research-related services to external clients. Since these and other similar institutes/bureaus were found to have no direct role and function in the focus of the research, they were not sampled, as shown in Table 5.2 below. It must be noted that permission to carry out the research on the institutes/bureaus was granted by the then Vice-Principal: Research and Planning (see Annexure 4).

Table 5.2: List of the sampled institutes/bureaus

Institute/bureau	Number of years of existence of the institutes/bureaus
Bureau for Counselling, Career and Academic Development (North Eastern Region)	5
Basic Legal Education Unit	10
Institute for Applied Communication	12
Bureau for Business Studies	12
Centre for Applied Psychology	10
ABET Institute	14
Centre for Business Management	20
Centre for Development Studies	13
Children's Literature Research Unit	8
Institute for Gender Studies	9
Centre for Public Administration and Management	13
Institute of Foreign and Comparative Law	44
Centre for Community Training and Development	17
Centre for Academic Literacy Research	15
African Centre for Arts, Culture and Heritage Studies	12
Bureau for Counselling, Career and Academic Development (Cape Coastal Region)	42
CB Powell Bible Centre	25
Centre for Accounting Studies	17
Institute for Social and Health Sciences	16
John Povey Centre for the Study of English in Southern Africa	10
The Legal Aid Clinic	11

The institutes/bureaus listed in Table 5.2 were sampled from the total number of institutes/bureaus provided in Table 5.1. The sampling of the institutes/bureaus was not done randomly since the focus of the research was more on those institutes/bureaus which are relevant to and have a direct role in and/or focus on community development. The institutes/bureaus which were found to have no focus on activities and/or roles towards community development were not sampled. This implies that the data collection tool, namely, the questionnaire, was only administered to the 21 sampled institutes/bureaus. The questionnaire was sent to these 21 institutes/bureaus. The research recorded a 100% response rate since all the 21 targeted respondents were able to return the completed questionnaires. This response rate validated the generalisation of the conclusions made in section 6.6.

The questionnaire was completed by senior people in the institutes/bureaus thus providing for more reliable information for the research. The table shows that 86% of the institutes/bureaus had been in existence for 10 or more years. Only 14% of the sampled institutes/bureaus had been in existence for periods

less than 10 years. The period for which the institutes/bureaus have been in existence can be considered to provide the reason for expecting the institutes/bureaus to have carried out some developmental roles and/or activities focusing on community development.

5.4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The findings that were gathered from the respondents through the use of the questionnaire are presented in this section. The questionnaire consisted of four sections which covered the following areas:

- Background information
  This part of the questionnaire focused on gathering the background information of the institutes/bureaus. It consisted of four items.
- Services rendered by the institutes/bureaus in rural communities.
  The items on this part of the questionnaire were aimed at determining the services that the institutes/bureaus were rendering in rural communities. It consisted of thirteen items.
- Rating scale items: Views on the development of rural communities
  This part consisted of six rating scale items aimed at determining the views of the respondents on aspects that relate to the development of rural communities.
- Institutional policy landscape
  The last part of the questionnaire consisted of eighteen items and focused on the questions related to UNISA policy. The questions were asked to establish whether UNISA placed an emphasis on rural development in its operations as would be directed by the institution's strategic imperatives.

The responses to all the items covered by the questionnaire in each of the above-mentioned areas are presented in this section. The presentation of the findings will then be followed by comparative analyses of some selected items of the questionnaire. The items in question are selected on the basis of the relatedness of the information to be obtained from the respondents. The analyses of these selected items will be covered in section 5.4.5.

5.4.1 **Responses of institutes/bureaus on background information (section
1.0 of the questionnaire)**

As stated above, the purpose of this part was to gather the background
information of the institutes/bureaus as indicated by the preceding questions.

i.   Item 1.1: Name of the institute/bureau

This question was aimed at determining the name of the institute/bureau
so that the correct name of the institute/bureau could be recorded for
purposes of this research. All respondents provided the names of their
respective institutes/bureaus.

ii.   Item 1.2: For how many years has your institute/bureau been in
existence?
This question was asked to establish the period of existence of the
institute/bureau. Figure 5.1 below shows that the majority of the
institutes/bureaus (38%) had been in existence for between 10 and 15
years. The figure also shows that 10% of the institutes/bureaus had been
in business for over 40 years.
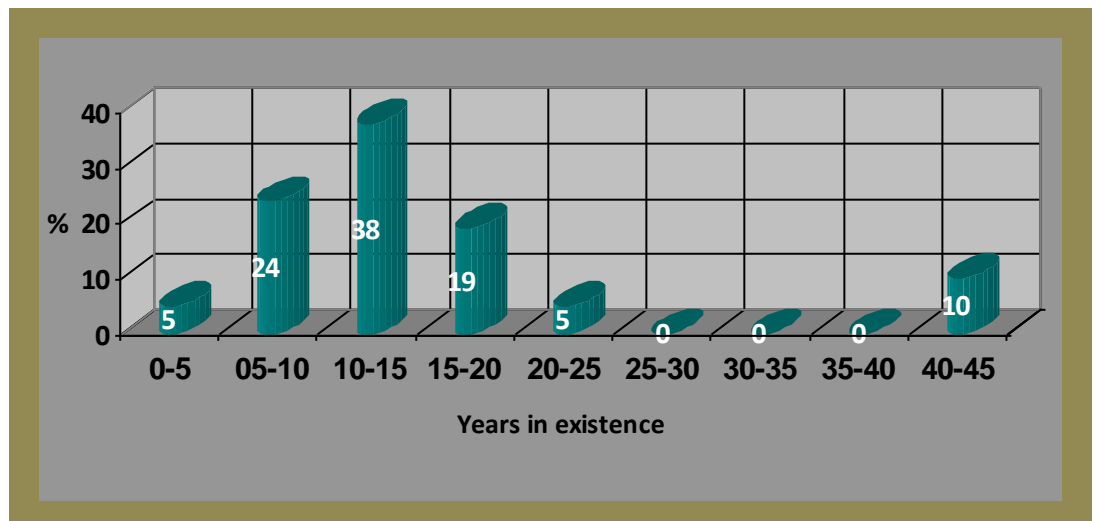
*Figure 5.1: Number of years that the institute/bureau had been in
existence*

It can be expected of the institutes/bureaus to have been involved in
some ways in the development of rural communities in the country since
they had been in existence long enough.

iii.   Item 1.3: Kindly provide the number of full-time academic staff in your institute/bureau.

The respondents were expected to provide the number of lecturing, training or academic staff in the institutes/bureaus. This information would assist the research by providing the level at which the institutes/bureaus were resourced in terms of human resources. Figure 5.2 provides the diagrammatical presentation of the responses to this item.
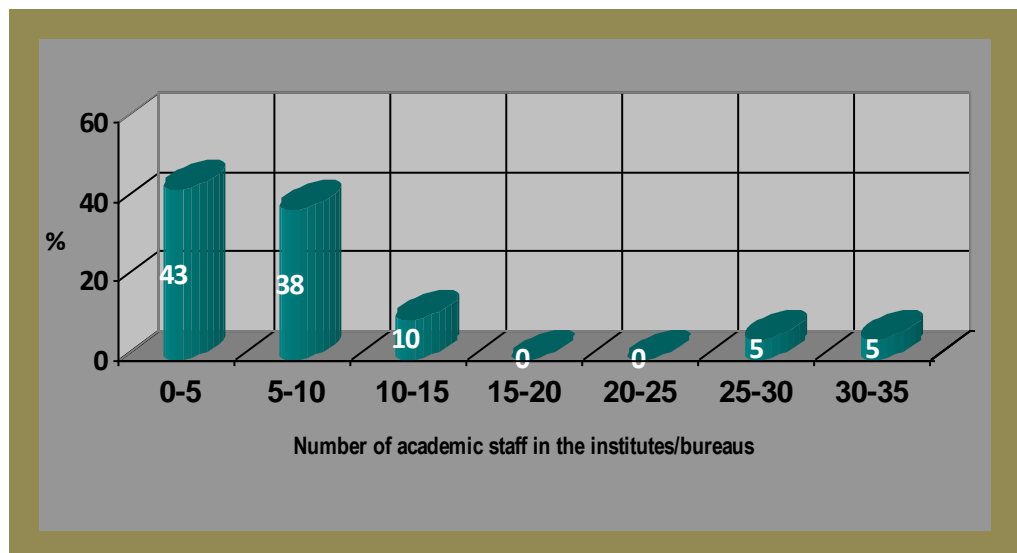
Figure 5.2: Number of academic staff in the institutes/bureaus

The figure shows that the institutes/bureaus were not well staffed. Eighty percent of the institutes/bureaus had only between 1 and 10 full-time academic staff. This would make it very difficult for these institutes/bureaus to be vigorously involved with community development programmes/projects in many areas.

iv.   Item 1.4: Of which College of UNISA does your institute/bureau form part?

This question was asked to identify the colleges of UNISA to which the institutes/bureaus belonged. The information would be helpful to inform the research regarding the potential of colleges to embark on rural community development through their institutes/bureaus. Figure 5.3 shows that the College of Human Sciences (CHS) had most (48%) of the

institutes/bureaus that focused on rural community development. The CHS was followed by the College of Economic and Management Sciences (CEMS) with 19% of the institutes/bureaus.
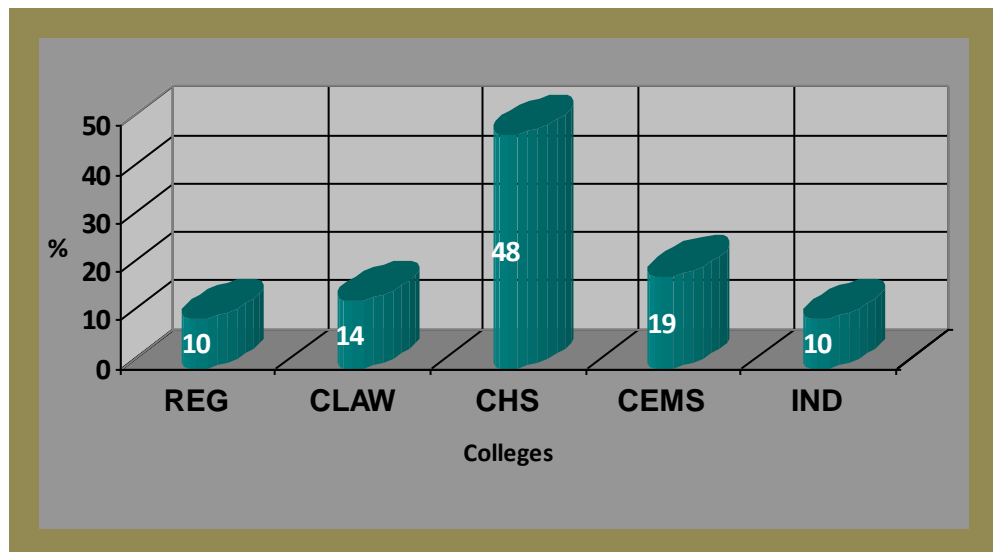
Figure 5.3: Colleges to which institutes/bureaus belong

The figure also shows that 10% of the institutes/bureaus were independent (IND) of the colleges, implying that they did not belong to any college. Another 10% were from the regions (REG) of UNISA. Fourteen percent of the institutes/bureaus were from the College of Law (CLAW). It can be deduced that the other two Colleges of UNISA, namely the College of Agriculture and Environmental Studies (CAES) and the College of Science, Engineering and Technology (CSET) did not have institutes/bureaus which were found to be focusing on rural community development during the sampling stage of the research.

5.4.2 **Responses to questions on services rendered by the institutes/bureaus in rural communities (section 2.0 of the questionnaire)**

This section of the questionnaire contained 13 questions. The purpose of these questions was to establish the extent to which the institutes/bureaus had rendered development programmes/projects/services in rural communities and particularly in Mpumalanga Province. The following are graphical presentations of the responses to the questions and brief analysis of each of the findings.

i.   Item 2.1: Which of the nine provinces of South Africa has your
        institute/bureau been mostly involved in regarding the development of
        human resources in rural communities?

        This question was asked to give the respondents an opportunity to
        inform the research about the province which they thought they had
        been mostly involved in. The findings derived from the respondents are
        presented in Figure 5.4 below:
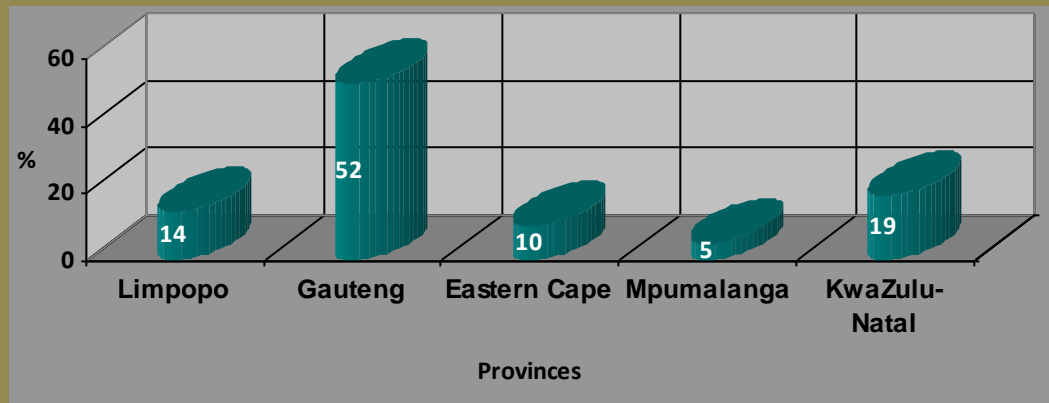
Figure 5.4: Provinces in which institutes/bureaus were most involved

        The responses to this item show that most of the institutes/bureaus
        (52%) had been mostly involved in Gauteng, followed by KwaZulu-Natal
        at 19%. Only 5% of the institutes/bureaus reported to have been mostly
        involved in Mpumalanga, the province targeted by the research. This is
        the lowest value, as can be seen from the graph. The other four
        provinces, namely, Western Cape, Free State, Northern Cape and
        North West were not mentioned at all in the responses.

ii.   Item 2.2: In which of the provided areas was your institute/bureau
        involved, i.e. in the province identified above in item 2.1?

        It was important to ask this question as a follow-up question to item 2.1
        to determine the area(s) in which the institute/bureau was involved,
        namely, urban areas, semi-urban areas, rural areas and farm areas.
        The responses are presented in the following figure.
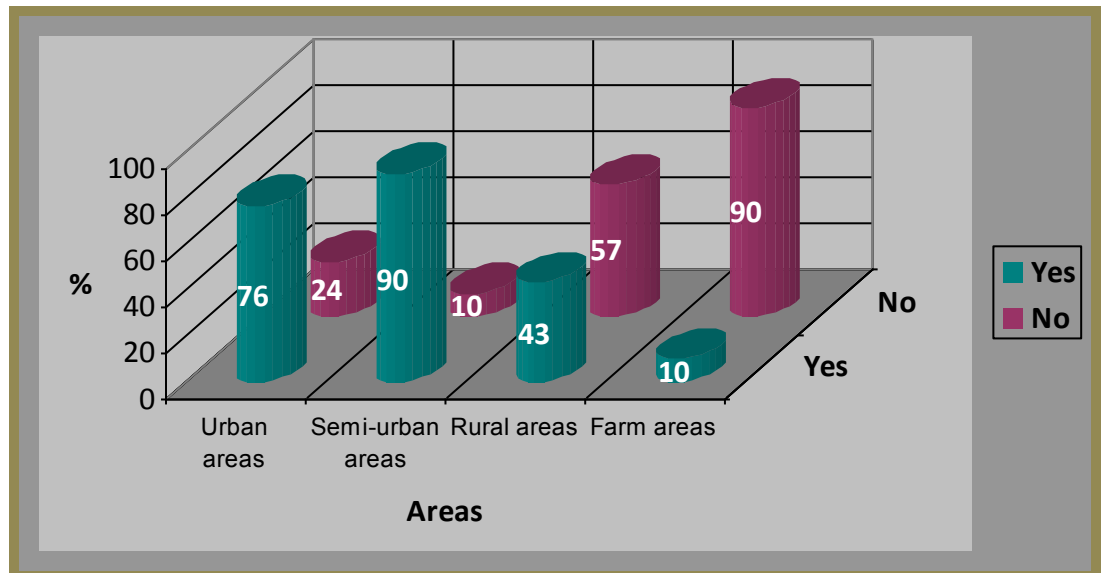
Figure 5.5: Indication of areas in which institutes/bureaus were involved

Figure 5.5 provides the responses of the respondents regarding the areas where their institutes/bureaus were involved. It is evident from the figure that most of the institutes/bureaus (90%) responded positively to being involved in semi-urban areas, commonly known as townships, followed by urban areas registering 76% affirmation. Only 43% of the institutes/bureaus were affirmed to having been involved in rural areas and 10% to having been involved in farm areas. These figures link well with Figure 5.4 where most of the highest number of institutes reported that they had been involved in Gauteng, a mostly urban province, with only 5%, 10%, 14% and 19% having been involved in Mpumalanga, Limpopo, the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal respectively, which happen to be the most rural provinces of South Africa.

iii.   Item 2.3: Has your institute/bureau been involved in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province?

The respondents were requested to provide a 'yes' or 'no' answer with a subsequent indication of the type of involvement, if any. Most of the respondents (67%) indicated that they were involved in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. The remaining 33% said that they were not involved at all. Figure 5.6

below provides the second part of the question where respondents provided the kind of involvement they had, if any.
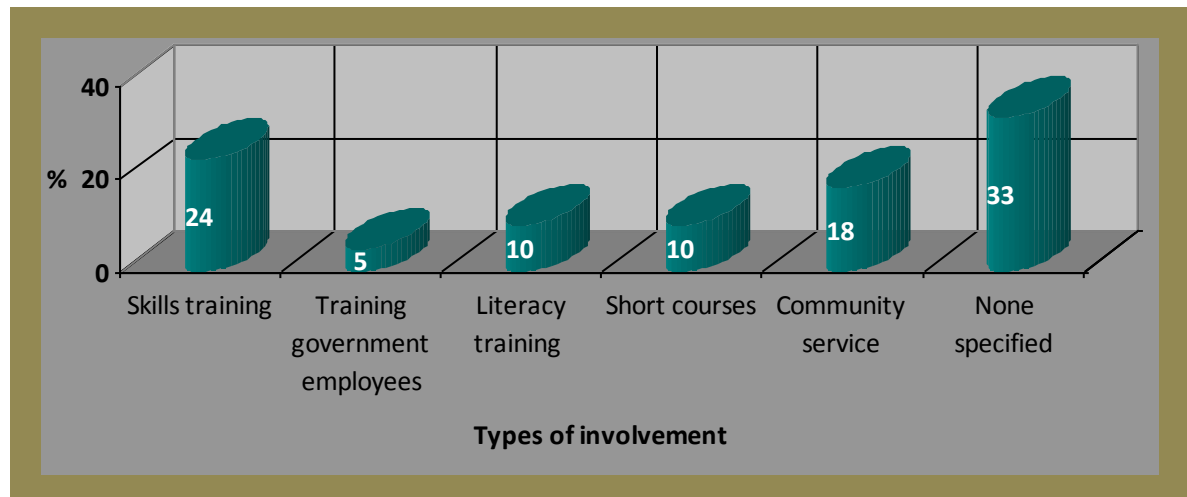
Figure 5.6: Types of programmes in which the institutes/bureaus were involved

The responses were grouped according to the categories listed in the figure. Grouping the responses allowed for the calculation of the percentages as indicated in the figure. This was possible since the number of responses per group of categories was then written as a percentage. The 33% that stated 'no involvement' were those institutes/bureaus that did not provide a 'yes' response to the question in item 2.4 above. It must be mentioned that 33% reflects a high representation for those institutes/bureaus that did not have any involvement to mention. It is encouraging however, to observe that there are institutes/bureaus that were involved with skills training, literacy training and community service interventions. These services are some of the interventions that have been identified in the literature as being key towards the development of rural communities.

iv.   Item 2.4: In which of the provided training programmes was your institute/bureau involved in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province?

