

UTILIZATION OF COMMUNITY WORK TO EMPOWER POOR FAMILIES

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work, and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

ABSTRACT

As poverty is becoming a growing concern in South Africa, poor families should not be seen as service recipients but more concern should be directed to their empowerment. Community work is an essential method to utilize for the empowerment of poor families since it involves working with people from individual up to community level. The Department of Social Development does not have guidelines based on the utilization of community work; as a result this method is not utilized to its full potential.

The purpose of the study was to formulate guidelines on the utilization of community work on the family level. In order to achieve this aim, the objectives of this study, which mainly focused on describing the socio-economic circumstances of the poor families and the utilization of community work, were explored.

An exploratory study was utilized in order to achieve the stated goal and objectives. The population for the study consisted of practicing social workers in the Department of Social Development. Purposive sample was used. The research methodology was a quantitative design with a data collection instrument being in the form of a questionnaire. To be able to gain insight about the utilization of community work, the questionnaire consisted of both closed and open-ended questions.

Literature review enabled the researcher to compile a questionnaire. The empirical study focused on the knowledge and skills of social workers in utilizing community work. In addition, data was obtained on the community work process as a main procedure to follow when implementing community work. Despite the respondents' theoretical knowledge of community work, it was concluded that community work is utilized at a minimal level. The most utilized social work method by the respondents is casework. The reason for the lack of community work practice is based on the fact that the Department of Social Development does not have guidelines with regards to community work.

It was recommended that the Department of Social Development should formulate a new regulation that will oblige the social workers to practice community work. In-service training should be held quarterly. Supervision should be offered regularly. Relevant qualification and extensive social work experience should be considered as a minimum requirement for managerial positions.

OPSOMMING

Alhoewel armoede 'n al groter probleem in Suid-Afrika raak, behoort arm gesinne in 'n toenemende mate nie net slegs as ontvangers van dienste beskou word nie, maar moet ook aandag geskenk word aan hulle bemagtiging. Aangesien gemeenskapswerk betrokke is by die persoon sowel as die persoon in die gemeenskap, kan dit beskou word as die aangewese metode om arm gesinne te bemagtig. Die Departement Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling beskik oor geen riglyne vir die aanwending van gemeenskapswerk nie en gevvolglik word die metode nie ten volle benut nie.

Die studie het ten doel om riglyne vir die implementering van gemeenskapwerk op die vlak van die gesin te formuleer. Derhalwe word die klem op die beskrywing van die sosio-ekonomiese omstandighede van arm gesinne en die gebruik van gemeenskapswerk as metodiek geplaas.

'n Verkennende studie is gebruik om die navorsingsoogmerke te bereik. Respondente vir die studie was praktiserende maatskaplike werkers in diens van die Departement van Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling. 'n Doelbewuste steekproef is benut. Daar is hoofsaaklik op kwantitatiewe navorsing gefokus en inligting is deur middel van vraelyste ingewin. Ten einde insig te ontwikkel in die gebruik van gemeenskapswerk is beide oop en geslote vroege gebruik.

Die literatuurstudie het die navorser in staat gestel om die vraelys saam te stel. Die empiriese studie was gerig op die kennis en vaardighede waарoor gemeenskapswerkers beskik en hoe dit geïmplementeer word. Addisionele empiriese inligting is ook ten opsigte van die proses van gemeenskapswerk verkry. Dit het aan die lig gekom dat ten spyte van voldoende teoretiese kennis van gemeenskapswerk die metode minimaal gebruik word. Gevallewerk word steeds die meeste tydens intervensie aangewend. 'n Gebrek aan riglyne vir die gebruik van gemeenskapswerk, word as die rede waarom gemeenskapswerk nie geïmplementeer word nie, aangevoer.

Dit word aanbeveel dat die Departement Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling regulasies vir die uitvoering van dienste deur middel van die gemeenskapswerk metode moet instel. Hierdie riglyne behoort maatskaplike werkers te inspireer om die voordele van gemeenskapswerk te ondersoek en aan te wend. Indiensopleiding behoort op 'n kwartaallikse basis te geskied. Supervisie moet geredelik beskikbaar wees. Relevante kwalifikasies en uitgebreide praktykervaring as minimum vereistes vir bestuursposte sal oorweeg moet word.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

This study focuses on the utilization of community work with the aim of empowering poor families. Community work is an essential method to serve this purpose since it involves working with people from a one-to-one level up to community level. Looking at the extent of poverty in South Africa, community work seems essential since it puts emphasis on the participation of people from grassroots level (Kamp 1996:231; White Paper for Social Welfare 1997).