This item provided the respondents with 11 training programmes (see item 2.4 from the Questionnaire) from which they were to indicate the areas which they might have offered or presented to the rural

communities in Mpumalanga Province. The purpose of the question was to check the responses provided in item 2.3 and also to identify whether the institutes/bureaus valued the role of training for development towards the upliftment of rural communities.
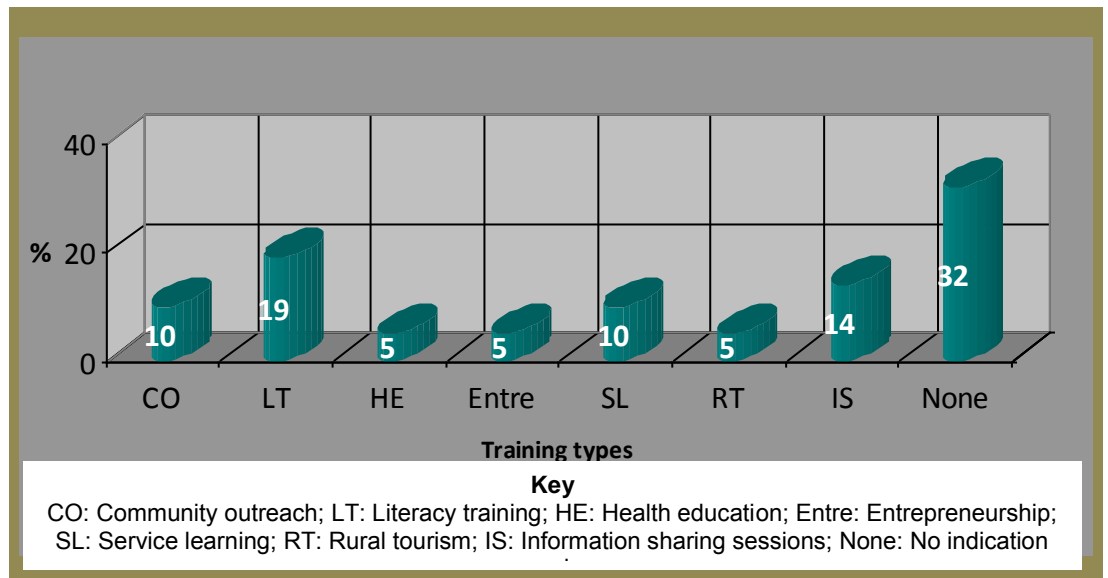
Figure 5.7: Type of training which was provided

It is significant to note that 32% of the institutes/bureaus indicated that they did not provide any of the identified training. This figure, which is similar to the 33% provided in the responses for item 2.3, thus confirms the provided responses. None of the identified training types registered a percentage above 20%. The graph also shows that few (5%) of the institutes/bureaus provided training in health education, entrepreneurship, and rural tourism. Literature has also shown that training in these areas is critical for the development of rural communities. The other training areas which were never identified by the institutes/bureaus although they were listed in the question were, among others, sustainable economic development, local economic development, subsistence agricultural farming, and basic environmental management. All these areas are vital for the development of rural communities as they form an integral part of the daily living of people in rural communities.

v.   Item 2.5: Approximately what percentage of the gross budget of your institute/bureau for the academic year 2006 was spent on work in Mpumalanga Province?

The expenditure incurred by the institutes/bureaus in Mpumalanga Province is another determining factor regarding their commitment towards the development of human resources in the province, hence the need for this item. It must be mentioned that the question refers to the 2006 calendar year because this was the year that preceded the year during which the field work of the research was started (2007). Another reason for focusing on the 2006 expenditure year was that the merger of the former University of South Africa with the former Technikon SA and the incorporation of the distance education wing of the former VISTA University (VUDEC) was completed in 2005.
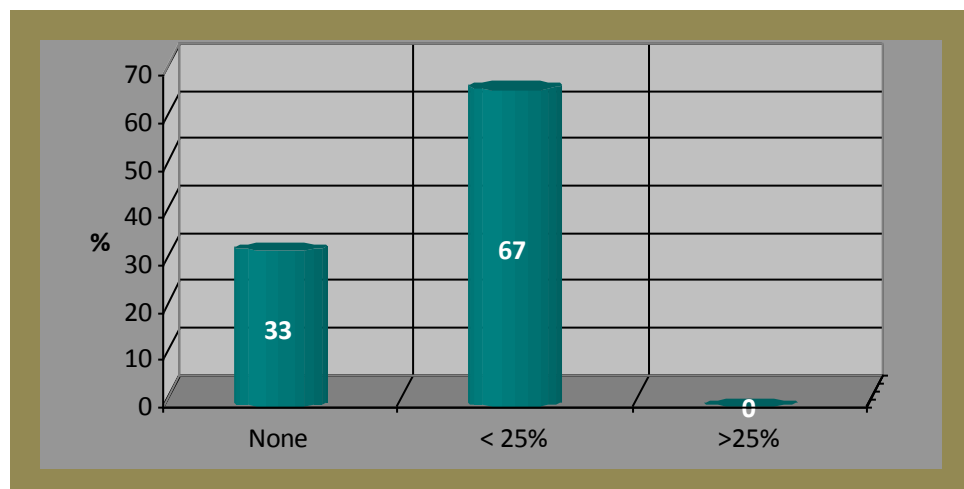
Figure 5.8: An indication of the 2006 expenditure of the institutes/bureaus in Mpumalanga Province

The figure shows that 33% of the institutes/bureaus did not incur any expenditure on programmes/projects in Mpumalanga Province. A sizeable number spent between 1% and 25% in the province. No institute/bureau spent anything above 25%. It must be mentioned that the 67% that had expenditure in the province is a relatively high number. It would have been clearer if there was a further breakdown of the less than 25% provided. The range does not show whether the

number is more towards the 25% value or towards the 1% value. The information does, however, address the main purpose of the question.

vi.   Item 2.6: What was the minimum education level required for people to participate in the training programmes/projects referred to in item 2.3?

The question was intended to establish whether education levels were considered as a factor in determining the participants in the training programmes which institutes/bureaus had to offer. Interesting findings are reported below through the following graphical presentation:
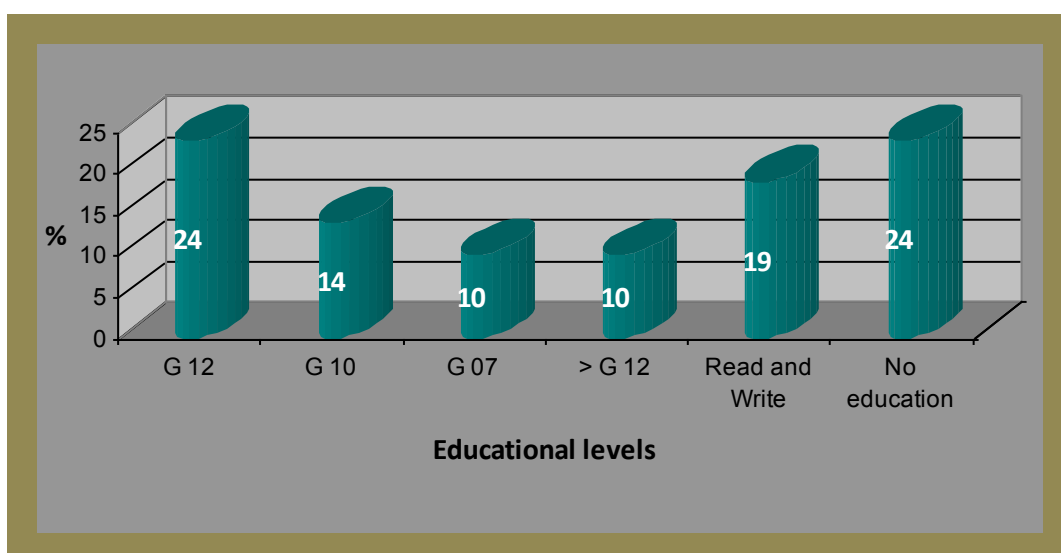
Figure 5.9: Required education levels to attend training programmes/projects

Most of the institutes/bureaus (24%) offered programmes that required participants to have Grade 12. Another 24% offered training programmes that required no educational level at all. There were some institutes/bureaus (19%) that offered training programmes that only required participants to be able to read and write. The last findings provided a favourable condition for most of the people from rural communities as literature has shown that most of the people in rural communities are illiterate. There was also a 10% indication of institutes/bureaus that offered programmes that required participants to have education levels that were higher than Grade 12. It can be deduced that these programmes were aimed at participants who were interested in furthering their studies towards some form of formal or

accredited qualification which is far beyond the basic needs for the basic skills development of people from rural communities.

vii.   Item 2.7: How many training programmes/projects focusing on the development of human resources in rural communities has your institute/bureau carried out in Mpumalanga Province?

This question was asked in order to establish the number of training programmes offered by the institutes/bureaus that had been involved in Mpumalanga Province. The need for quantifying the involvement was to determine whether the said involvement could be justified through determining the extent to which the institutes/bureaus were involved.
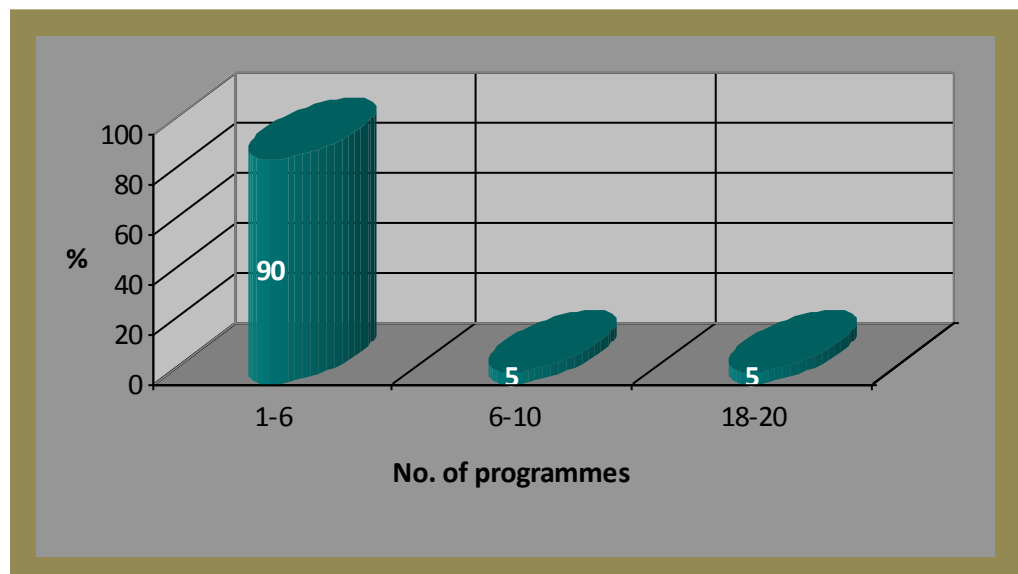
Figure 5.10: Number of training programmes/projects offered

The findings as presented in Figure 5.10 show that very few programmes were offered. This is evident from the responses showing that 90% of the institutes only had between 1 and 6 programmes. Only 5% of the institutes reported that they had presented between 6 and 10 programmes and also between 18 and 20 programmes. These findings show that though the institutes/bureaus showed an involvement in the Province, these numbers posed a challenge to the number of beneficiaries to the interventions if very few programmes were reported to have been embarked on. It is important to mention that these findings must be read in comparison with the findings of item 2.11 where the

numbers of the beneficiaries are indicated. This cross-reference will provide the reader with even more related findings.

viii. Item 2.8: What language medium is mostly used during the presentation of training programmes/projects conducted by your institute/bureau?

It was necessary to determine what medium of instruction the institutes/bureaus used most during their presentations, as language plays an important part in instruction. If a certain language, such as English, is the sole medium of communication during the presentation of training programmes, most of the intended recipients of the training programmes may be left out. This is so because language can be a barrier in communication during training sessions. The responses to this question are presented below.
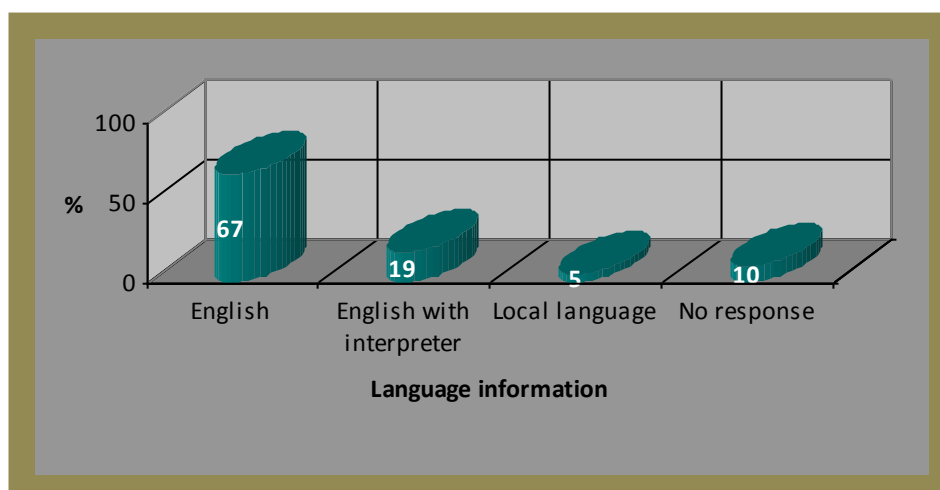
Figure 5.11: Language used during training

The fact that English was used mostly in training, as shown by the 67% response, can be seen as a cause for concern. Literature has shown consistently that rural communities experience significant levels of illiteracy. The use of English in training programmes aimed at rural communities poses a challenge. It is interesting to note that 19% of the institutes/bureaus indicated that they used English, but that they enlisted the aid of an interpreter. This approach is a positive indication that those institutes/bureaus were committed to the development of people in rural communities. A relatively small number of the institutes/bureaus (5%) reported that they used the local language of the

area where they were involved. This is a positive finding which shows that there are some institutes/bureaus that are committed to the cause of human development in rural communities. Since 10% of the institutes/bureaus were not able to respond to the question they could not be assessed in terms of language usage.

ix.   Item 2.9: In which region of Mpumalanga has your institute/bureau been mostly involved?

Mpumalanga Province consists of three regions, namely the Ehlanzeni Region, Nkangala Region and Gert Sibande Region (Annexure 2). The question was asked to establish whether the institutes/bureaus were involved in all the three regions of the province or only in some.
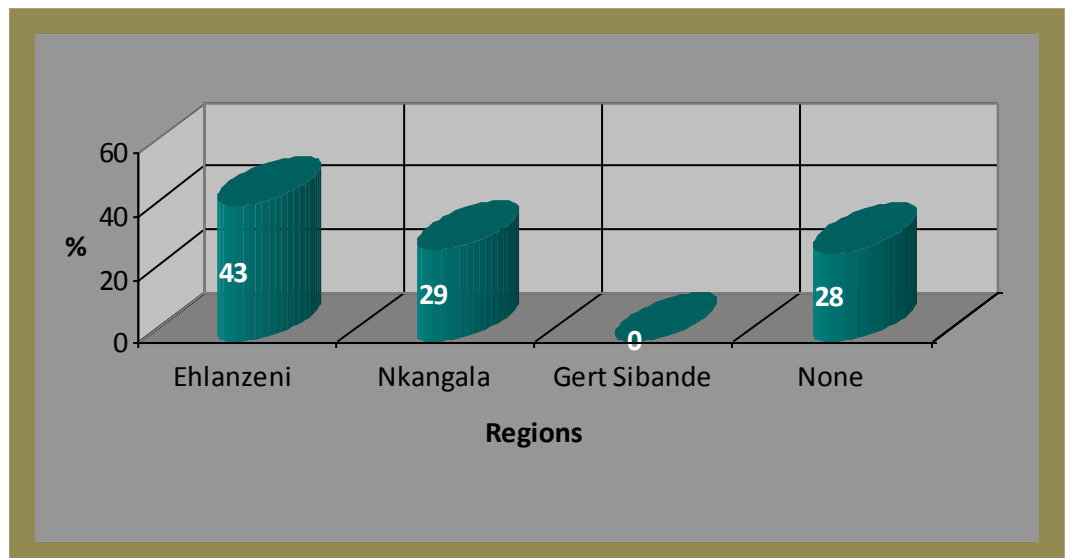
Figure 5.12: Regions of Mpumalanga Province where institutes/bureaus were involved

The findings show that the institutes/bureaus were involved in the most rural regions of the province, namely Ehlanzeni and Nkangala. None of the institutes/bureaus reported an involvement in the Gert Sibande Region which also has rural areas in the east. A sizeable number (28%) of institutes/bureaus reported none participation. This number shows a minimal level of involvement of the institutes/bureaus with regard to the development of human resources in the rural communities of the province.

x.   Item 2.10: Who funded the project(s) that your institute/bureau carried
out in Mpumalanga Province?

Funding has always been a challenge in the provision of training
programmes and basic services to communities. Item 4.15 showed that
institutes/bureaus mentioned funding as a challenge faced by UNISA
with regard to its involvement in the development of rural communities.
It was therefore necessary to ask this question to find out how the
programmes/projects carried out in Mpumalanga Province were funded.
Responses to the question are recorded in the following diagram.
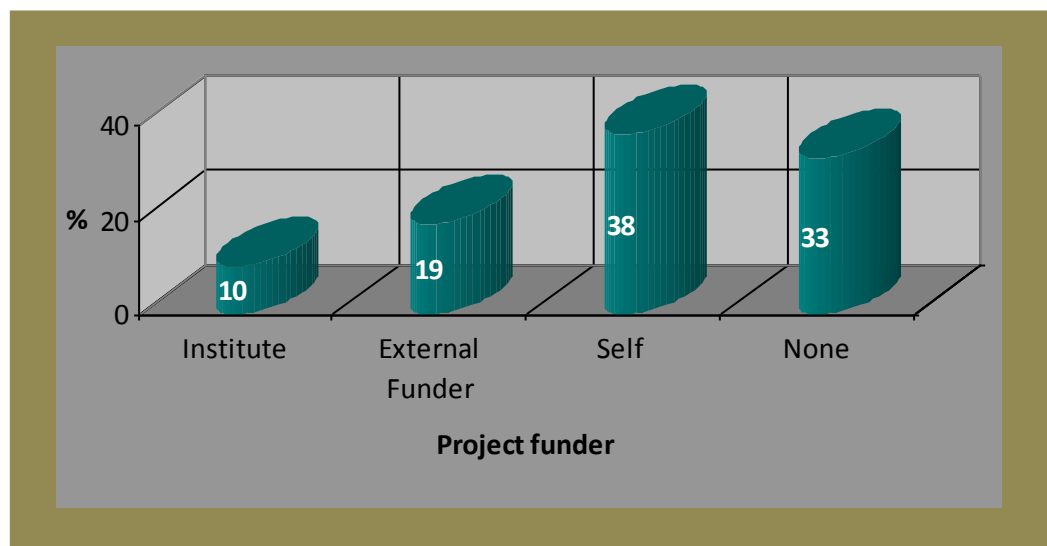
Figure 5.13: Indication of the funders of projects

The findings show that most of the projects (38%) were funded by the
participants themselves. This scenario shows that it would have been
difficult for many people from the rural communities to participate in the
programmes because there is such a high level of unemployment and
financial resources are lacking. The involvement of external funders,
which was reported to be at 19%, is a somewhat progressive finding
which could be encouraged as a support base for rural communities.
The same can be said about the contribution of institutes/bureaus
towards the support for participants. The finding showed a 10%
contribution made by the institutes/bureaus. Thirty three percent of the
institutes/bureaus were unable to say who funded their training
programmes/projects. This is a cause for concern regarding the records
of the institutes/bureaus.

xi. Item 2.11: On average how many people received training on community development programmes/projects run by your institute/bureau in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province?

The intention of this question was to establish whether more people benefited from the programmes/projects presented by the institutes/bureaus. Figure 5.14 below reflects the responses to this item.
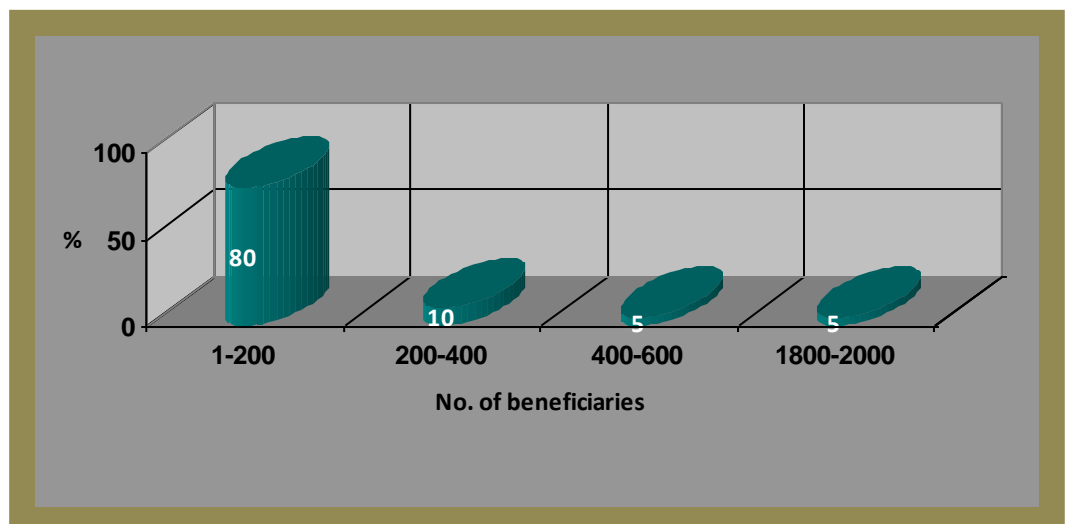
Figure 5.14: Number of beneficiaries from the programmes/projects offered by UNISA institutes/bureaus

The figure shows that on average very few people benefited from the programmes/projects run by the institutes/bureaus in Mpumalanga Province. Eighty percent of the institutes/bureaus reported that a maximum of 200 participants had benefited from their collective programmes/projects. Only 10% of the institutes/bureaus reported that they had assisted a maximum of 400 beneficiaries through their involvement. Another 5% of the respondents indicated that their institutes/bureaus had contributed to a maximum of 2 000 beneficiaries. These numbers are low, considering that 27% of the approximately 1.75 million people of the population of the province had no schooling (see 1.5.3) and would have been assisted in some way by participating in these programmes. These findings correspond with the findings of item 2.10 where it is shown that most of the programmes required the

participants to fund their participation. This could be one of the reasons why few people participated in the programmes/projects.

xii. Item 2.12: Would you say that your institute/bureau has done enough in terms of the development of rural communities in Mpumalanga Province? Kindly provide a reason for your answer.

This question was asked to verify how institutes/bureaus measure their own contribution towards the development of rural communities in the province. The purpose of this question was also to confirm the responses provided to items 2.4, 2.7 and 2.11.

Ninety percent of the respondents provided a negative response to the question. This indicates that they were of the view that their institutes/bureaus did not do enough in developing rural communities in Mpumalanga Province. Figure 5.15 is a representation of the reasons the respondents believed to have inhibited their institutes/bureaus from doing enough towards the development of rural communities.
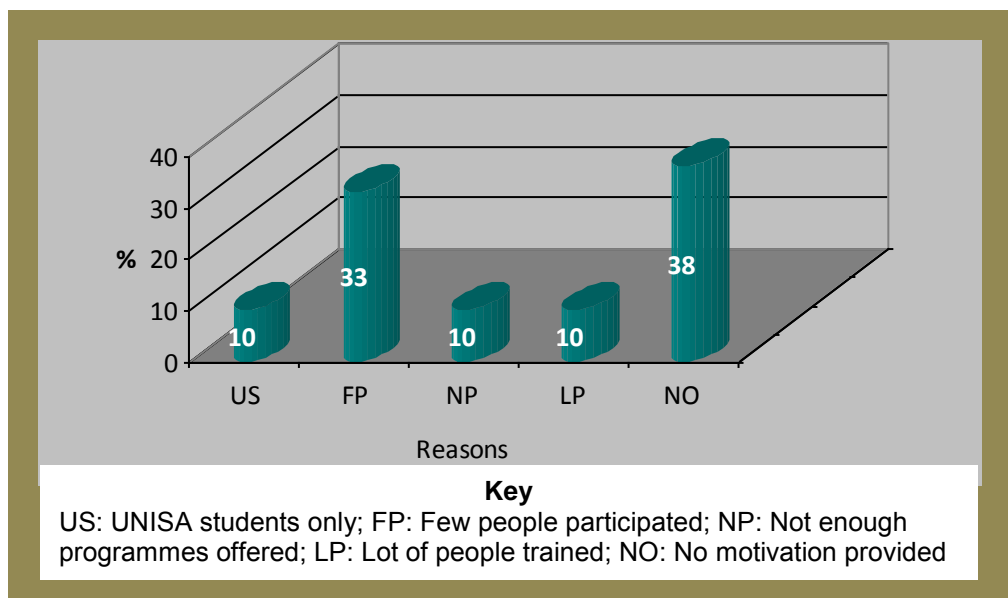
Figure 5.15: Reasons provided for response to item 2.12

The responses showed that some institutes/bureaus (10%) reported that their involvement in the Province was primarily focusing on those people who had already registered as UNISA students. A similar number of institutes/bureaus stated that they saw the reason for them

not doing enough was that they did not offer many programmes focusing on the development of people in rural communities. Three quarters of the respondents confirmed that few people participated in the training programmes/projects that were offered by the institutes/bureaus. A comparable number of the respondents (38%) did not provide reasons for their responses to item 2.12.

xiii.   Item 2.13: How much time (as a percentage of the full-time equivalent (FTE) member of staff) should your training/academic staff spend on activities that focus on the development of rural communities?

This question was intended to establish the official position of institutes/bureaus towards their commitment to involvement in rural community development.

Responses to the question showed that 90% of the institutes/bureaus had a zero staff time-allocation towards the development of rural communities. It can be deduced from these responses that institutes/bureaus did not have an institutional position committing their academic/training staff to be involved in rural development.

5.4.3   **Responses to items on views of respondents on the development of rural communities (section 3.0 of the questionnaire)**

This section consisted of rating scale questions where respondents were required to provide their views on different aspects of the development of rural communities. Statements were provided and the respondents were to rate their views. This section of the research was required to provide the respondents with an opportunity to rate their views on the selected items which were covered by the section. The approach taken in presenting the findings of this section was to provide each statement as reflected on the questionnaire, then provide a rationale behind each statement and then report the responses to each statement.

The results and findings on the responses to the rating scale items of this section are reported sequentially below.

i.   Item 3.1: The level of unemployment in rural areas can be reduced by, among others, the provision of basic skills.

        The need for this item was to verify the position of the respondents on the impact of unemployment towards the development of rural communities.
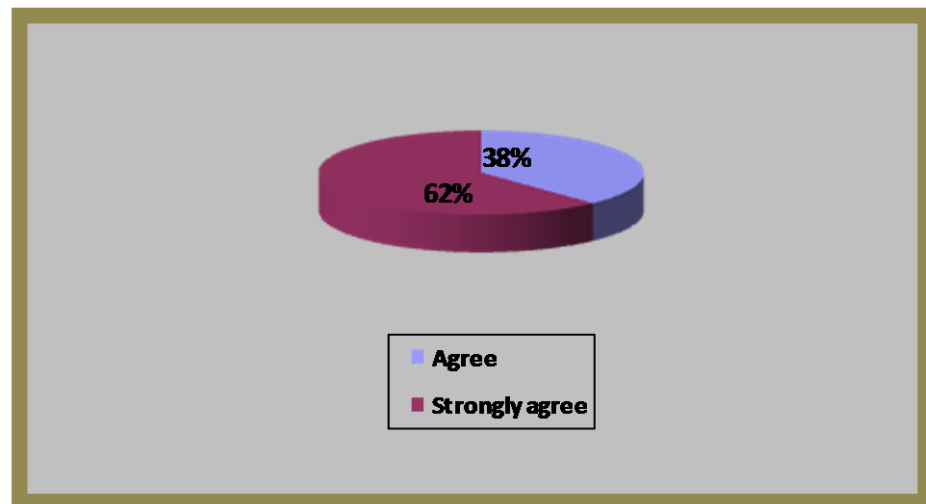
Figure 5.16: Responses to whether skills reduce unemployment

        The findings show that all the respondents believed that the provision of basic skills training can reduce the level of unemployment of people in rural communities (Fig. 5.16). This is shown by the fact that 62% agreed strongly with the statement and the remaining 38% just agreed to the statement. These findings presented a basis to show that institutes/bureaus would therefore be expected to embark on the provision of basic skills training programmes/projects if they were committed to the development of these communities.

ii.   Item 3.2: The low level of literacy of people in rural communities is a barrier to the provision of training programmes/projects in these communities.

        This item was aimed at determining whether the respondents did indeed consider literacy levels to be an inhibiting factor in their involvement in the provision of development programmes/projects in the rural communities (see Fig. 5.17).
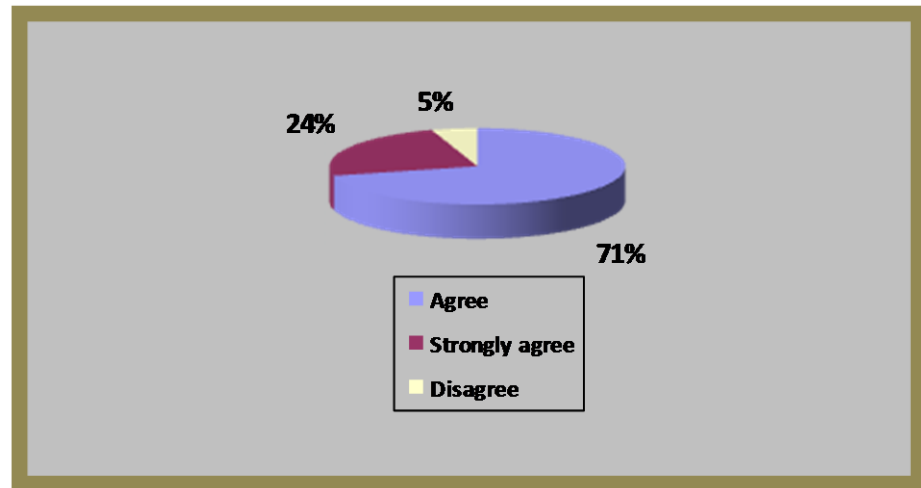
Figure 5.17: Responses to whether illiteracy is a barrier to rural development

The respondents affirmed the statement that illiteracy can be a barrier to the development of rural communities. Only 5% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Since the majority of the respondents (95%, of whom 24% agreed strongly with the statement) agreed with the statement, it can be considered that the institutes/bureaus understand the importance of being considerate when providing programmes/projects to rural communities and that the high levels of illiteracy can inhibit many people from participating in programmes that are aimed at assisting them. This means that ways and means should be sought to overcome this problem

iii.   Item 3.3: The provision of training programmes focusing on local economic development could assist in enhancing a better life for people in rural communities.

The statement was informed by the cited role of local economic development in rural development as indicated in section 3.2.6 of Chapter 3. It was therefore necessary to determine whether the respondents valued the role of LED in rural development (see Fig. 5.18).
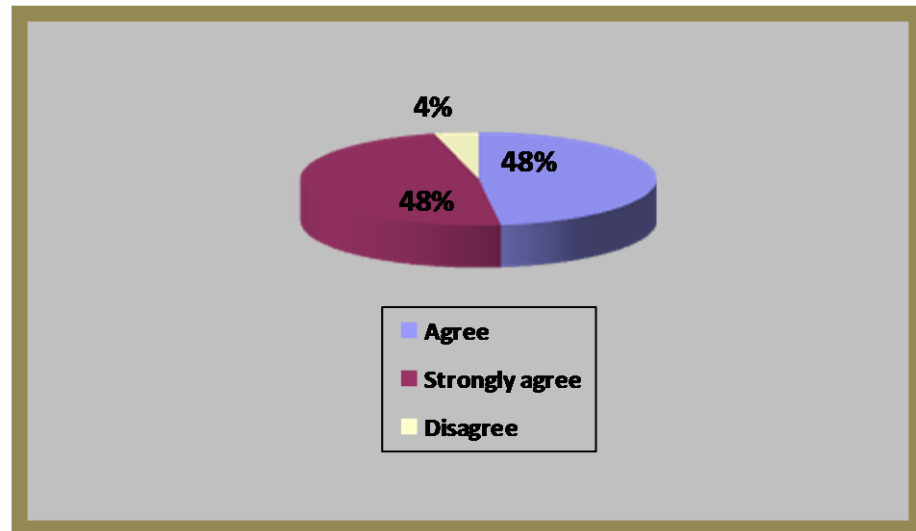
Figure 5.18: Responses to whether LED training enhances a better life

The responses show that 48% of the respondents agreed while another 48% strongly agreed with the statement. Only 4% disagreed with the statement. The fact that an overwhelming majority of the respondents affirmed that training in LED enhances the quality of life for people in rural communities does not correspond with the responses to item 2.4 where respondents were required to indicate the type of training that they had conducted in rural communities in Mpumalanga. It would have been expected for the institutes/bureaus to have also conducted training on LED since they value its role to enhance the life of rural people. None of the institutes/bureaus indicated that they had conducted LED training in the rural communities of the province.

iv.   Item 3.4: Your institute/bureau has made a contribution towards the development of rural communities in Mpumalanga Province.

This statement was included in an attempt to verify whether respondents believed that their institutes/bureaus had contributed to the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga. This statement was also aimed at authenticating the responses provided in items 2.7 (number of programmes offered)

and 2.11 (number of beneficiaries). Their responses are reflected in Figure 5.19.
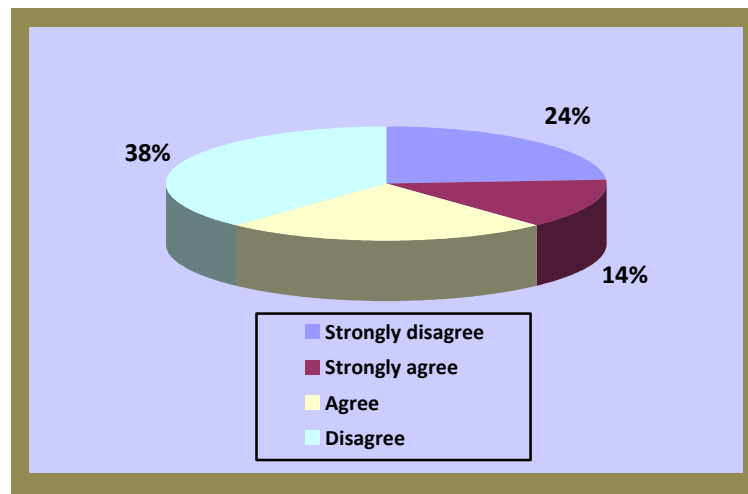
Figure 5.19: Responses to whether the institutes/bureaus had contributed to rural development in Mpumalanga Province

The responses show that respondents answered the questions posed to them fairly and truthfully. This is shown by the distribution of the responses to the statement in question. The majority of the respondents did not agree with the statement, which shows that they acknowledged the fact that their institutes/bureaus did not do enough in contributing to the development of human resources in the rural areas of Mpumalanga Province. Only 14% of the respondents strongly agreed that their institutes/bureaus had made a contribution. The majority of the respondents to this item confirmed the finding of item 2.12 where 90% of the respondents answered negatively to the statement that institutes/bureaus had done enough to develop rural communities in the Province.

v.   Item 3.5: Community outreach and partnerships can benefit the rural communities by accessing the expertise and knowledge which universities possess.

The rationale of this statement was to determine whether the respondents believed that institutes/bureaus can, through community engagement and partnerships, contribute towards rural community

development. Figure 5.20 below provides the responses to this statement.
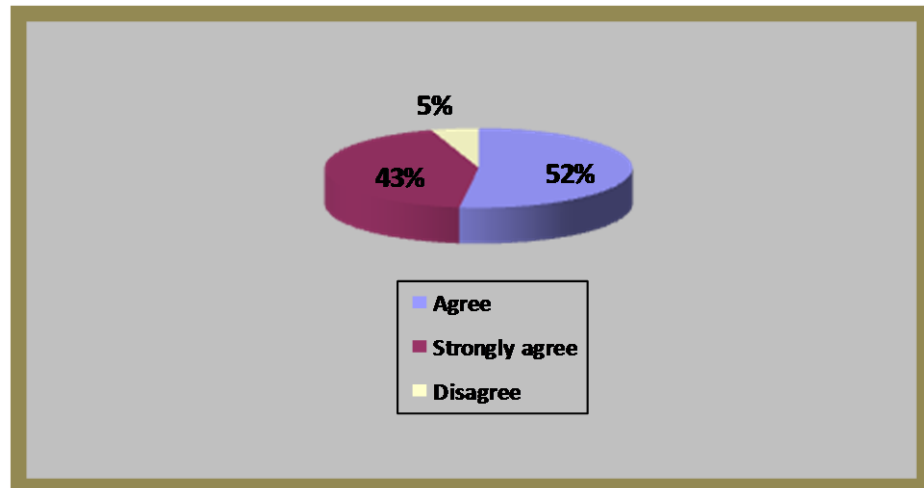
Figure 5.20: Responses to whether community outreach and partnerships contribute to rural development

The majority of the respondents (95%) agreed with the statement, thus showing that they confirmed the directives of literature on the role of community outreach and partnerships which universities should establish with role players to support programmes/projects that aim to develop rural communities. The responses also show that 5% of the respondents disagreed with the statement which translated to the fact that they were not convinced that the establishment of partnerships for community outreach could assist in the development of human resources in rural communities. It appears that there are some institutes/bureaus that will not value any means or investment in community engagement activities as part of an attempt to create avenues for the development of rural communities.

vi.   Item 3.6: Universities can, through service learning, contribute towards the development of rural communities.

The motive for requesting the respondents to rate this statement was similar to the one in item 3.5 above, namely to determine whether institutes/bureaus valued the role of service learning as a model through which universities can assist communities to access the expertise of university students. Service learning is another avenue

through which university students can become involved in community service in their respective fields of study while they get credits for their academic progress. The responses to this statement are reflected in Figure 5.21 below.
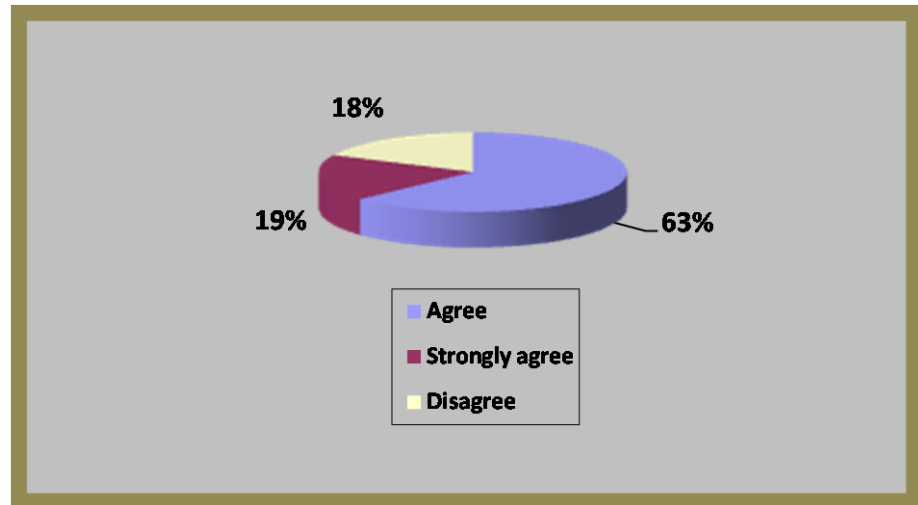
Figure 5.21: Responses to whether service learning contributes to rural development

Figure 5.21 shows that most of the respondents (82%) agreed that service learning can be used as a model to advance the notion of rural development. They believe that involving students in community work can be beneficial to both the university students and the rural community where the students practise their profession. The responses, however, further show that 19% of the respondents disagree that service learning can contribute to the development of rural communities. This number of respondents (19%) is cause for concern since literature has indicated that service learning can benefit rural communities.

5.4.4 **Responses to the institutional policy landscape questions (section 4.0 of the questionnaire)**

i.   Item 4.1: Does the mission statement of your institute/bureau commit the institute/bureau to the development of rural communities?

This question was asked to determine if institutes/bureaus had committed themselves in any way to the development of rural

communities. Such commitments are usually embedded in mission statements of institutions/organisations.