Poverty remains a serious problem in South Africa because, according to May (1998:303) and the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), half of South Africa's population can be categorised as poor, with most people living below the poverty line. Poverty in this country is reflected in its income inequality. The poorest 40% of households receives only 11% of the total income, whilst the richest 10% receives 40% of the total income.

Poverty is also related to geographic areas. Wilson, Kanji and Braathen (2001:303) and Goldsmith and Blakeley (1992:45) confirm that most of the poor live in rural areas. With the increasing rate of urbanisation and migration in South Africa, poverty in urban areas is increasingly becoming a concern. Ropers (1992:24) argues that the poor appears to exist everywhere and that no city or town, urban or rural area is immune to poverty.

Causes of poverty are multiple and interdependent (Ropers, 1991:17). Underemployment and unemployment are the primary causes of poverty (Goldsmith & Blakely, 1992:38; World Bank Report, 1997:20; Ropers, 1991:176). These writers argue that many poor people involuntarily work part-time or have short-term jobs; as a result they are called the working poor. May (2000:40) argues that most unemployed poor people are poorly educated. Their lack of education and training makes it difficult for them to get into formal sector employment.

Poverty can have tremendous effects on poor families. McKendrick (1992:16) believes that certain difficulties that poor families face, such as a prolonged lack of resources, can demoralise families. He states that poverty results in families experiencing stress in excess of their abilities to cope or adapt. Most poor families lack self-esteem. According to Ropers (1991:25) poverty narrows and closes life chances. He argues that being poor not only means economic insecurity, but also rapidly deteriorating mental and physical health.

As poverty is becoming a growing concern in this country, poor families should not be seen as service recipients but more concern should be directed to their empowerment. Social workers are expected to be at the forefront in taking on the challenge of poverty and all its manifestations. McKendrick (1992:12) states that social workers are equipped with skills and tools to assist with various and widespread problems of the poor. He also states that social workers are charged with the responsibility of intervening in problems and in situations of need in the person-environment configuration.

Social workers are faced with the duty of empowering poor families in order to enhance their self-reliance. The process of empowerment, according to Leon (1998:18), begins at the time of assessment. Holcombe (1995:16) states that empowerment involves participation both of the poor and the larger society. She argues that through participation, people move from passive acceptance of their situation to a critical understanding, which allows them to structure their own reality.

Empowerment of families requires that social workers recognise the internal and external forces that deeply affect family well-being (Gutierrez, Parsons & Cox, 1998:147). This means that there is a need for a strategy which begins to integrate individual problems with public and policy issues. A community work method provides one such possibility.

Community work puts emphasis on people's participation. Families can be empowered through community work projects and programmes. Sviridoff and Ryan (1997:129) and Gutierrez *et al.* (1998:147) state that, to strengthen families, social workers must tackle

problems affecting communities. The community, therefore, becomes an element in empowering the family.

The persistence of extreme poverty led to the decision to pursue a study, focusing on poor families and social work intervention by means of community work.

1.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to present guidelines to social workers for empowering poor families by means of community work.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

The following objectives have been formulated in order to achieve the aim of the study:

- To describe the characteristics of poor families.
- To explain the different components of poor families.
- To explain the effects of poverty on poor families.
- To describe the community work process incorporated with community work as a strategy for empowerment.
- To investigate how social workers use community work to empower poor families.

1.4 RESEARCH FIELD

The study focused on investigating the knowledge and skills of social workers with regards to the utilization of community work in a family context. The study population consisted of social workers from the Department of Social Development. In order to make the field more accessible to the researcher, the study field was demarcated to the magisterial districts of Botshabelo, Thaba Nchu and Bloemfontein.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An exploratory study was done. It originated from the researcher's interest in the discipline of social work and its role in addressing the problems faced by the majority of South Africans. Herholdt (1997:94) states that two out of five South Africans live in poverty. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:80), one of the purposes of an exploratory study is to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for a better understanding of the research topic. In this case the researcher wanted to understand how the social workers use community work as a strategy to empower poor families.