Table 5.3: Responses to whether the mission statement commits the institutes/bureaus to rural development

Response type	% of responses
Hardly	43
Not at all	43
Strongly	14

The responses represented in Table 5.3 show that most of the mission statements of the institutes/bureaus do not contain any commitment declaration related to participation or involvement in rural development. Only 14% of the respondents reported that the mission statements of their institutes/bureaus were vocal on the development of rural communities. These institutes/bureaus which have such declaration statements have a basis on which to build towards carrying a visible and sizeable contribution to the development of rural communities. It can be concluded that since most of the mission statements of the institutes/bureaus are silent on their involvement in rural development, the subsequent commitment of UNISA to the expected role in the development of rural communities cannot be positively appraised.

ii.   Item 4.2: In your view, is your institute/bureau able to embark on contributing to the development of rural communities?

This question was asked to find out whether institutes/bureaus had the appropriate capability and capacity to embark on programmes/projects that seek to address the challenges of rural communities.

Seventy six percent of the respondents confirmed that their institutes/bureaus were capable of embarking on rural development programmes/projects. The remaining 24% indicated that their institutes/bureaus were not able to carry out the expected activities with regard to the development of rural communities. These responses

could be associated to capability issues such as human and financial resources, and time needed for them to embark on such programmes/projects. If those institutes/bureaus that have the ability to be involved in the rural communities were to do their utmost, the people in these communities could benefit significantly.

iii.   Item 4.3: Has your institute/bureau entered into partnerships/agreements with any other organisation/institution towards the development of rural communities?

The importance of collaborative partnerships towards community development must be emphasised. It was necessary to determine whether institutes/bureaus were mindful of this requirement for a synergic approach towards development. Table 5.4 presents the responses to the question. The table further provides the types of partners where applicable.

Table 5.4: Indication of types of partners that the institute/bureau has

Response type	% of responses
None	42
Non-governmental organisations	24
Other universities	14
Government departments	10
Funding agencies	10

The responses provide a positive report on the number of institutes/bureaus (58%) who have collaborative partners as listed in the table. It is also clear that the partners cover a wide range. Since funding agencies stand at 10% it can be deduced that such institutes/bureaus would be able to source funding to assist the relatively poor people from the rural communities. However, it is a cause for concern that 42% of institutes/bureaus do not have any collaborative partnerships.

iv.   Item 4.4: Does your institute/bureau have set targets on involvement in the development of rural communities?

This question was a validation question for item 4.1, the mission statement question. Targets are usually informed by the strategic directives of organisations such as mission and vision statements. It was therefore necessary to determine if the institutes/bureaus had any set targets towards the involvement in the rural communities.

The responses show that none of the institutes/bureaus had any set targets towards participation and/or involvement in rural communities. This state of affairs should pose a challenge for institutes/bureaus to work on as it is impossible to focus on activities if no indication is given of what is intended to be achieved.

v.   Item 4.5: Does your institute/bureau rate the involvement of staff in rural training programmes/projects positively when evaluating staff performance?

UNISA uses the Integrated Performance Management System (IPMS) as a tool to evaluate and assess the performance of staff. It was therefore necessary to ask a question to find out whether the involvement of staff in rural community development programmes/projects would be valued and recognised when assessing staff performance.

The responses show that 86% of the institutes/bureaus do not attach any assessment benefit for involvement in the development of rural communities. This means that staff in these institutes/bureaus are not extrinsically motivated to focus on rural development programmes, as there is no incentive to do so. The remaining 14% reported that staff are sometimes credited for involvement in the development of rural communities. It can thus be concluded that institutes/bureaus will not be able to improve and increase their role in the development of rural communities if their staff are not rewarded for work done specifically in rural communities. Without some kind of incentive staff would probably

not be inclined to face the many difficulties that exist in these poor communities.

vi. Item 4.6: Does your institute/bureau have students that, as part of their training, are required to be involved in community service learning in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province?

This question was asked to ascertain whether institutes/bureaus had students who were involved in service learning as form of community service.

Ninety percent of the respondents indicated that their institutes/bureaus did not have any students involved in service learning. Only 10% provided an affirmative response to the question. This shows that those institutes/bureaus that have students studying towards formal qualifications need to consider the role and contribution that students can make through the idea of service learning.

vii. Item 4.7: Have any of the staff in your institute/bureau since 2003 conducted research that focused on the development of rural communities?

The reason for including this question was to establish whether staff in the institutes/bureaus had an interest in the development of knowledge within the field of rural community development. One way to find out whether individuals have a vested interest in a field is through the verification of their research interest. Table 5.5 below presents the responses to this question. The table further provides the focus areas of the research carried out in cases where research was conducted.

Table 5.5: Indication of whether institutes/bureaus conducted research on rural development

Response type	% of responses
None	75
Focus on family literacy	10
Focus on HIV and AIDS	5
Focus on other different areas	10

The table shows that 75% of the responses indicated that their institutes/bureaus had conducted no research on rural development since 2003. The other 25% reported that their institutes/bureaus had conducted research in a number of topics as reflected. It is to be commended that there are institutes/bureaus whose staff conducted research on topics that included HIV and AIDS and family literacy. These areas are important and pose some challenges to people living in rural communities.

viii.   Item 4.8: Has your institute/bureau been involved since 2003 in training programmes/projects on the development of rural communities within the context of social responsibility which had no direct financial benefit to the institute/bureau?

The concept of social responsibility entails ploughing back into the communities for no gain. Rural communities should gain most from this type of exercise since most poor people are found in rural communities. It was necessary to establish whether institutes/bureaus embarked on activities driven by social responsibility in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province.

In responding to this question 90% of the respondents stated that their institutes/bureaus did not have any programmes/projects that were carried out as a form of social responsibility in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. Only 10% indicated that their institutes/bureaus carried out activities in the rural communities of the province which were not for gain. These responses correspond with the responses to item 2.10 where it was found that 10% of the institutes/bureaus funded some of the programmes/projects they carried out in the rural communities of the province. There is a need for most of the institutes/bureaus at UNISA to understand the need for programmes/projects driven by social responsibility so that most people from rural communities can benefit from such programmes/projects.

ix.   Item 4.9: Has your institute/bureau been involved in community outreach programmes in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province since 2003?

The purpose of this question was to establish if institutes/bureaus had been involved in community outreach programmes in the rural communities of the province since 2003. Community outreach programmes would be programmes that focus on supporting the communities on soft personal skills development activities such as basic financial management skills training. Table 5.6 communicates the responses to this question.

Table 5.6: Indication of whether institutes/bureaus have been involved in community outreach programmes

Response type	% of responses
None	62
Literacy education	14
Financial management	10
Community participation	10
Skills training	5

The information extrapolated from Table 5.6 shows that most of the institutes/bureaus (62%) had never been involved in community outreach activities. The data also provide a good basis for consideration regarding those institutes/bureaus which were involved in community outreach activities. Their involvement areas covered some key aspects of community involvement towards the personal growth of the beneficiaries. The areas in question are literacy education, financial management and community participation, which have a beneficial role in the development of rural community members.

x.   Item 4.10: Would you say that your institute/bureau assists rural communities in accessing information on community development issues and programmes such as fund-raising?

This question was intended to ascertain the extent to which institutes/bureaus had been involved in the dissemination of development-related information to people in rural communities.

Table 5.7: Responses to whether the institutes/bureaus disseminated information to rural communities

Response type	% of responses
None	62
Now and then	24
Yes, but not much	14

The responses to this item highlight the minor involvement of institutes/bureaus in the dissemination of development-related and -focused information to rural communities. The table shows that 62% of the respondents indicated that their institutes/bureaus were not involved in any way in this responsibility. The remaining 38% recorded that they did indeed disseminate information to these communities who experienced the need for information to assist them in the betterment of their lives. However, they were only involved in these activities now and then, and did not do much in this regard. It can be concluded that the institutes/bureaus at UNISA were not doing well – or enough – in this respect. There is a need for improvement in this area.

xi.   Item 4.11: Do you think that UNISA as an institution is committed to the development of rural communities in South Africa?

The motivation for this question was to get the views of the respondents on the role and commitment of UNISA as a whole towards the development of rural communities. The responses to this question are recorded in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Views on UNISA's commitment to rural development

Response type	% of responses
Very much	10
Much	33
Sometimes	28
Little	24
Not at all	5

The responses to this question show that 33% of the respondents considered UNISA to be doing much towards the development of rural communities while 24% were of the opinion that UNISA was doing little in this area of development. Another small number of respondents (5%) believed that the university was doing nothing at all. There was a follow-up question to this item where the respondents were required to provide reasons for their responses. Table 5.9 reflects the reasons that were given.

Table 5.9: Reasons for responses provided for item 4.11

Response type	% of responses
Part of UNISA mission statement	19
Availability of institutes/bureaus	20
Development of formal students	14
Lack of commitment/focus	42
None	5

The reasons provided show that some of the respondents believed that the vision statement of UNISA does send a commitment to the institution to contribute towards the development of rural communities. What is not clear from this view is whether the statement of the university's vision is actually translated into actions. There were some respondents (20%) who believed that the existence of institutes/bureaus is a sign of commitment on the part of the university to embark on the development of rural communities in the country. They seemed to consider that this should be done through the institutes/bureaus. The 47% of the respondents who thought that

UNISA was not doing enough in the development of rural communities in the country stated reasons like the lack of commitment and/or focus or that the university was just not doing anything at all. These conflicting responses show that the institution is facing a problem in this regard. It shows that some institutes/bureaus do not understand their role or mandate of being the platform through which the university has to carry out its non-formal and informal developmental programmes.

xii. Item 4.12: What, in your view, is the most critical problem in rural communities of South Africa that needs urgent attention?

The respondents were required to answer this question so that they could state what they considered to be critical challenges in the development of rural communities. The findings to this item are presented in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10: The three most critical challenges regarding development in rural communities

Response type	% of responses
Unemployment	43
Lack of basic education	33
Skills shortage	24

The respondents provided three main challenges faced by the rural communities in terms of development. The percentages reflected by the responses in stating the challenges show that the respondents were in line with the literature pertaining to the developmental challenges faced by rural communities. The impact of unemployment, the lack of basic education and the shortage of skills negatively affects development in the rural communities.

xiii. Item 4.13: What do you think should your institute/bureau do in responding to the critical developmental problems of the rural communities of South Africa you identified in item 4.12 above?

Since the respondents were able, in item 4.12, to identify the challenges faced by rural communities, it was then important to determine what they thought their institutes/bureaus could do to assist in addressing the identified challenges. This question seeks to assist and seek solutions to the problems mentioned in item 4.12.

Table 5.11: List of perceived actions of institutes/bureaus to address the rural development challenges

Response type	% of responses
Provide more skills training	57
Provide more basic education	14
Establish partnerships with communities	10
No responses provided	19

The respondents appeared to believe that their institutes/bureaus could do much more to address the developmental challenges faced by rural communities. The provision of more skills training was rated high on the list as it scored 57%. This shows that there is an understanding of the role that skills training can play in the development of rural communities in the country. The provision of basic education which covers areas such as health issues was also identified as an area in which institutes/bureaus could be involved contribute towards addressing the identified challenges of rural communities. Some of the respondents cited the need to establish partnerships with the rural communities as an important aspect that could assist in the provision of development programmes to the rural communities. It is interesting to note that institutes/bureaus realise the need for partnerships as a significant element in development. It is also evident from the presented data that 19% of the respondents did not identify their perceived roles which could assist in addressing the challenges of development in the rural communities of the country.

This may be as a result of a lack of institutional insight of the respondents or it could be that they honestly realised that their institutes/bureaus are not committed in any way to assisting these needy communities.

xiv.   Item 4.14: What would you rate as the three most important strengths of UNISA in rendering assistance towards the development of rural communities?

The respondents were required to answer this question in order to determine whether they could identify areas in which UNISA could assist in the provision of developmental programmes/projects to rural communities.

In responding to this item the respondents identified the following three strengths of UNISA:

- Available human resources
- Available facilities
- Available expertise

This means that the university has the potential to embark on programmes that aim to develop human resources in the rural communities. The cited available human resources would imply that academics and part-time tutors could be used to support the developmental programmes. The facilities that the institution has country-wide in the form of regional service centres are areas that are conducive to programme delivery. As a university UNISA has a knowledge resource in the form of expertise in all the areas of rural community development. It can be concluded that the university needs to utilise these strengths to assist in addressing the developmental needs of rural communities.

xv. Item 4.15: What would you rate as the three most important factors inhibiting UNISA in rendering assistance towards the development of rural communities?

This question was asked to allow the respondents to state any challenges that they considered to be barriers to UNISA's intentions to assist in the development of rural communities. In responding to this question the respondents stated the following factors that inhibit UNISA's intentions to assist rural communities:

- Lack of clear policy on rural development
- Lack of funding
- No time for staff to focus on rural work

These challenges imply that the university needs to come up with a clear policy committing it to be involved in the development of rural communities. These responses agree with the responses to item 4.11 stating that the university lacks commitment to and focus on rural communities. The issue of lack of funding is a critical challenge because rural communities are the poorest people in the country. Institutions and organisations seeking to venture into these communities may not always expect the people to pay for their services and support programmes. It is necessary for the institutions to be funded in some way in order to support the rural communities. Responses to item 4.5 showed that most of the institutes/bureaus (86%) do not attach any value to the involvement of staff in rural development-focused work in their appraisal of staff performance. The challenge that the staff do not have time to focus on rural work supports these adverse responses to item 4.5.

xvi. Item 4.16: Which other institutes/bureaus at UNISA are involved in contributing towards the development of rural communities?

The reason for this question was to use it a control measure to find out whether the other institutes/bureaus would be in a position to identify

the fellow institutes/bureaus which they considered to be doing enough in the development of the rural communities. Table 5.12 provides the responses to this question.

Table 5.12: List of institutes/bureaus considered by fellow institutes/bureaus as the most involved in rural development

Response type	% of responses
ABET Institute	43
Centre for Business Management	42
Institute for Applied Communication	5
Not sure/known	10

The responses show that the ABET Institute and the Centre for Business Management top the list as institutes/bureaus which are considered to be involved in the development of rural communities. The Institute for Applied Communication comes second with 5% of the respondents recognising it for its role. A number of institutes/bureaus reported that they were not sure which of their fellow institutes/bureaus were doing much work in the development of rural communities. These responses raise questions as to why institutes/bureaus like the Centre for Community Training and Development, the Centre for Development Studies and the Institute for Gender Studies (to name a few) were not identified as playing key roles in the development of rural communities, considering that they focus on critical areas towards the development of rural communities.

xvii. Item 4.17: You are most welcome to indicate in the space provided below any other issues on this topic which you may wish to raise.

This item was intended to afford the respondents an opportunity to contribute towards the research by identifying or raising issues that they considered worth noting in this regard. Most of the respondents mentioned the following issues:

- Institutes/bureaus are expected to generate income for the university.

- There is a need for UNISA to establish an Institute for Rural Development.

- The government must find ways in which to force universities to embark on rural development programmes/projects as part of their mandate.

- UNISA should allow rural work on social responsibility grounds and reward staff for rural participation.

These are important comments that were made by the respondents. They contributed positively to the research especially with the recommendations.

xviii. Item 4.18: It would be greatly appreciated if you would be kind enough to indicate the 2006 gross budget and total FTE staff of your institute/bureau.

The purpose of this question was to allow the respondents to reveal the 2006 gross budget and FTE staff of their institutes/bureaus for the researcher to determine whether the allocation of funding to the institutes/bureaus had any link to the number of staff members, which would then translate to the expected deliverables. Table 5.13 provides the responses in a combined form for the two parts of item 4.18.

Table 5.13: The 2006 gross budget and Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff of the institutes/bureaus

Budget range	Number of institutes/bureaus	Average number of staff per institute/bureau
R (1m-5m)	5	6
R (6m-10m)	2	7
R (11m-20m)	1	11
R (21m-30m)	1	34
None provided	12	6

The information provided by Table 5.13 shows that most of the institutes/bureaus, 12 out of 21, did not provide their 2006 gross budget as requested. Instead of providing amounts these institutes/bureaus indicated that their budgets are part of the colleges or the region, or that the information was not available. It can be concluded however that the position of those institutes/bureaus that were able to provide the amounts for their 2006 gross budgets was that the more staff members they had, on average, the higher was the budget allocated to the institute/bureau. A further conclusion is that the funding of institutes/bureaus is to some extent proportional to the staff establishment of the institute/bureau. This could further translate to the extent of the responsibilities given to the institute/bureau.

5.4.5 Comparative analyses of selected items

It was pointed out in section 5.4 that selected items which were aimed at the extrapolation of related information were to be compared with each other and analysed as such. The comparative analyses are provided below of the eight pairs of items which were found to be comparable. The findings of the two items are presented in a parallel format for purposes of easier comparison, arrangement and presentation.

i. Item: 2.3: Kinds of involvement of institutes/bureaus compared with item
    2.7: Number of training programmes presented in Mpumalanga Province

Table 5.14: Comparative analysis of item 2.3 and item 2.7

Item: 2.3: Kinds of involvement of institutes/bureaus	**Item 2.7: Number of training programmes presented in Mpumalanga Province**
The respondents were requested to provide a 'yes' or 'no' answer with subsequent indication of the type of the involvement if any. Most of the respondents (67%) indicated that they were involved in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. The remaining 33% said that they were not involved at all. It is encouraging however, to observe that there are institutes/bureaus that are involved with skills training, literacy training and community service interventions. These services are some of the key interventions that have been identified in the literature as critical towards the development of rural communities	This question was asked in order to establish the number of training programmes presented by the institutes/bureaus which had been involved in Mpumalanga Province. It was necessary to quantify the involvement to determine whether the said involvement could be justified. The responses as presented in Figure 5.10 show that very few programmes were offered. This is evident from the responses showing that 90% of the institutes only had between 1 and 6 programmes. Only 5% of the institutes reported to have presented between 6 and 10 programmes and another 10% reported to have presented between 18 and 20 programmes. These findings show that though the institutes/bureaus showed an involvement in the province, the low level of involvement poses a challenge to the number of beneficiaries of the interventions.

Conclusion from the analysis

The analysis of the findings of both item 2.3 and item 2.7 shows that most of the institutes/bureaus have not been able to conduct enough human resources development programmes/projects targeting the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. Very few institutes/bureaus have conducted relevant programmes/projects towards the development of human resources in the rural communities of the province.

ii.   Item 2.6: Required educational level for participation in programmes/projects compared with item 2.8: Language used during training

Table 5.15: Comparative analysis of item 2.6 and item 2.8

Item: 2.6: Required educational level for participation in programmes/projects	**Item 2.8: Language used during training**
The question aimed to establish whether educational levels were considered to be a factor in determining the participants to the training programmes that institutes/bureaus had to offer. Most of the institutes/bureaus (24%) presented programmes that required participants to have a Grade 12 educational level. Another 24% presented training programmes that required no educational level at all. There were also some institutes/bureaus (19%) that presented training programmes that required participants to be able to read and write. This shows that about 43% of the institutes/bureaus had requirements that were suitable for the development of people from rural communities, as the literature indicates that most of the people in rural communities are illiterate. There was also a 10% indication of institutes/bureaus that presented programmes that required participants to have educational levels higher than Grade 12. It can be deduced that these programmes were aimed at participants who were interested in furthering their studies towards some form of formal or accredited qualification. This is far beyond the basic needs for the development of basic skills required by people from rural communities.	In view of the important part played by language, it was necessary to determine what medium of instruction the institutes/bureaus mostly use during their presentations. If a certain language, like English, is the sole medium of communication during the presentation of training programmes, most of the intended recipients of the training programmes may be left out, because language can be a barrier in communication during training sessions. It was found to be a cause for concern that more English is used. Sixty seven percent of the institutes/bureaus required the participants to be able to communicate in English.. The literature has shown consistently that rural communities experience significant levels of illiteracy. This means that the use of English in training programmes aimed at rural communities could pose a challenge to the target participants. It is interesting to note that 19% of the institutes/bureaus indicated that they use English but make use of an interpreter. This approach is a positive indication that those institutes/bureaus are committed to the development of people in rural communities. A relatively small number of the institutes/bureaus (5%) reported that they do make use of the local language of the area where they are involved. This is a positive finding which shows that there are some institutes/bureaus that are committed to the cause of human development in rural communities. Ten percent of the institutes/bureaus were not able to respond to the question and thus could not be assessed in terms of the language usage.

Conclusion from the analysis
It can be concluded that most of the institutes/bureaus do not take into account the fact that many people from rural communities are illiterate and therefore would not be able to access training programmes that require certain educational levels. The analysis also led to the conclusion that the use of English by institutes/bureaus during their sessions could have a limiting effect on the number of participants. A general conclusion on the findings of these two items is that the institutes'/bureaus' requirement for certain educational level and some level of language proficiency in English are hindrances to people from rural communities in accessing the development programmes/projects of the institutes/bureaus.

iii.   Item 2.3: Kinds of involvement of institutes/bureaus compared with
        item 2.11: Number of beneficiaries

Table 5.16: Comparative analysis of item 2.3 and item 2.11

Item: 2.3: Kinds of involvement of institutes/bureaus	**Item 2.11: Number of beneficiaries**
The respondents were requested to provide a 'yes' or 'no' answer with a subsequent indication of the type of involvement if any. Most of the respondents (67%) indicated that they were involved in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. The remaining 33% said that they were not involved at all. It is encouraging however, to observe that there are institutes/bureaus that are involved with skills training, literacy training and community service interventions. These services are some of the key interventions that have been identified in the literature as critical to the development of rural communities.	This question was intended to establish whether more people benefited from the programmes/projects presented by the institutes/bureaus. Responses to the question showed that on average very few people benefited from the programmes/projects run by the institutes/bureaus in the province. Eighty percent of the institutes/bureaus reported that a maximum of 200 participants benefitted from their collective programmes/projects. Only 10% of the institutes/bureaus reported that they assisted a maximum of 400 beneficiaries through their involvement. Another 5% of the respondents indicated that their institutes/bureaus contributed to a maximum of 2 000 beneficiaries. It must be mentioned that these numbers are very low taking into account that the majority (61%) of the 3 643 435 population of Mpumalanga Province live in rural areas (Statistics SA, 2007).

Conclusion from the analysis

The comparative analysis of the findings yielded by the questions of the two items shows that although some few institutes/bureaus conducted programmes/projects that are critical to the development of human resources in rural communities, the number of beneficiaries to these programmes/projects is insignificant. It can be concluded therefore that the institutes/bureaus did not contribute sufficiently in terms of beneficiaries of their programmes/projects.

iv.   Item 2.11: Number of beneficiaries compared with item 3.4:
       Institute/bureau contributed to rural development in Mpumalanga
       Province

Table 5.17: Comparative analysis of item 2.11 and item 3.4

Item 2.11: Number of beneficiaries	**Item 3.4: Institute/Bureau contributed to rural development in Mpumalanga Province**
This question was intended to establish whether many people benefited from the programmes/projects presented by the institutes/bureaus.	The need for this statement was to verify whether respondents believed that their institutes/bureaus had contributed to the development of human resources in the rural communities of the Province.
Responses to the question showed that on average very few people benefited from the programmes/projects run by the institutes/bureaus in the province. Eighty percent of the institutes/bureaus reported that a maximum of 200 participants benefitted from their collective programmes/projects. Only 10% of the institutes/bureaus reported that they assisted a maximum of 400 beneficiaries through their involvement. Another 5% of the respondents indicated that their institutes/bureaus contributed to a maximum of 2 000 beneficiaries. It must be mentioned that these numbers are very low taking into account that the majority (61%) of the 3 643 435 population of Mpumalanga Province live in rural areas (Statistics SA, 2007).	The findings show that respondents replied fairly and truthfully to the questions posed to them. This is shown by the distribution of the responses to the statement in question. The majority of the respondents did not agree with the statement, which shows that they acknowledged that their institutes/bureaus did not do enough in contributing to the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. Only 14% of the respondents strongly agreed that their institutes/bureaus had made a contribution. The majority of the respondents to this item confirmed the finding of item 2.12 where 90% of the respondents replied in the negative to the statement that institutes/bureaus were doing enough to develop rural communities in the Province.

Conclusion from the analysis

The findings of item 2.11 show that not enough people benefited from the involvement of the institutes/bureaus in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. The findings of item 3.4 show that the majority of the respondents indicated that their institutes/bureaus were not doing enough towards the development of rural communities in the province. It can therefore be concluded that it was found that the institutes/bureaus were not doing enough towards the development of people in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province.

v.   Item 3.6: Service learning contributes to rural development compared with item 4.6: The institute/bureau has service learning students

Table 5.18: Comparative analysis of item 3.6 and item 4.6

Item 3.6: Service learning contributes to rural development	**Item 4.6: The institute/bureau has service learning students**
The motive for requesting the respondents to rate this statement was to determine whether institutes/bureaus valued the role of service learning as a model through which universities can assist communities to access the knowledge acquired by university students in their respective fields of study. Most of the respondents (82%) agreed that service learning can be used as a model to advance the notion of rural development. They believed that involving students in community work can be beneficial to both the university students and the rural community where the students practise their profession. The findings, however, also show that 19% of the respondents disagreed with the principle of service learning being a contributor to the development of rural communities. This number of respondents (19%) poses a concern to the research since literature has indicated that service learning can benefit rural communities.	This question was asked to ascertain whether institutes/bureaus had students who were involved in service learning as a form of community service. Ninety percent of the respondents indicated that their institutes/bureaus did not have any students involved with service learning. Only 10% provided an affirmative response to the question. This shows that those institutes/bureaus which have students studying towards formal qualifications need to consider the role and contribution that students can make through service learning.

Conclusion from the analysis
It can be concluded from the analysis of the findings of these two items that the respondents understood the role of service learning towards rural community development but most of the institutes/bureaus did not have students who were involved in service learning. From this one can infer that there is a significant need for institutes/bureaus to consider service learning in their planning and business model.

vi.   Item 2.10: Who funded the project(s) that your institute/bureau carried out in Mpumalanga Province? Compared with item 4.8: Has your institute/bureau since 2003 been involved in training programmes/projects on the development of rural communities within the context of social responsibility which had no direct financial benefit to the institute/bureau?

Table 5.19: Comparative analysis of item 2.10 and item 4.8

Item 2.10: Who funded the project(s) that your institute/bureau carried out in Mpumalanga Province?	**Item 4.8: Has your institute/bureau since 2003 been involved in training programmes/projects on the development of rural communities within the context of social responsibility which had no direct financial benefit to the institute/bureau?**
Since funding has always been a challenge in the provision of training programmes and basic services to communities it was necessary to ask this question to find out how the programmes/projects that the institutes/bureaus carried out in Mpumalanga Province were funded. The findings show that most of the projects (38%) were funded by the participants themselves. This shows that it would have presented a challenge for more people to participate in the programmes since people in rural communities are unemployed. The involvement of external funders, which was reported to be at 19%, is a somewhat progressive finding which could be encouraged as a support base for rural communities. The same can be said about the contribution of institutes/bureaus towards the support for participants. The finding showed a 10% contribution made by the institutes/bureaus. Thirty three of the institutes/bureaus were unable to say who funded their training programmes/projects.	The concept of social responsibility entails ploughing back to communities for no gain. Rural communities should benefit most from this exercise since most poor people are found in rural communities. It was necessary to establish whether institutes/bureaus embarked on activities driven by social responsibility in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. In responding to this question 90% of the respondents stated that their institutes/bureaus did not have any programmes/projects that were carried out as a form of social responsibility in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. Only 10% indicated that their institutes/bureaus carried out activities in the rural communities of the province which were not for gain. There is a need for most of the institutes/bureaus at UNISA to understand the need for programmes/projects driven by social responsibility so that most people from rural communities can benefit from such programmes/projects.
Conclusion from the analysis A comparison of the responses of these two items shows that most of the institutes/bureaus did not support the funding of the programmes/projects that they conducted in the rural communities of the province. Furthermore, it was found that 90% of the institutes/bureaus did not conduct any rural development programmes/projects aimed at the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province within the dictates of social responsibility. It was then concluded that the institutes/bureaus did not create opportunities for people from the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province to access their programmes/projects if they did not have the financial means to do so. There is a need for institutes/bureaus to pay attention to this responsibility.	

vii.   Item 3.6: Service learning contributes to rural development compared
         with item 4.11: Do you think that UNISA as an institution is committed to
         the development of rural communities in South Africa?

Table 5.20: Comparative analysis of item 3.6 and item 4.11

Item 3.6: Service learning contributes to rural development	**Item 4.11: Do you think that UNISA as an institution is committed to the development of rural communities in South Africa?**
The motive for requesting the respondents to rate this statement was to determine whether institutes/bureaus valued the role of service learning as a model through which universities can assist communities to access the knowledge acquired by university students in their respective field of study. Most of the respondents (82%) agreed that service learning can be used as a model to advance the notion of rural development. They believed that involving students in community work can be beneficial to both the university students and the rural community where the students practise their profession. The findings, however, also show that 19% of the respondents disagree with the principle that service learning contributes to the development of rural communities. This number of respondents (18%) poses a concern to the research since the literature has indicated that service learning can benefit rural communities.	The motivation for this question was to get the views of the respondents on the role and commitment of UNISA as a whole towards the development of rural communities. The findings derived from the responses to this question show that 33% of the respondents considered UNISA to be doing much towards the development of rural communities while 24% of the responses believed that UNISA was doing little in this area of development. A small number of the respondents (5%) believed that the university was not doing anything at all. This item consisted of a follow-up question where the respondents were required to provide reasons for their responses. The reasons provided show that some of the respondents believed that the vision statement of UNISA indicates the expected commitment of the institution to contribute towards the development of rural communities. Some respondents (20%) believed that the existence of institutes/bureaus is a sign of commitment on the part of the university to embark on the development of rural communities in the country. The other 47% of the respondents thought that UNISA was not doing enough towards the development of rural communities in the country. They gave reasons such as the lack of commitment and/or focus or that the university was just not doing anything at all. These conflicting responses show that the institution is facing a problem in this regard. It shows that some institutes/bureaus do not live up to their role or mandate of being the platform through which the university has to carry out its non-formal and informal developmental programmes.

Conclusion from the analysis

The analysis of these items shows that the institutes/bureaus understand the role and importance of service learning towards the development of rural communities. It was however found that none of the responses to item 4.11 cited service learning as a reason for their concern that UNISA as an institution is not doing enough in the development of rural communities in South Africa. It was concluded from these findings that UNISA as an institution needs to improve its activities that focus on rural development (such as employing the service learning model of university teaching and learning).

viii.   Item 4.11 Do you think that UNISA as an institution is committed to the development of rural communities in South Africa? Compared with item 4.15: What would you rate as the three most important factors inhibiting UNISA in rendering assistance towards the development of rural communities?

Table 5.21: Comparative analysis of item 4.11 and item 4.15

Item 4.11 Do you think that UNISA as an institution is committed to the development of rural communities in South Africa?	Item 4.15: What would you rate as the three most important factors inhibiting UNISA in rendering assistance towards the development of rural communities?
The motivation for this question was to get the views of the respondents on the role and commitment of UNISA as a whole towards the development of rural communities. The findings show that 33% of the respondents considered UNISA to be doing much towards the development of rural communities while 24% of the responses viewed UNISA as doing little in this area of development. A small number of the respondents (5%) believed that the university was not doing anything at all. This item contained a follow-up question where the respondents were required to provide reasons for their responses. The reasons provided show that some of the respondents believed that the vision statement of UNISA does indicate a commitment of the institution to contribute towards the development of rural communities. What is not clear from this belief is whether the statement of the university's vision does get translated into actions. There were some respondents (20%) who believed that the existence of institutes/bureaus is a sign of commitment on the part of the university to embark on the development of rural communities in the country. They felt that this should be done through the institutes/bureaus. Forty seven percent of the respondents believed that UNISA was not doing enough in the development of rural communities in the country. They stated reasons such as the lack of commitment and/or focus or that the university was just not doing anything at all. These conflicting responses show that the institution is facing a problem in this regard.	This question was tasked to allow the respondents to state any challenges that they considered to be a barrier in UNISA's intentions to assist in the development of rural communities. In responding to this question the respondents stated the following factors that inhibit UNISA's intentions to assist rural communities: • Lack of clear policy on rural development • Lack of funding • No time for staff to focus on rural work These challenges imply that the university needs to come up with a clear policy committing it to be involved in the development of rural communities. This finding agrees with the finding of item 4.11 where the respondents stated that the university lacks commitment to and focus on rural communities. The issue of a lack of funding is a critical challenge because rural communities have the poorest people of the country. Institutions and organisations seeking to venture into these communities may not always expect the people to pay for their services and support programmes. It is necessary for the institutions to be funded in some way in order to support the rural communities. Findings related to item 4.5 show that most of the institutes/bureaus (86%) do not attach any value to the involvement of staff in work focused on rural development in their appraisal for staff performance.

Table 5.21 (Continued): Comparative analysis of item 4.11and item 4.15

Conclusion from the analysis

The challenges faced by UNISA to be able contribute towards the development of rural communities (such as the lack of clear policy on rural development, the lack of funding and the lack of time for staff to focus on rural work) support the findings that 47% of the respondents who believed that UNISA was not doing enough in the area of rural development. A conclusion was then reached on the basis of this analysis that UNISA as an institution needs to put systems in place to address the area of rural development.

5.5 SYNTHESIS OF THE FINDINGS

This section focuses on the amalgamation of the findings of the research with the stipulation of literature on the items that formed the basis of the research. These core items were used in the development of the questionnaire. The three main sections of the questionnaire, sections 2, 3 and 4, namely services rendered by institutes/bureaus in rural communities, views of respondents on the development of rural communities, and policy landscape issues of the institutes/bureaus towards the development of human resources in rural communities, respectively, are therefore the source of the synthesis with the findings of the research. The synthesis of the findings was carried out with the intention of creating a connected whole (Soanes, 2001) between the findings of the research and the information of the literature review (Chapter 2) and the theoretical framework of the research (Chapter 3).

5.5.1 Synthesis of the findings on services rendered by institutes/bureaus in rural communities

Section 2 of the questionnaire focused on the services the institutes/bureaus rendered towards the development of human resources in rural communities in general, with a specific focus on rural communities in Mpumalanga Province. The synthesis provided below emanates from the dictates of the literature review on the selected items of section 2 of the questionnaire and the findings of the research as reported in section 5.4.

5.5.1.1 The involvement of higher education institutions in rural communities

Higher education institutions have, over the years, primarily been focusing on teaching, research and service (Fourie, 2003; Ngcongo, 2003; Shah, 2006). This decades-old role of universities has created many challenges for universities. Among the challenges that face universities is their contribution towards the development of rural communities. As an example of this expected role, Thomson (2003) quotes Nzimande, the SA Communist Party leader who made a call on universities to promote sustainable livelihoods in rural communities, and develop a meaningful rural economy. Samuels (1992) argues that universities should utilise their resources in the process of national development since they are funded by national resources. The findings of the research showed that 90% of the institutes/bureaus reported that their staff had no time allocated towards involvement in rural communities (see 5.4.2.xiii). Universities should also accept the responsibility for directing their teaching and research towards the strengthening of communities and the strengthening of their capacities to empower themselves (Higgs, 2002). A relatively low number of institutes/bureaus (18%) were found to be involved with programmes that focus on activities related to training and teaching (see 5.4.2.iii). The literature further confirms that universities should uphold their purpose of meeting the needs of society which include, among others, activities that aim towards community development (Belshaw & Thomas, 1984; Higgs, 2002; Nkomo & Sehoole, 2007; Reddy, 1992; Tahir, 2001). The research found that the institutes/bureaus were, to a certain degree, involved in the development of rural and farm areas (see 5.4.2.ii). The research also found that the institutes/bureaus did not conduct enough community programmes/projects in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. Most of the institutes/bureaus (90%) only accounted for a maximum of six projects/programmes they conducted or presented in the rural communities of the target province (see 5.4.vii).

5.5.1.2 The areas of involvement of higher education in rural communities

Humphreys and Conlon (2003) identify three distinct types regarding the role of higher education in the development of communities. The first is the role

as stakeholder in the economic development of communities. This role implies that higher education should assist communities in developing and growing economically. The literature identifies three areas that have a direct economic development impact on rural communities. These areas are local economic development (see 3.2.6), entrepreneurship (see 3.2.7) and rural tourism (see 3.2.8). The findings of the research have shown that only 5% of the institutes/bureaus have conducted training on programmes related to entrepreneurship and rural tourism, which is contrary to the dictates of the literature (see 5.4.2.iv). Section 5.4.3 of the findings has shown that almost all of the respondents affirmed (48% agreed and 48% strongly agreed) that training on local economic development could assist in enhancing the quality of life for people in rural communities. This is in contrast to the findings in 5.4.2.iv that none of the institutes/bureaus (0%) have conducted any training on local economic development.

The second identified role of higher education is that of a strategic partner in community development. In the past two decades university agents have widely advocated and supported the role of university-community collaboration (Brulin, 1998). This view envisages higher education as an integral part of a seamless web of organisations committed to the development of rural communities. Such partnering could entail a catalytic role (Nkomo & Sehoole, 2007) where the institution initiates the activities without necessarily participating in them. Nocon, Nilsson and Cole (2004), on the other hand, have emphasised the need for higher education institutions to remain a partner in rural development projects to see to it that the projects are completed, thus ensuring the realisation of the envisaged success. Barnes and Phillips (2000) recognise local municipalities, community leadership, non-governmental organisations, fellow higher education institutions and development/funding agents as possible partners. The research found that only 19% of the training programmes conducted by the institutes/bureaus in the rural communities of Mpumalanga were funded by external funders (see 5.4.2.x). This demonstrates that there were not many development/funding agencies that were involved as partners in the projects in question. The other findings as reflected in 5.4.3.v show that 95% of the respondents generally believed that community engagement and partnership can benefit the rural communities. Finding 5.4.4.iii showed a sizeable number (42%) of the institutes/bureaus that never had any

collaborative partnerships in programmes/projects towards the development of rural communities. This is contrary to the literature review. Most of the respondents (82%) also regarded service learning, which is indeed a factor in community partnership imperatives, as a contributor in the development of rural communities. This role is realised through students' involvement in the rural communities. Another reported finding was that only 10% of the institutes/bureaus had established some kind of partnerships with communities (see 5.4.4.xiii). This shows that most of the institutes/bureaus had not established enough partnerships to benefit rural communities although they are aware of and value the positive role that can be played by partnerships.

The third role of higher education is that of a service provider – building intellectual capital in the communities. This role is necessary to provide the required skills to develop the communities through training interventions. Tahir (2001) contends that the potential of distance higher education for non-formal education as a tool for rural development has been largely neglected. This argument explains the role that higher education should play in providing non-formal training towards the development of rural communities. The involvement of university academics in rural communities (Tackach, 2004) is another way in which universities can contribute to the empowerment of these communities. The research, however, found that most of the institutes/bureaus (86%) did not value the participation of their academic staff in rural communities when assessing their performance (see 5.4.3.v). This finding shows that the academics are not encouraged or motivated to embark on activities that seek to address the plight of the rural communities. Higher education should also generate new knowledge towards solving the educational, housing and economic problems of the country (Higgs, 2002). The educational problems of the communities entail, among others, the lack of knowledge acquisition to enable these communities to fend for themselves while housing and economic problems entail challenges in terms of self-sufficiency. This means that higher education has a role with regard to social and economic responsiveness (Badat, 2005). One way in which higher education can serve communities with the acquisition of knowledge is through holding information-sharing sessions, seminars and workshops to empower the target communities (Zeichner, 2001). The use of university libraries for community information

sharing is a vehicle through which information can be disseminated to communities (Kiplang'at, 1999). This role is derived from the centuries old community service responsibility of universities (Ngcongo, 2003). Section 5.4.2.iv of the research showed that only 14% of the institutes/bureaus conducted information-sharing sessions or workshops in rural communities. This figure shows that very few institutes/bureaus valued the role that information-sharing sessions can have towards the development of rural communities.

The North Carolina Central University, in partnership with local black churches, has been providing community resources in what is called Project Diabetes Interventions Reaching and Educating Communities Together (Project DIRECT) (see section 3.2.2). This project has been supporting communities with diabetes prevention and support (Reid, Hatch & Parrish, 2003). The Project DIRECT initiative is indicative of universities' role in empowering communities with health education, and training and support services. In contrast to this expected role of universities the research found that 62% of the institutes/bureaus have never been involved in community projects focusing on health education (see 5.4.3.ix). This finding is further supported by section 5.4.2.iv where it is reported that only 5% of the institutes/bureaus have conducted health education training in the rural communities. It can be concluded from these findings that the institutes/bureaus are not doing enough towards the promotion of health education to rural communities in general but also in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province in particular.