A non-probability sampling will be used as the method of data gathering. The researcher used the purposive sample of the population of social workers from the Department of Social Services and Population Development in the Free State Province. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:166), purposive sampling is usually selected on the basis that the researcher has knowledge of the study population and that the population can be easily identified. Due to the limited scope of the study and the issue of accessibility, the study sample consisted of 25 social workers.

The study is quantitative in nature. The primary instrument used was a questionnaire. According to Neuman (2000:34), when gathering quantitative data, a researcher asks people questions in a written questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of both closed and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were used to provide a greater uniformity of responses, whereas the open-ended questions were included to provide the researcher with an idea of how much knowledge the respondents have (Babbie & Mouton 2001:223). Data gathered was analysed manually.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There were some limitations to the study. Firstly, the researcher struggled to get the most relevant literature sources for the study. Secondly, it was difficult to get the respondents to participate, due to the busy schedule of some of the social workers. As a result the respondents took a long time to return the questionnaires, even though a deadline was

stated. Some of the social workers took annual leave before returning the questionnaire. This resulted in the researcher having to select another sample, hence the delay to finish the study. Finally, due to the limited scope of the study, the findings of the study cannot be generalized to the Department of Social Development in other provinces.

1.7 CONTENTS

The study is presented in five chapters:

- Chapter One is an introductory chapter. It relates to the problem to be researched and the aims and objectives of the study research methodology
- Chapter Two contains the description of the poor families and their characteristics, theories of poverty, and causes and consequences of being poor.
- Chapter Three focuses on community work as a method of intervention.
- Chapter Four will provide empirical evidence.
- Chapter Five will present findings and general conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES OF POOR FAMILIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

No individual exists in total isolation. Everybody belongs to and is shaped by a family system of one kind or another (Janosik & Green, 1992:1). The family is regarded as a major and primary social system. Each family performs certain functions for its survival. A major family function is one of socialization for competence in a changing, complex society. It provides its members with nurturing and caring services.

Families interact with larger institutions. According to Janosik *et al.* (1992:1), the continuous interaction of the families with larger institutions makes it necessary to include significant internal and external factors that affect family arrangements and operation. Changes in the social order may have tremendous effects on the family. According to Sviridoff and Ryan (1997:128), families experience more stresses and strains as a result of the changing world of work and the overall economy. Because the economic changes may cause social problems like poverty, Alcock (1997:9) argues that poverty exists within a dynamic and changing social order. Poverty is on the increase, with over half of the South African population living in poverty. Millions of South African families continue to face the sting of poverty daily.

This chapter focuses on the stereotypical views about poor families and poverty, the characteristics of the poor, the components of poor families as well as the effects of poverty on poor families. Social workers need to understand what the term "poor families" means, and therefore a description will be given.

2.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE FAMILY AND THE POOR FAMILY

Definitions vary according to the family structure and the functions it performs. McKendrick (1992:8) defines the family as a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption; constituting a single household; interacting and communicating with each other in their respective social roles and creating and maintaining a common culture.

Janosik and Green (1992:13) provide a functional definition of a family as a system whose components engage in a continual interaction according to the rules and norms that evolve over time and make it possible for the family to survive.

Wagle (2002:156) provides definitions of a poor family, using both the absolute and relative approach. His absolute definition agrees with Alcock's (1997:67) definition of a poor family as those who lack resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary in the society to which they belong.

Using the relative approach, Wagle (2002:157) defines the poor family as those who lack a certain amount of income derived from the mean or median income in a given society. The family income is used to determine whether individuals and families fall below the poverty line. Rank (2001:883) states that a household under specific income levels is considered poor.

2.3 THEORIES OF POVERTY

Poverty is a complex phenomenon because of the various factors that are seen as its cause. Ropers (1992:114) and Goldsmith and Blakely (1992:5) provide theories of poverty as pathology and poverty as structure. These theories focus on the behaviour of the poor and public policy. Understanding of these theories will give the social worker a comprehensive idea of how the society perceives poor people. In this section, poverty as pathology and poverty as structure will be distinguished.