5.5.1.3 The impact of low education levels of rural people in the development of their communities

The literature has shown that illiteracy hampers the role that rural people should play in their development (see 2.2.9). Wijetunge (2000) contends that literacy is the primary tool through which people from rural communities can acquire the necessary skills for their development. UNESCO (2000) confirms the importance of exposing rural adults to literacy training programmes in order to address their lack of basic educational knowledge. The research found that only 10% of the institutes/bureaus conducted training focusing on the upliftment of literacy levels of people in the rural

communities of Mpumalanga Province (see 5.4.2.iii). This finding does not correspond with the finding reported in 5.4.3.ii that 95% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that low levels of literacy are a barrier to the provision of training programmes to people in rural communities. This finding would have been well supported if a corresponding number of institutes/bureaus had conducted literacy training programmes in the rural communities of the province in question. These conflicting findings pose a challenge to the institutes/bureaus with regard to their perceived role of literacy development in rural communities.

The low literacy levels of people in rural communities have a direct relationship to the role played by the language used during training sessions. The research found that only 5% of the institutes/bureaus made use of the local language of the trainees in their training sessions while 19% reported that they used an interpreter during their training sessions (see 5.4.2.viii). These findings show the commitment of the institutes/bureaus towards acknowledging and then attempting to overcome the language barrier when conducting training programmes in rural communities. It was also reported that the institutes/bureaus conducted training programmes that were accommodative of the low levels of education of people from rural communities. This was shown by finding 5.4.2.vi where 19% and 24% of the programmes conducted by the institutes/bureaus only required people who were able to read and write and those with no education at all, respectively.

5.5.1.4   The impact of the high poverty levels of rural people in the development of their communities.

According to the Discussion Document on the South African Anti-poverty Strategy rural people are vulnerable to poverty (South Africa, 2008). This view on the challenge posed by poverty in rural communities is further supported by Castle (2001) who states that people in rural communities are characterised by persistent low incomes and poverty. Kotzé (1994) describes rural poverty as a feature of South Africa. He regards it as a problem that is increasing in magnitude and one that should be addressed as a matter of urgency. The masses in rural communities, being poor as well as politically and economically powerless, are marginalised. The extensive

rate of unemployment, high illiteracy and low health standards in rural communities are a cause for serious concern (Tosterud, 1996).

The research reported that 38% of the programmes presented by the institutes/bureaus in rural communities were funded by the people from these rural communities themselves (see 5.4.2.x). The findings further show that only 29% of the programmes were either funded by the institutes/bureaus or by external funders. This indicates that the people from the poverty-stricken rural communities are challenged in terms of the affordability of and access to the programmes.

5.5.2 **Synthesis of the findings on the views of respondents on the development of rural communities**

5.5.2.1 The role of skills training in the reduction of unemployment in rural communities

Coetzee and Visagie (1995) found that one of the key areas of support to small and medium-sized and micro-enterprises (SMME) is access to training. This research finding shows that access to training could assist in empowering rural communities. De Coning (1991) supports this finding by citing that if people do not access training they will not have the ability to deal with the SMME as a composite whole. Tosterud (1996) emphasises that rural South African citizens are in desperate need and deserving of training. This need, if satisfied, would translate to the betterment of the life of the rural people. The research found that 48% of the respondents agreed that training of people in rural communities can assist to decrease the level of unemployment in rural communities (see 5.4.3.iii). Another 48% strongly agreed with this statement. This finding shows that institutes/bureaus attach meaning and value to the role of training towards the development of rural communities.

5.5.2.2 The role of community engagement and partnerships in contributing towards the development of rural communities

The literature confirms the important role of community engagement and partnerships and identifies a range of role players in the partnerships which include churches, rural leadership structures, government structures, local

municipalities, and non-governmental organisations (Barnes & Phillips, 2000; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000; Cushman, 2002; Reid, Hatch & Parrish, 2003). The remoteness of universities and the alienation of the educated must be cured by intelligent action and the social involvement of universities which should be at the centre of community engagement (Shah, 2006). By implication universities have a critical role to play in community engagement. For example, the University of Pretoria (UP) reported that 20 000 students and staff members were involved in community engagement programmes in 2007. The involvement included the provision of health services to rural communities, the empowerment of educators from previously disadvantaged schools, aid to people with disabilities, the development of small business, improvement in schools, care for the aged and support for children living with HIV and AIDS.

The research found that 43% of the respondents agreed that community engagement and partnerships can benefit the rural communities by accessing the expertise and knowledge required by these communities (see 5.4.3.v). A further 52% of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement about community engagement and partnerships. This finding is however not consistent with the finding in 5.4.4.iii that 42% of the institutes/bureaus reported that they did not have any partnerships with other universities, NGOs, government structures or funding agencies. These findings show that the institutes/bureaus valued the importance of partnerships, but did not do anything to put such a position into practice.

5.5.2.3 Service learning has a contributory role in rural communities

The public service mission of higher education is today referred to in many nuanced terms, such as engagement, community service, civic responsibility, service learning, outreach and extension (Tackach, 2004). All these terms refer to the service role of higher education. The practice of service learning by universities allows the university students opportunities to be involved in the improvement of the lives of others in a meaningful way (Swick, 2001). Ngai (2006), who found that the service learning programmes of the Chinese University of Hong Kong benefited both participating students and the target communities, supports this viewpoint. Service learning has a mutual benefit for the participating students and the community being serviced. The research

found that 82% of the respondents affirmed the statement that universities can, through service learning, contribute towards the development of rural communities (see 5.4.3.vi). This percentage figure is constituted by 63% and 19% of the respondents who respectively agreed and strongly agreed with the statement.

Community service at the Roger Williams University in the USA is not limited to the participation of students but includes the participation of the students' professors as well (Tackach, 2004). The involvement of these academics is actually one of the areas on which the professors are assessed. The University of Pretoria, through the Community Engagement department, provides incentives for excellence in community engagement in the same way that it acknowledges excellence in teaching and research in order to motivate its academic and support staff to become more involved in this activity (University of Pretoria, 2007a). Regarding the involvement of the staff of the institutes/bureaus in service teaching during staff assessment, the research found that most of the institutes/bureaus (86%) did not consider the involvement of staff in rural service teaching when assessing their performance (see 5.4.4.v). This means that the institution does not allow for staff incentives to motivate them to be more involved in this activity. It will be important for UNISA to learn from the practice of Roger Williams University, among others, regarding rating the participation of the academic staff in community service teaching when assessing their performance.

5.5.3 **Synthesis of the findings on policy landscape issues governing the institutes/bureaus towards the development of human resources in rural communities**

5.5.3.1 The strategic imperatives of higher education institutions and their relevance to rural development

One of the four areas of responsibility for universities is the need for universities to direct a proportion of their research and operational activities towards the development of the poor and disadvantaged people from rural communities (Belshaw & Thomas, 1984). The university's mission statement needs to reflect the university's commitment towards this imperative. Higgs (2002) also contends that the higher education system and individual

universities should be required to be effective and have clearly defined objectives linked to national development.

The Mrs Helena Kaushik Women's College in India is one example where the institutional mission statement clearly stipulates the commitment and focus of the college towards the upliftment of women from the rural community it serves (Kaushik, Kaushik & Kaushik, 2006). The University of South Africa is vocal on its commitment towards the development of people from the disadvantaged communities. This is clear from its mission statement where it states that *the university will participate in community development by utilising its resources and capacities for the upliftment of the disadvantaged* (University of South Africa, 2007). The findings of the research show that most of the institutes/bureaus (86%) did not have their own mission statements committing them towards the development of rural communities in particular (see 5.4.4.i). Another finding which has a direct link to this finding is finding 5.4.4.iv which indicates that none of the institutes/bureaus have set targets on rural development. Without individual mission statements or targets towards rural development the institutes/bureaus cannot fulfil their role regarding the development of rural communities. This should be a cause for concern for the university. Contrary to these findings 76% of the respondents affirmed that their institutes/bureaus are capable of contributing towards the development of rural communities (see 5.4.4.ii). Capability could be seen in the context of the responses to denote the willingness of the staff in the institutes/bureaus, but this does not necessarily imply that strategic imperatives are in place in the institutes/bureaus.

Finding 5.4.4.vii of the research reported that only 25% of the staff of the institutes/bureaus had conducted research focusing on rural development since 2003. As stated earlier, the literature dictates that universities should focus their research and resources towards the development of rural communities. This finding shows that the institutes/bureaus need to do more to advance knowledge through research as a way of assisting the development of rural communities. With regard to the institutional commitment of UNISA towards the development of rural communities, 43% of the respondents confirmed that it was committed (see 5.4.4.xi). When asked why they would regard UNISA as committed only 19% mentioned the university's mission statement, while 20% mentioned the existence of institutes/bureaus as an indication of the university's commitment to this cause. A few

respondents (14%) believed that the formal programmes for which some rural students enrolled would contribute greatly to development in those communities. These findings show that the institutes/bureaus need to systematically develop strategic imperatives such as mission statements, visions, policies, strategies, plans and targets to provide guidelines for their involvement in the development of rural communities.

5.5.3.2 The social responsibility role of higher education towards the development of rural communities

The view that a university is a social institution whose purpose is to meet the needs of society implies that it has a social role (Higgs, 2002) in the community. The transformation of higher education in South Africa was intended to redress past inequalities and to transform the higher education system to serve a new social order (South Africa, 1997a). This expected social role implies that higher education has a responsibility towards society. An example of a university's response to the social role is the Centre for Environmental Strategy at the University of Surrey in the UK. This university conducted courses in rural communities on environmental issues without a profit intent but as part of its social responsibility consent (Wehrmeyer & Chenoweth, 2006). The challenge faced by universities is to succeed in maintaining the acceptable balance between the research, teaching and social service functions (Speck, 2001). In most cases the service function is superseded by the other two functions. Shah (2006) further contends that the public credibility of universities depends upon their being seen to be doing something which is of recognisable benefit to society. Tackach (2004) cites a number of activities on which universities could embark for this purpose. The activities include, among others, lecturing at public libraries, museums and other venues where members of the community gather, writing articles for newspapers and popular magazines for the general public, conducting research and writing grants for non-profit community organisations, offering workshops for high school teachers and speaking in high school classrooms, and serving on boards of and participating in programmes offered by museums and historical societies.

The research found that 90% of the institutes/bureaus reported that they had no social responsibility-driven programmes in the rural communities of

Mpumalanga Province (see 5.4.3.viii). This finding implies that most of the institutes/bureaus neglect their social service role.

5.5.3.3 The availability of information and its role towards community development

The unavailability of information in rural communities has an inhibiting and negative impact on the development of people from these communities (Kiplang'at, 1999). The literature abounds with examples that show that there is a need for information to be made available to communities for purposes of developing such communities. The information needed should cover a wide range of focus areas such as lifelong learning, social issues, literacy education, basic conservation work, personal counselling support and basic agricultural skills (Karunawathie, 1998; Mackay, 2001; Newa, 1990; Talan, 2001; Shah, 2006; Warner, 1989). In this regard the Rural Development Strategy of the Government of National Unity emphasises that access to information on the harvesting and conservation of the environment is one of the needs of rural people (South Africa, 1995a).

Finding 5.4.3.x of the research shows that 62 of the institutes/bureaus did not have any programme to assist rural communities to access information that would assist their development. The other 38% of the respondents affirmed that their institutes/bureaus occasionally embarked on activities aimed at providing information to rural communities but some of them (14) confirmed that their institutes/bureaus did not do enough for this cause. This finding shows that there is a need for UNISA through its institutes/bureaus, among other means and platforms, to improve its support to rural communities.

5.5.3.4 Development challenges in rural communities

The literature has shown that rural communities are commonly faced with, among others, the following challenges: unemployment, a lack of access to communication and information, inadequate health and education services, poor economic development, illiteracy, land use issues, inferior environmental quality, persistent low income and poverty, and outward migration of skilled people (Castle, 2001; Hercules, Andersson & Dangor, 1997; Fields, 1985; Illouz-Winicki & Paillard, 1998; Kiplang'at, 1999; Warner, 1989; Wijetunge, 2000). These are the areas that require attention in order to address the

developmental challenges faced by the people in rural communities. Universities have to understand these needs in order to put systems and processes in place so that the challenges may be addressed.

The research showed that the respondents understood the challenges facing rural communities. This was evident from their responses where they mentioned unemployment (43%), a lack of basic education and training (33%) and a skills shortage (24%) as the three most critical challenges facing the rural communities (see 5.4.3.xii). When asked what the institutes/bureaus should do to respond to these rural challenges, most of the respondents (57%) cited the provision of more skills training, followed by the provision of basic education (14%). It can be assumed that these two areas of focus can contribute to the creation of employment opportunities which would thus address the challenge of unemployment as stated in 5.4.3.xii. These findings show that the institutes/bureaus would, with all things being equal, be able to direct their focus to the real challenges faced by rural communities.

5.5.3.5 The strength of higher education as an enabler for the development of rural communities

Universities have always been considered to be the knowledge bank of the world. This is so because of the professoriate base of universities (Baker, 2002). The university professor possesses high-level knowledge in his/her field of specialisation. The expertise, knowledge, and resources available in a university should be utilised for the direct benefit of society at large (Witte, 2000). Universities have resources which can only be provided to communities through what Shah (2006:10) refers to as the "democratisation of higher education through engagement with the community and evolving the learning laboratory in the field". In short, this implies making the resources of universities available to the needy people. The service learning practices of university students (Fourie, 2003) could also be utilised as a constructive resource. Universities have shown a renewed interest in using their available resources to assist communities and regions through community development initiatives (Williams, 2002). Badat (2005) argues that the decentralised location of distance education institutions provides a platform for the university to utilise its expertise and resources towards the development of the communities they serve. The University of Pretoria, for example, has

committed itself to use its skills, knowledge, facilities and infrastructure to empower and assist communities.

The research found that the respondents thought UNISA's three most important strengths were available human resources, available expertise and available facilities (see 5.4.3.xiv). The cited strengths are in line with the examples from the literature mentioned in this section. This implies that UNISA is in an appropriate position to embark on rural developmental programmes in rural communities. A follow up question was asked to determine the three most important factors that could be inhibiting UNISA in rendering support and assistance towards the development of rural communities. The respondents cited the lack of clear policy on rural development, the lack of funding and no time for staff to focus on rural work as the three most inhibiting factors on UNISA's expected role in rural community development (see 5.4.3.xv).

5.6 **AN OUTLINE OF THE ROLE OF SOME INSTITUTES/BUREAUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL COMMUNITIES**

This section provides a brief overview of a few institutes/bureaus from the University of Pretoria. The purpose of the section is to take a brief look at what other South African university institutes/bureaus are doing with regard to the community development role. The University of Pretoria was chosen as an example primarily because it is located in Pretoria where the University of South Africa's main campus is also situated. The notion of locality provided a basis to decide on this university for the relative outline of its activities towards, and involvement in, community development. The following subsections present the activities of the identified institutes/bureaus as reported through the 2007 Annual Report/Review, the 2008 University of Pretoria In a Nutshell document, the TUKSLAW News and the Centre for Child Law 2007 Annual Report. These are just a few institutes/bureaus; the list is not conclusive.

5.6.1 **The Community Engagement Department**

The University of Pretoria has a Department of Community Engagement which is responsible for the promotion of and coordination of community engagement programmes of the university (University of Pretoria, 2008b). The Community Engagement Department falls under the direct line function of a Vice-Principal. This institutional arrangement is indicative of the value that the university puts on the community engagement. The Community Engagement Department emphasises the importance of responsiveness to the educational, cultural, economic, social, health, industrial, scientific and technological needs of communities.

Table 5.22 below provides information on the community engagement programmes and projects carried out by the University of Pretoria in 2007 (University of Pretoria, 2007a).

Table 5.22: The community engagement projects/programmes conducted by the University of Pretoria in 2007

Faculty/ Department	Curricular (service learning) projects	Research -related projects	Social development projects	Empowerment projects	Outreach projects	Total
Support Services	3	1	17	0	44	65
Economic and Management	4	6	16	2	10	38
Education	9	2	8	0	2	21
Engineering, Environment and IT	2	3	4	1	0	10
Health Sciences	20	4	4	1	2	31
Humanities	13	7	11	1	8	40
Law	4	2	10	0	3	19
Natural and Agricultural Sciences	3	9	11	8	3	34
Theology	1	1	4	0	0	6
Veterinary Sciences	12	2	3	0	2	19
Total	71	37	78	13	74	283

Source: University of Pretoria 2007 Annual Review

5.6.2 **The Centre for Child Law**

The Centre for Child Law at the University of Pretoria is committed to the promotion and recognition of children's rights through the development of child law practices in the country (University of Pretoria, 2008a). To achieve most of its programmes and projects the centre sought donations to sponsor their programmes for 2007. Amongst their sponsors were the Open Society Foundation, the Save the Children Sweden and the Ford Foundation (University of Pretoria, 2007b). These donors contributed funding amounting to R1 829 752. This funding assisted the centre in its endeavour to carry out its community development projects. The centre conducted a number of programmes in 2007, including conducting workshops on the Children's Act in Limpopo Province, and the North West Province. It also participated and presented in a number of stakeholder forums and workshops on children's issues. Another role played by the centre in 2007 was to assist the boys who were assaulted by staff at the Ethokomala Reform School in Mpumalanga Province (University of Pretoria, 2007b). The centre provided legal support to these boys and secured a court interdict preventing the staff from the school from abusing the boys. This support was provided free of charge by the centre.

5.6.3 **The Centre for the Study of AIDS**

The University of Pretoria established the Centre for the Study of AIDS (CSA) in 1999 to mainstream HIV and AIDS through all aspects of the university's activities and to understand the complexities of the pandemic in South Africa (University of Pretoria, 2008b). The centre conducts training on counselling and supports a range of community-based projects. The centre handles a wide range of community projects and has developed strong regional and international links (partnerships). In 2000 the centre established a number of satellite centres in other provinces of South Africa. These offices provided training, counselling and information on HIV and AIDS to communities in the respective provinces. The satellite office in Mpumalanga was run in partnership with the then Technikon SA where these institutions shared office facilities and collaborated in their community development programmes and projects. A number of rural communities in the Lowveld areas of Mpumalanga Province benefited greatly through the existence of this satellite centre.

5.6.4 The Centre for Veterinary Wildlife Studies

The Centre for Veterinary Wildlife Studies is located within the Faculty of Veterinary Sciences of the University of Pretoria. The centre has been involved in a number of programmes that target disadvantaged communities (University of Pretoria, 2007a). Some of the projects carried out by the centre in 2007 are briefly discussed below:

- The centre initiated and conducted community outreach programmes which included visits to schools where students mentored learners, assisted AIDS orphans with their studies and became involved in extramural activities.
- Students and staff assisted up and coming farmers in previously disadvantaged communities with necessary farming skills and techniques.
- The centre conducted research, targeting areas that emanated from the veterinary needs of communities.
- Visits were undertaken to low-income, small-scale farmers in the Jericho and other rural communities to inspect and treat livestock and production animals at no cost.
- Students visited Madidi Village in the North West to interact with the learners from disadvantaged schools and assisted them in planting trees in resource-poor communities on Arbour Day.
- Students visited a number of veterinary clinics in the Winterveld and Pretoria North areas to render services on a voluntary basis for the benefit of the communities.
- Other departments of the faculty collaborated with the centre to offer diagnostic services and to run clinics in the communities. They also visited small-scale and emerging farmers to provide professional advice.

5.6.5 The Centre for Education Law and Policy

This centre is part of the UP Faculty of Education. Through this Centre the faculty has, conducted a number of community engagement and development programmes/projects (University of Pretoria, 2007a). The following are some of the projects carried out by the centre:

- The centre makes its students, staff, facilities and expertise available to communities countrywide to improve the quality of education of people in previously disadvantaged communities.

- The centre deploys its educational psychology students in schools to provide learning support, career guidance, providing training and development assistance in rural schools.

- It offers specialist skills and facilities to persons with severe communication difficulties, and develops rural teachers in the areas of science and mathematics education.

- The centre also offers skills training to principals of schools on the mentorship programmes to assist them in mentoring the newly appointed teachers in their schools.

- The centre has also established good working relationships and partnerships with schools around the country where student educators are hosted for teaching practice sessions.

The overview of these institutes/bureaus has shown the extent to which they are involved in community development projects. It has also shown the relatively wide range of activities carried out by the institutes/bureaus. It is interesting that although the University of Pretoria is a residential institution many of the programmes/projects carried out by these centres are not localised within the university's campus in Pretoria but that services are taken to the communities who need them. A number of the programmes have targeted the previously disadvantaged communities, most of which are rural communities.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The findings as reported in this research have shown that the role of the University of South Africa, through its institutes/bureaus, towards the development of rural communities in Mpumalanga Province is a challenging one. The literature has shown that higher education institutions have the means in terms of knowledge, skills, resources, and to some extent facilities, to serve the needs of rural communities (Baker, 2002; Williams, 2002). It is therefore important for UNISA to position itself and align its community engagement initiatives and processes to increase its involvement in the

development of rural communities. Communities, and rural communities in particular, have high hopes for and expectations from universities who usually openly state their intensions which bring hope to the rural communities. The findings of the research showed an interesting disjuncture between theory/policy on the one hand and practice on the other. The mission is fine but practice lags behind. Theories about the core functions of universities have to distinguish between ideals and practice on the one hand and the internal tensions between different layers of the system, namely institutional policy and execution by the components of the institution.

Since 1994, after the democratisation of the South African political landscape, the South African government has developed a number of policies that would attempt to restructure and refocus higher education in the country to a level that would meet the challenges of the rural masses of the country. The role that could be played by higher education towards the development of rural communities in South Africa has been emphasised by government in many ways and in many platforms. The research found that the University of South Africa is, to a great extent, not aligned to channel its resources and means for the development of rural communities in Mpumalanga Province and the country in general. This is evident from the lack of strategically aligned imperatives to commit the institution to this course.

After the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 people had high expectations regarding the creation of opportunities for development and human emancipation. This was also true for people in the Mpumalanga Province. However, the findings presented in this chapter do not show that the institutes/bureaus of UNISA are fully committed to the development of people in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. It was interesting to note that some institutes/bureaus at the University of Pretoria, which is a residential university, have reported their involvement in a substantial number of community development programmes/projects that they carried out to a certain extent in rural communities as well. The research has also shown that there is no indication of a vigorous development practice by UNISA in the province. The following chapter provides the synthesis, conclusions and recommendations of the research.

CHAPTER SIX

SYNTHESIS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers an overview and synthesis of the research. The findings of the research as reported in the previous chapter are also discussed. More specifically, this chapter puts forward an interpretation of the findings within the context of the problem statement (Chapter 1) of the research, the literature review presented in Chapter 2, the theoretical framework (Chapter 3) and the research design (Chapter 4). A number of conclusions and key recommendations which emanated directly from the research are provided. This concluding chapter is presented under the following headings: overview of the research, research problem, research design and methodological approach, conclusions with an overarching conclusion and key recommendations of the research.

6.2   OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

The theoretical framework mapped the position and role of higher education in the development of rural communities. It was argued that higher education institutions have a critical role to develop the human resources in the communities they serve. The research also examined the attempts of the South African government to legislate the higher education sector thus ensuring that the playing field is levelled for the sector to contribute appropriately to the development of communities, especially the previously disadvantaged ones such as the rural communities in South Africa.

This research has endeavoured to examine the role of the University of South Africa – a distance higher educational institution which was established through the merger of the former UNISA, the former Technikon SA, and the incorporation of the VUDEC campus of the former VISTA University – in the

development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. An attempt was also made to relate the role of the university to literature directives on the expected role of higher education institutions. The research was based on the philosophical stance that the provision of education and training skills is directly proportional to human resources development which further relates directly to the development of rural communities. This means that education and training are essential elements of human resources development. Finally, approaches are offered that could assist the University of South Africa in responding to the developmental needs of rural communities.

6.3 **THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The research question, namely 'What is the role of the University of South Africa in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province?' as outlined in Chapter 1 provided the guidelines that led the research through to its conclusion. The following sub-problem questions provided the focus of the research:

- What are the main areas of involvement of universities in the development of rural communities?

  The review of the literature, as shown in Chapter 2, as well as the theoretical framework outline in Chapter 3 of the dissertation have shown that universities are both strategically and ideally placed to deal with the educational and training needs pertaining to the development of rural communities. These institutions have both the required knowledge base and the necessary expertise to contribute meaningfully to the development of rural communities. The empirical findings of the research have indicated that the University of South Africa, the focus of the research, was not equitably channelling its resources (see 5.4.2.i, 5.4.2.ii, 5.4.2.v, 5.4.2.x, 5.4.4.v, and 5.4.4.vii) to focus on the identified areas of involvement towards the development of rural communities, in particular the rural communities in Mpumalanga Province.

The fundamental challenge for the University of South Africa is to enhance the focus of its institutes/bureaus to target rural communities so that it should not be found wanting when assessed against national developmental needs.

- Does the University of South Africa have strategic directives committing it to the development of rural communities?

The research showed that it is critical for UNISA to be conscientious in identifying and committing to its strategic imperatives regarding its developmental roles. A university's role as a stakeholder in community development entails that its vision and mission statement(s) should unequivocally articulate its commitment to community development. The research found that the UNISA mission statement clearly expresses its intended involvement in community development. UNISA also has an articulated institutional policy on community participation. These general statements needed to be cascaded to the strategic and operational directives of the institutes/bureaus to enforce their commitment to community development. However, the research could not affirm such cascaded commitment at the level of the institutes/bureaus surveyed in this research.

It is therefore imperative that the institutes/bureaus of UNISA develop their individual strategic missions and objectives to reflect their role as the developmental arm of the university.

- Is the University of South Africa responding positively to the legislative directives of the Republic of South Africa towards the development of rural communities?

The research showed that the South African government has developed a number of policy directives aimed at creating a platform for higher education institutions to assume their involvement in the development of communities, especially the previously disadvantaged ones. Chapter 2 of the dissertation presented, among others, some of the official national policies on the role of universities towards community development. These included the policy on the

restructuring and transformation of higher education, the policy on the creation of comprehensive universities, the policy on the mergers of the higher education institutions in South Africa; the policy on the funding of higher education; the Act on the establishment of the Council on Higher Education; and the employment strategy framework document on the creation of jobs and fighting poverty. These and other government policies outline the role that stakeholders should play to contribute to the development of the needy communities. The University of South Africa, being a public-funded higher education institution, has a significant role to respond to the legislated directives for higher education in South Africa.

6.4   THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Although the research design was quantitative in nature, it included qualitative components since the data collection tool, a questionnaire, contained a number of open-ended questions which gave respondents an opportunity to provide responses to the qualitative questions. The inclusion of the open-ended items in the questionnaire provided for the validation of the information gathered through the quantitative items, thus ensuring the reliability of the collected data. The design of the research had a unilateral sample, namely the managers of UNISA institutes/bureaus. The research would have been enhanced even more had the design included subjects from the rural communities.

The design required the researcher to distribute the questionnaire to the managers of the institutes/bureaus at UNISA. The questionnaire was distributed to the managers electronically via the electronic mailing system. This distribution method was effective and allowed for easy follow-up with the respondents who at first had not returned the completed questionnaires. Thus the research enjoyed a 100% return rate of the completed questionnaires.

For purposes of enhancing the quality of the research, a limited comparative delineation of the role of some institutes/bureaus of the University of Pretoria in the development of rural communities was carried out. The research found that UNISA and the University of Pretoria had a relatively similar aim in

establishing institutes/bureaus. The strategic imperatives and focus of institutes/bureaus at these two universities were found to be comparable. The inclusion of an overview of the institutes/bureaus on the University of Pretoria confirmed that the analysis of the UNISA strategic missions and objectives was objectively carried out. This exercise enriched the research in that it presented the research with a relative outlook at the activities of institutes/bureaus of another higher education institution in the development of rural communities.

6.5   REALISATION OF THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the research was to determine the role of UNISA, and more particularly selected institutes and bureaus of the institution, in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. The research was designed to determine whether the institutes/bureaus of UNISA engaged themselves in the provision of appropriate skills and knowledge to meet the developmental needs of rural communities in the province. To this end the following research objectives were pursued. The success with which that was done is also summarised below:

- To identify the services rendered by the institutes/bureaus of UNISA in rural communities: The responses of the respondents presented appropriate and adequate information that accorded the research with findings which could lead to substantial conclusions emanating from the research.

- To establish the views and perceptions of UNISA through its institutes/bureaus on the development of rural communities: To achieve this objective, the research had six specific items that sourced information from the respondents regarding their outlook on the development of rural communities.

- To determine the strategic position and directives of UNISA towards community development: The questionnaire contained a section that consisted of institutional policy landscape items. These items were

included to determine whether UNISA and its institutes/bureaus had policy statements and targets aimed at directing its focus towards, among others, the area of community development. The questionnaire was found to be conceptually legitimate during the pilot stage of the research (see Chapter 4). It was pre-tested on a few people who had some background knowledge on UNISA institutes/bureaus and other relevant people from rural communities. The responses and the feedback received demonstrated that the respondents had understood and interpreted all the items correctly. On that scale, this feedback can be interpreted as an indication of validity.

- To provide guidelines on the contribution that UNISA, through its institutes/bureaus, could can make towards the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province: Information concerning the contributory role of UNISA towards rural community development was gathered through the responses of the managers of UNISA institutes/bureaus. The collected data was adequate to provide an analysis of the rural development status of the institutes/bureaus of UNISA.

6.6. CONCLUSIONS

Three overarching findings emerged from this research project. Firstly, evaluations of the corporate mission, policies and strategies of an institution should also be measured against the execution of such missions, policies and strategies. Simply put, a corporate commitment does not necessarily translate directly into execution and implementation at other and lower functional levels of the organisation. Secondly, the empirical findings showed that respondents agreed that the University of South Africa had a role to play, through its institutes/bureaus, in the development of communities, particularly the rural communities. Thirdly, the empirical data showed that institutes/bureaus were not necessarily successful in giving full effect to that role. Overall, it could then be concluded that UNISA is in a better position to also focus its role in the development of rural communities through solving the problems that impact negatively on the improvement of the livelihood of people in these communities.

A number of key conclusions could be drawn from the findings of the research.

The nature of the research required that the conclusions be presented in a clustered approach to advance a thematic understanding of the conclusions. Four distinct clusters were subsequently identified for this purpose, namely a strategic imperative collection, a collection of the challenges of rural communities, a collection of training programmes, and the institutional commitment collection of conclusions. The conclusions are presented per cluster in the section below.

6.6.1 The strategic imperative conclusions

6.6.1.1 UNISA does not have clear targets, staff commitment statement, or special incentives to commit and encourage staff to participate in rural development programmes/projects (see 5.4.2.xiii, 5.4.4.iv and 5.4.4.v).

6.6.1.2 The non-existence of individual mission statements of the institutes/bureaus in most cases, or the lack of a declaration in the mission statements of the few institutes/bureaus who had mission statements committing them towards involvement in the development of rural communities (see 5.4.4.i) contributed to the poor participation/involvement of institutes/bureaus in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province.

6.6.1.3 The approach to rural development of the University of South Africa does not appear to be sufficiently coordinated. Due to the lack of such coordinated approaches in the existing institutes/bureaus, these institutes/bureaus only become involved with development activities in rural communities as and when they deem it necessary.

6.6.2 Rural communities' challenges conclusions

6.6.2.1 The University of South Africa is very much aware of the development challenges faced by people in rural communities (see 5.4.4.xii) and is also aware of what should be done to assist in addressing those challenges (see 5.4.4.xiii).

6.6.2.2 Some of the institutes/bureaus of UNISA were found to be committed to overcoming the language barrier and creating an acceptable environment to assist people in rural communities to participate and thus to benefit from training programmes/projects offered by those institutes/bureaus (see 5.4.2.viii).

6.6.3 Training programmes conclusions

6.6.3.1 The respondents understood and valued the importance and role of providing basic skills training programmes to people in rural communities in order to improve their livelihood (see 5.4.3.i and 5.4.3.iii).

6.6.3.2 Most people from the rural communities could not benefit from the training programmes/projects offered by UNISA through its institutes/bureaus since most of the programmes/projects required participants to have some formal education (see 5.4.2.vi and 5.4.2.viii). This usually constitutes a challenge for people in rural communities. The respondents confirmed that the high illiteracy levels in rural communities could inhibit access to rural development opportunities (see 5.4.3.ii and 5.4.4.xii).

6.6.3.3 Training conducted by the institutes/bureaus of UNISA was not based on systematically identified training needs of the rural communities in the province. This practice may have affected the few training programmes offered in the rural communities and the low participation figures of the target people in the communities as shown by the findings of the research (see 5.4.vii and 5.4.xi).

6.6.4 Institutional commitment conclusions

6.6.4.1 The institutes/bureaus of UNISA have been involved in the development of human resources mostly in Gauteng Province as compared to the other provinces of South Africa. This implies that they have localised their services to areas closer to the main campus of UNISA which is in Pretoria, Gauteng Province (see 5.4.2.i).

6.6.4.2 The findings of the research furthermore led to the conclusion that the institutes/bureaus of UNISA have not been involved to a satisfactory extent in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province (see 5.4.2.i, 5.4.2.v, 5.4.2.vii, 5.4.2.xi, 5.4.3.iv and 5.4.3.xii).

6.6.4.3 The University of South Africa, through its institutes/bureaus, is neither committed nor responding to its expected social responsibility role since the participants were required to pay for most of the programmes offered by the institutes/bureaus (see 5.4.2.x and 5.4.4.viii).

6.6.4.4 The University of South Africa understood the role of community engagement, collaborative partnerships and service learning practices towards the development of rural communities (see 5.4.3.v, 5.4.3.vi and 5.4.4.iii), but did not operationalise these practices in a way that would benefit people from the disadvantaged communities, such as rural communities (see 5.4.4.vi and 5.4.4.ix).

6.6.4.5 The University of South Africa has the necessary resources, facilities and expertise to embark on community development programmes/projects that could address the development challenges faced by people in rural communities (see 5.4.4.xiv).

6.6.4.6 The institutes/bureaus of UNISA did not assist people in rural communities to access information on community development projects (see 5.4.4.x).

6.7   AN OVERARCHING CONCLUSION

The theoretical framework in Chapter 3 and the findings of the research as reported in Chapter 5 have shown that the University of South Africa has a clear institutional mission statement that commits the university to community development. It was also shown that the institutes/bureaus are the mechanisms through which the university offers non-formal, non-credit bearing community development programmes/projects which are critical to the development of human resources in rural communities. There is a need for a needs assessment exercise to be conducted by UNISA (see

recommendation 6.8.1.3). The needs assessment would then inform UNISA to be more responsive to the identified needs of people in rural communities.

The research has, in other words, shown that while UNISA indeed had policies in place in support of rural communities, the empirical reality was less clear and that the university still has a way to go to realise its ideals in this regard.

There is a need for UNISA to provide guidelines, targets and specific policy directives to the institutes/bureaus to focus more of their activities on the needs of rural communities. The institutes/bureaus of UNISA have the autonomy to develop customised programmes to address the identified development needs of rural communities. The institutes/bureaus should therefore capitalise on this autonomy and develop relevant training programmes that would benefit rural communities. This exercise would ensure that the institutes/bureaus utilise their programme development expertise and skills to develop the rural communities which are in dire need of support. The training programmes to be developed by the institutes/bureaus should be informed by the literature directives on the necessary focus areas for rural development as also spelt out in the theoretical framework of this research. It should not be programmes developed just for the sake of developing programmes but should be programmes that seek to address the critical developmental needs of rural communities.

The research also found that there is a critical role that can be played by the establishment of strategic partnerships and collaborative ventures with other stakeholders in the development of rural communities. The stakeholders would include, among others, the provincial and local governments, developmental agencies, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, community leadership structures and other interested parties. These collaborative and partnership initiatives should be properly managed to ensure that they are sustainable and productive for the benefit of rural communities and not for mere statistical window dressing. Those collaborations should be nurtured and well managed for the benefit of society.

The research was directed mainly by the review of literature which led to the formulation of the theoretical framework of the research (see Chapter 3). The

theoretical framework has been central to the assessment and measurement of the involvement of UNISA in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. The theoretical framework presented the background of what a university should do to assist in the development of rural communities. The findings of this research as presented earlier in the chapter have shown that the findings confirmed the directives of the literature as the basis on which the research was carried out and that led to the justification of the findings and conclusions of the research. These findings and conclusions further led to the presentation of the recommendations of the research as outlined in the next sections.

6.8   KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

There are a number of reasons why research reports often make recommendations, such as those regarding future policy options, implementation of the findings, managerial action rather than research action, and suggestions for further study (see for example, Cooper & Schindler, 2001; Mouton, 2001). The recommendations generated by this research are presented primarily for the first three reasons. The University of South Africa, in particular, stands to benefit from the recommendations of this research as they would assist it in the further development of its policies, strategies and instruments to accommodate and enhance its role in the development of human resources in rural communities. The recommendations should also inform the management of the university to consider support for the institutes/bureaus to enhance their functioning in dealing with rural development issues.

The recommendations presented in this section emanated from the literature review, the theoretical framework, the findings and the conclusions of the research. The recommendations are presented in the order in which they were conceived, from the first-order recommendations, that is, those recommendations which were considered central to the research, to the second-order recommendations, those that were found to be peripheral to the research. The purpose of categorising the recommendations in this way was to systematise the presentation of the recommendations, and thus to differentiate between the fundamental and tangential recommendations. The order also provided for the targeted implementation unit(s) for each

recommendation. Figure 6.1 shows the diagrammatical representation of the order of the recommendations:
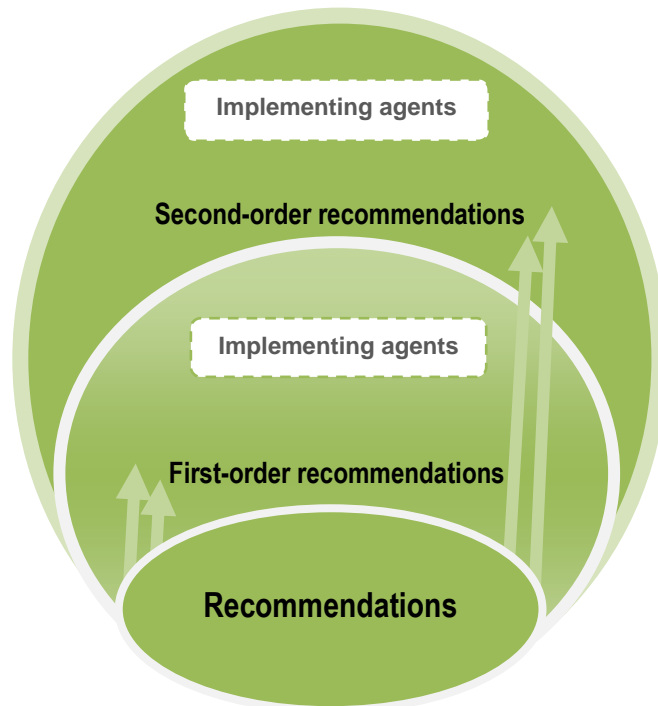
Figure 6.1: Schematic representation of the order of recommendations

The recommendations of the research follow in the next section. They are presented in line with directives of the order described above. In each case the target implementing agents are also indicated after the recommendation.

6.8.1   First-order recommendations

6.8.1.1 Incorporation of rural development guidelines into the individual mission statements of the UNISA institutes/bureaus

It is recommended that the institutes/bureaus of UNISA consider the incorporation of clear guidelines into their mission statements, thus committing them to being involved in the development of rural communities. It is believed that such strategic statements of commitment would ensure that the institutes/bureaus respond to the dire need of this disadvantaged sector of society (see 6.6.1.2). This recommendation targeted the UNISA Colleges and the institutes/bureaus.

6.8.1.2 Targets for institutes/bureaus on rural development programmes

The research found that UNISA does not have any targets for the institutes/bureaus to meet on rural development programmes (see 6.6.1.1). It is, therefore, recommended that the colleges at UNISA, under which institutes/bureaus are located, should determine targets for their institutes/bureaus on the number of programmes/projects, beneficiaries of the services, and the number of regions/districts serviced in the provinces. This initiative would ensure that the institutes/bureaus become more effective in their attempt to contribute towards the development of people in the rural communities. The following implementing agents were targeted by this recommendation: UNISA colleges, academic departments and institutes/bureaus.

6.8.1.3 Needs assessment survey in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province

It is recommended that UNISA conduct a needs assessment survey in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province in collaboration with other interested parties. These needs should be compiled into a comprehensive database of training needs to inform the institutes/bureaus and other development agents who would be interested, as part of their intended endeavour, to provide training programmes/projects to the rural communities (see 6.6.3.3). The UNISA institutes/bureaus were the main target of this recommendation.

6.8.1.4 Training programmes for rural development

It is recommended that the training to be provided to the rural communities should target the following areas:

- Entrepreneurship development
- Life skills training
- Numeracy skills
- Reading and writing skills
- Rural tourism

- Skills training (both technical and soft skills)
- Small business management
- Small business finance
- Subsistence agricultural projects for food security

These focus areas have been identified as some of the main areas that have the potential to unlock the development of rural communities (see 2.2.9, 2.2.10, 2.2.11, 3.2, 6.6.2.1, and 6.6.3.1).

It is further recommended that these training programmes should not require that potential participants from rural communities have educational achievements in order to participate, since such a requirement would impede their access to those developmental programmes. The institutes/bureaus also need to have the training programmes translated into the language of the target community. The translation services of the Department of African Languages at the university could be of assistance for this exercise. They could also make a valuable contribution to the department if considered as a research project(s). These considerations were motivated by the high illiteracy rate in rural communities. The target of this recommendation was the UNISA colleges, institutes/bureaus and the Department of African Languages.

6.8.1.5 Broadening the services of institutes/bureaus to rural communities

It was reported in the research that most of the institutes/bureaus were involved mainly in Gauteng Province (see 6.6.4.1). It is recommended that the institutes/bureaus expand their services to most of the provinces of South Africa to benefit many people, especially to the most rural provinces of the country, such as Mpumalanga Province. The institutes/bureaus of UNISA were the primary target of this recommendation.

6.8.2   **Second-order recommendations**

6.8.2.1 Development of strategic partnerships and collaborative initiatives

Partnerships and collaborations are critical to the development of communities; particularly those communities that need the support and assistance of stakeholders and concerned parties (see 6.6.4.4). It is recommended that UNISA establish partnerships and collaborations with stakeholders in rural development initiatives such as other institutions of higher education, local Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, local government, and local community leadership structures (traditional leadership in most cases).

These partnerships and collaborative initiatives should also incorporate the establishment of an Information Resource Hub (IRH) in the three regions of the province. It is recommended that UNISA initiate and coordinate the establishment of such a hub. The support and management of the hub should be a collaborative venture of the partners identified above. The purpose of such a hub would be to provide the necessary information for rural developmental programmes and projects. It is further recommended that the hub be housed and operated in the municipal library of the designated area. This would ensure its availability to the people who need the resources and information on rural development (see 3.2.3, 6.6.3.2 and 6.6.4.6). This recommendation targeted the UNISA senior management, UNISA colleges, UNISA institutes/bureaus, the Mpumalanga district and local municipalities and the traditional leadership structures in the province.

6.8.2.2 Augmentation of the social responsibility mandate of UNISA

It is recommended that UNISA should improve and intensify its social responsibility commitment to communities (see 6.6.4.3). The social responsibility should include enhancing the service learning practice at UNISA. Many authors and scholars of community development have hailed service learning as one of the main ways in which universities can serve needy communities (see 3.2.5). UNISA can further enhance its social

responsibility commitment by encouraging its students to target rural communities when carrying out their service learning practice.

The nature of rural communities presents a number of challenges for the university academics who would otherwise be willing to carry out rural development projects in those areas in furthering the institutional social responsibility commitment. It is, therefore, recommended that UNISA should establish a special fund for rural development. It is suggested that the funding be raised from development funding agencies, the private sector, UNISA alumni and other UNISA social partners. This fund would take the form of an empowerment fund to benefit UNISA academics and other staff members who embark on rural development projects. The fund would provide for incentives such as performance awards, grants for relevant research, attendance to conferences and seminars and other kinds of encouragement and motivation (see 6.6.1.1). This recommendation targeted the senior management, colleges and institutes/bureaus of UNISA.

6.8.2.3 Involvement of UNISA regional centres in rural development initiatives

Although the research did not focus primarily on the role of the UNISA regional centres in rural development, it is recommended that the regional centres of UNISA should be mandated, empowered and resourced to conduct and present rural developmental programmes/projects to the rural communities in their regions. The regional centres of the university are well placed to represent the university to the communities they serve since they possibly know these communities relatively well. The regional centres have the required facilities in the form of training venues, library facilities and learning delivery technologies which could be utilised for the presentation of programmes/projects to people from the rural communities (see 6.6.4.5). This recommendation targeted the learner support portfolio management and the management of the UNISA regional centres.

6.8.2.4 Establishment of an institutional Rural Development Forum (RDF)

The research has shown that the institutes/bureaus at UNISA do not have coordinated rural development approaches or strategies. It is therefore

recommended that a rural development forum (RDF) be established at UNISA. Such a forum should be an advisory organ on rural development matters to the university. It should not be seen as a training institute or bureau. It would also advise the management of the university on the status of rural development processes at UNISA. The RDF would typically consist of representatives from managers of UNISA institutes/bureaus and other stakeholders who have an interest in rural development, such as development agents, local government and traditional leadership structures. This recommendation would assist in improving the currently poor coordination of rural development initiatives at UNISA (see 6.6.1.1, 6.6.1.2, 6.6.1.3, 6.6.3.2, 6.6.4.2, and 6.6.4.3). The targeted agents for the implementation of this recommendation were the senior management of UNISA, the UNISA colleges, institutes/bureaus, and other stakeholders such as local government and rural leadership structures.

6.8.2.5 Incorporation of a rural development directive clause in the funding of higher education by government

South African higher education institutions are funded by government through a funding formula. The funding formula is based on the enrolled, active students, and the successful graduates. Non-formal short programmes that are more applicable to the development of human resources in rural communities are neither funded nor subsidised by government. Although an in-depth analysis of the funding formula and funding process of universities by government was not the focus of this research, it is recommended that government, through the National Department of Education, should incorporate a rural development clause in its funding directives for higher education institutions. This would increase the number of rural development projects, thus benefiting more people from rural communities (see 6.6.1.2, 6.6.3.2 and 6.6.4.2). This recommendation targeted the Department of Higher Education and Training, councils of universities and the senior management of universities.

6.8.2.6 Implications and utilisation of the findings of this research

Justice would not have been done to the University of South Africa, the target of the research, if an opportunity were not created for the findings

and recommendations of the research to be shared with the university community. It is recommended that a session should be organised for the findings of the research to be presented to UNISA, and particularly to the institutes/bureaus and any other interested parties. Such an exercise would justify the purpose of formulating the recommendations as stated in 6.8 above. As shown in this recommendation, the researcher is expected to initiate the recommended information-sharing session to share the findings with the interested parties.

6.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The following limitations emerged during the course of the research:

- The research did not focus on the whole university and was thus limited to the institutes/bureaus of UNISA as the relevant centres through which the university offers its non-formal training programmes and short courses that are more applicable to rural development projects.

- The post-merger restructuring process that took place at UNISA impacted on the research since some managers of institutes/bureaus were affected by the placement process and could no longer be available and in a position to complete the questionnaire.

- Some institutes/bureaus were later either closed down or merged with others as a result of the institutional restructuring that took place at UNISA after the merger of the former UNISA and the former Technikon SA and the subsequent incorporation of the distance education campus (VUDEC) of VISTA University.

- The distribution of the questionnaires was only done through the use of the electronic mail (e-mail) system because it was easier for the researcher to contact the managers of the institutes/bureaus through the e-mail facility.

- The research did not include the needs assessment of the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province as part of the research since that was considered a fully fledged research project on its own, hence the recommendation that a needs assessment survey be conducted in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province (see 1.8, 6.8.1.3).

- At the outset of designing the research it was decided to focus on one institution, namely, UNISA, and not do a comparative study across South African institutions. The motivation for this decision was the assumption that the nature and mission, policies, strategies and organisational structures of universities differed widely and that all those differences would have to be accounted for if the research was to come to conclusions that would be cross-institutionally valid. This motivation also led to deliberately steering away from an internationally comparative study.

6.10 CONCLUSION

The research has shown that the UNISA institutes/bureaus have been used by the colleges to manage and run all the non-formal, informal and short course programmes which were found to be perceived as important and necessary in the development of rural communities.

The research has succeeded in showing the level and nature of involvement of UNISA, through its institutes/bureaus, in the development of people in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province. While determining the involvement of the institution towards the development of the human resources in the rural communities of the province, the research was able to provide a theoretical framework setting which constituted the background for the research. This comprehensive narrative milieu has enriched the research in providing valuable information for higher education institutions and any other developmental agents that would be interested in rural development initiatives in general.

It was evident throughout the research that people in rural communities require appropriate skills and related human resources support which may be made possible by, among others, the provision of education and training programmes. The research further showed that there is a need for UNISA to enhance and increase its involvement and participation in the rural communities instead of localising its services mainly to people in the rural communities of Gauteng Province. The research made it quite clear that UNISA, like any other university, has the expertise, the knowledge and

resources to support and assist with developmental initiatives aimed at the disadvantaged communities in the country, particularly the rural ones. The existence of UNISA's regional resources further affirmed the strategic relevance and potential of this university with regard to rural development.

The University of South Africa should be committed to nurturing and providing the necessary support and guidance to ensure that its departments and/or institutes/bureaus are viable, empowered and responsive to rural community development needs.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE 1: QUESTIONNAIRE USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MANAGERS OF INSTITUTES/CENTRES AT UNISA

Questionnaire to enquire on the role of UNISA on the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province

Confidential: For study purposes only.

Your Institute/Centre has been identified as one of the Institutes/Centres that should be requested to complete this questionnaire as part of the research sample. The research is towards a PhD qualification at Stellenbosch University. UNISA is funding my studies since I am a UNISA staff member. The findings of the research will, among others, help UNISA in determining or cementing its role in the development of rural communities. All the Institutes/Centres in UNISA will be provided with feedback on the findings of this research.

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please take a few minutes of your valuable time to assist me in this research project by completing this questionnaire. It should take at the most 30 minutes to complete. **Kindly return the completed questionnaire on or before Friday, 13th June 2008** either by **email or fax** to the following details:

Mr. Paul M. Maminza
Email: pmaminza@unisa.ac.za
Fax: 086 642 8816
Tel: (015) 290 3446
Mobile: 082 883 7217

1.0 Background information

1.1 Name of your Institute/Centre:

_____

1.2 For how many years has your Institute/Centre been in existence?
Number of years: _____

1.3 Kindly provide the number of full time lecturing/training/academic staff in your Institute/Centre:
Number of staff: _____

1.4 Of which College of UNISA does your Institute/Centre form part?

_____

2.0 Services rendered by the Institutes/Centres in rural areas
Kindly provide answers to the following questions by ticking **(√)** in or completing the provided space:

2.1 Which of the nine provinces of South Africa has your Institute/Centre been mostly involved in regarding the development of human resources in rural communities? Choose one.

Eastern Cape	
Free State	
Gauteng	
KwaZulu-Natal	
Limpopo	
Mpumalanga	
Northern Cape	
North West	
Western Cape	
None	

2.2 In which of the following areas were you involved in i.e. in the province identified above (you may tick more than one).

Urban areas (Metropolitan areas/towns & cities)	
Semi urban areas (Townships)	
Rural areas (Tribal areas and country side)	
Farm areas (Areas owned by farmers and inhabited by farm-workers)	
None	

2.3 Has your Institute/Centre been involved in the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province?

Yes	
No	

If yes, in what way was the involvement? _____
_____
_____
_____

If no, skip item 2.4 below.

2.4 In which of the following training programmes/projects was your Institute/Centre involved with in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province?

Sustainable economic development training	
Information sharing sessions/workshops	
Community outreach and partnership workshops	
Service learning and community work	
Literacy training	
Local economic development training	
Entrepreneurship development training	
Rural tourism training	
Subsistence agricultural development training	
Basic environmental management training	
Health education training	
None	

2.5 Approximately what percentage of your Institute/Centre's gross budget for the calendar year 2006 was spent on work in Mpumalanga Province?

75%+	
69-50%	
49-25%	
Less than 25%	

2.6 What was the minimum education level required for people to participate in the training programmes/projects referred to in 2.3 above? In the case where different training programmes required different levels, tick the highest level. Choose one.

No education level needed	
Being able to read and write	
Grade 7 (Standard 5)	
Grade 10 (Standard 8)	
Grade 12 (Standard 10)	
Above Grade 12	

2.7 How many training programmes/projects focusing on the development of rural communities has your Institute/Centre carried out in Mpumalanga Province? _____

2.8 What language medium is mostly used during the presentation of training programmes/projects conducted by your Institute/Centre? Choose one.

English	
Local indigenous language	
English with the use of an interpreter	

2.9 In which region of Mpumalanga has your Institute/Centre been mostly involved? Choose one.

Ehlanzeni Region (Nelspruit area)	
Gert Sibande Region (Badplaas/Ermelo area)	
Nkangala Region (Middelburg/KwaNdebele area)	
None	

2.10 Who has funded the project(s) that your Institute/Centre carried out in Mpumalanga Province?

Self (the participants themselves)	
External Funder (Sponsor)	
The Institute/Centre	
None	

2.11 On average, how many people received training on community development projects/programmes run by your Institute/Centre in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province? Kindly provide the number of people. _____

2.12 Would you say that your Institute/Centre has done enough in the development of rural communities in Mpumalanga Province?

Yes	
No	

Kindly motivate your response: _____
_____
_____
_____

2.13 How much time (as a percentage of the full time equivalent (FTE) member of staff) should your training/academic staff spend on activities that focus on the development of rural communities? _____

3 Views on the development of rural communities.

Next we want to enquire about your views on different aspects of the development of rural communities. Not all professionals and Institutes/Centres involved in the development of rural communities necessarily agree on the issues raised in the next set of items. There are no perfectly right or wrong views on these issues. We have therefore provided different options from which you can choose.

In answering this section, kindly read each statement and then decide whether you:
- Strongly agree with it (4), or
- Agree with it (3), or.
- Disagree with it (2), or
- Strongly disagree with it (1),
  by ticking **(√)** in the appropriate block of your choice.

3.1 The level of unemployment in rural areas can be reduced by, among others, the provision of basic skills training.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

3.2 The low level of literacy of people in rural communities is a barrier to the provision of training projects/programmes in the rural communities.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

3.3 The provision of training programmes focusing on local economic development programmes could assist in enhancing a better life for people in rural communities.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

3.4 Your Institute/Centre has made a contribution towards the development of rural communities in Mpumalanga Province.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

3.5 Community outreach and partnerships can benefit the rural communities by accessing the expertise and knowledge which universities possess.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

3.6 Universities can, through service learning, contribute towards the development of rural communities.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

4.0 Institutional policy landscape

Kindly provide answers to the following questions:

4.1 Does the mission statement of your Institute/Centre commit the Institute/Centre towards the development of rural communities?

Very strongly	
Strongly	
Hardly	
Not at all	

4.2 In your view, is your Institute/Centre able to embark on contributing to the development of rural communities?

Yes	
No	

4.3 Has your Institute/Centre entered into partnerships/agreements with any other organisation/institution towards the development of rural communities?

Other university(ies)	
Funding agency(ies)	
Non-governmental organisation(s)	
International organisation(s)	
Government department(s)	
None	

4.4 Does your Institute/Centre have set targets on involvement in the development of rural communities?

Yes	
No	

If so, what are the targets?

_____
_____
_____
_____

4.5 Does your Institute/Centre rate the involvement of staff in rural training programmes/projects positively when evaluating staff performance?

Yes, very important	
Yes, important	
Sometimes	
No, not at all	

4.6 Does your Institute/Centre have students that, as part of their training, are required to be involved in community service learning in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province?

Yes	
No	

If yes, state the focus areas of the community service learning:

_____
_____
_____
_____

4.7 Have any of the staff members in your Institute/Centre since January 2003 conducted **research** that focuses on the development of rural communities?

Yes	
No	

If yes, kindly provide the topics of the research projects which were conducted since January 2003 (irrespective of the current stage of the research projects): _____

_____
_____
_____

4.8 Has your Institute/Centre since January 2003 been involved in training programmes/projects on the development of rural communities, e.g. within the context of social responsibility, which had no direct financial benefit for the Institute/Centre?

Yes	
No	

If yes, what was the benefit for the Institute/Centre's involvement in such training programmes/projects?

_____
_____
_____
_____

4.9 Has your Institute/Centre since January 2003 been involved in community outreach programmes in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province (examples: basic health awareness, basic financial management, environmental management?

Yes	
No	

If so, kindly give examples:

_____
_____
_____
_____

4.10 Would you say that your Institute/Centre assists rural communities to access information on community development issues and programmes, such as fund-raising?

Yes, to a great extent	
Yes, but not as much as would like	
Now and then	
No, not at all	

4.11 Do you think that UNISA as an institution is committed to the development of rural communities in South Africa?

Very much	
Much	
Sometimes	
Little	
Not at all	

Kindly provide a reason(s) for your answer: _____

_____
_____
_____

4.12 What, in your view, is the most important development problem in rural communities of South Africa and that needs urgent attention?

_____

4.13 What do you think should your Institute/Centre do in responding to the most important development problem of the rural communities of South Africa you identified in 4.12 above?

_____
_____
_____
_____

4.14   What would you rate as the three most important strengths of UNISA in rendering assistance towards the development of rural communities?

_____
_____
_____
_____

4.15   What would you rate as the three most important factors inhibiting UNISA in rendering assistance towards the development of rural communities?

_____
_____
_____
_____

4.16   Which other Institutes/Centres at UNISA are involved in contributing towards the development of rural communities?

_____
_____
_____
_____

4.17   You are most welcome in the space below to indicate any other issues on this topic you may wish to raise:

_____
_____
_____
_____

4.18   I would appreciate it greatly if you would be kind enough to indicate the 2006 gross budget and total FTE staff of your Institute/Centre below:
        Budget: R _____   FTE staff: _____

May I take this opportunity to gratefully thank you for your time and effort in completing this questionnaire.

Signed
_____
Mr. Paul M Maminza

Email   :   pmaminza@unisa.ac.za
Telephone   :   015-290 3446
Mobile   :   082 883 7217
Fax   :   086 642 8816

ANNEXURE 2: MAP OF MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

ANNEXURE 3: LIST OF PEOPLE ON WHOM THE QUESTIONNAIRE WAS PILOTED

Names	Position	Department
1. Mr. Mathews Kokong	Former Manager: Institute for Applied Communication	College for Human Sciences: UNISA
2. Dr. NE Tshikwatamba	Former Trainer and Lecturer	Institute for Public Management and Development: Former Technikon SA
3. Ms. P. Shezi	Head: Facilitation of Learning	KwaZulu-Natal Region: UNISA
4. Mr. S. Nhlapho	Head: Facilitation of Learning	Midlands Region: UNISA

ANNEXURE 4: LETTER OF AUTHORISATION TO DISTRIBUTE QUESTIONNAIRES TO MANAGERS OF INSTITUTES/BUREAUS AT UNISA

From:	Narend Baijnath
To:	Paul Maminza
Date:	4/13/04 11:24AM
Subject:	Re: Request for questionnaire distribution

Dear Paul,

I regret the delay in responding. I was on leave for a week followed by business in Cape Town and Umtata, so I only received your request today.

I am very interested in your research and would like to look at your findings.

You are hereby also given approval to proceed with your inquiry via the questionnaire to the Institutes.

Best wishes,

Prof Narend Baijnath
Vice Principal: Research and Planning
University of South Africa [UNISA]

Pretoria Office: OR Tambo Building 11-15
Tel: 012 429 4591

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Tel: 011-471 2553
Fax: 011-471 2977

Cel: 0836793107

ANNEXURE 5: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM THE RESEARCH PROMOTER

UNIVERSITEIT VAN STELLENBOSCH
UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

To whom it may concern

This serves as a letter of introduction for

Paul M. Maminza (student number 13943448)

Who is registered for his PhD at the University of Stellenbosch.

The title of his research is "The role of the University of South Africa (former Technikon Southern Africa) towards the development of human resources in the rural communities of Mpumalanga Province".

He is currently starting with the data generation and collection for his research. His fieldwork would include the use of questionnaires and interviews. It would be appreciated that, when mr. Maminza approaches you to participate in the research either by completing a questionnaire or participation in an interview, you would respond favorably and give him your kind and appreciated support and co-operation.

Your participation in his research project, would not only benefit your region, but also the whole country.

Thank you for your response, support and co-operation.

Prof C.A. Kapp
Director : Centre for Higher & Adult Education

28 June 2004

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