2.3.1 Poverty as pathology

The first theory is poverty as pathology. The poor are often criticized by the society as being lazy and enjoying their condition. The society sees poor people as people who do not want to uplift themselves. Ropers (1992:115) refers to this theory as the "blaming the victim" theory. The blaming the victim theory focuses on the individual's behaviour with regards to their poverty. Alcock (1997:36) states that poverty, according to the blaming the victim theory, is seen as the product of the individual's weakness and fecklessness.

Poor people are viewed as suffering from the defects of their own pathological activity. Ropers (1992:118) and Alcock (1997:37) agree on the explanation, which seeks to relate social status with the supposedly inherited characteristics such as lower intelligence.

Goldsmith *et al.* (1992:5) and Ropers (1992:127) provide the conceptualization of ideas referred to as the culture of poverty. They claim that family poverty is persistent because parents and communities passed on wrong values and attitudes to new generations. The culture of poverty is seen as both an adaptation and a reaction of the poor to their marginal position in a class-stratified, highly individuated and capitalistic society. According to the culture of poverty, poor people are happy and comfortable with their situation.

The culture of poverty is evident on three levels: individual, family and community levels. To agree with this view, Alcock (1997:38) provides a category of explanation that focuses on the family or the community as the cause of poverty. He refers to this as a cycle of deprivation in which the inadequate parenting, lower aspirations and disadvantaged environment of families and communities are internalized as part of the values of their children as they grow up. Thus when these children reach adulthood their expectations and abilities are lowered and they more readily expect and accept the poverty and deprivation of their parents and acquaintances. The poverty of the poor is not only blamed on the poor families but on other factors such as public policy.

2.3.2 Poverty as structure

The second theory of poverty is poverty as structure. It focuses the blame of poverty not on the poor but on external factors. Ropers (1992:155) refers to this explanation as the "blaming the system" theory. According to Alcock (1997:39), Goldsmith *et al.* (1992:11) and Ropers (1992:155), poverty is the product of dynamic social forces. These authors argue that the explanation for the persistence of poverty should be based on the failings of antipoverty policies and the agencies and institutions responsible for making them work. In addition Goldsmith *et al.* (1992:10) state that poverty is seen as being built into

the economic and political structure generated by three interrelated forces. They explain these interrelated forces as follows:

- The first force is a set of long-term, intergenerational disconnections from the mainstream society, mainly through lack of employment, which results in physical, social and political isolation.
- The second force arises from educational and social handicaps that prevent the poor from entering the transformed high-tech workforce, where skills and personal presentation are both important.
- The third force is the institutional hostility of the welfare systems, penal institutions and related bureaucracies that make the poor the victims and dependants of public charity rather than participants in generating resources for them or their families.

The structural perspective, according to Herholdt (1997:95), claims that few opportunities exist for the poor to improve themselves. It is also argued that the existing opportunities are structured to advance the more privileged at the expense of the underprivileged.

2.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POOR

It is important for the social worker to understand the characteristics of poor families, as this will help him/her to plan how to approach the client system. Poor families often have similar characteristics. Goldsmith *et al.* (1992:43), Herholdt (1997:90) and May (2000:31) provide the racial dimension, geographical variations, age of the family members, disability within the family and the family type as the characteristics of the poor families.

2.4.1 Racial dimension

The first characteristic of poor families is the racial dimension. Alcock (1997:15) states that race is an important feature of the structure of poverty and inequality. In South Africa, poverty rates differ according to racial groups. Poverty is concentrated among blacks, particularly Africans. Blacks have often been victims of discrimination or disadvantage based on skin colour. According to May (2000:33) and Herholdt (2002:94),

there is a staggering 2,4 million poor black people in this country. Some of them live in families where the poorest 40% of households earn less than six percent of the total income.

2.4.2 Geographical variations

Geographical variations are the second characteristic of poor families. Goldsmith and Blakely (1992:46), Herholdt (1997:92), and May (2000:32) agree that the majority of poor people live in rural areas. In addition, these authors argue that, although only 53% of the South African population is located in the rural areas, the poverty share of these areas is more than 76%.

Although poverty is predominantly a rural problem, urban poverty is becoming a growing concern. As a result Pillay-Lathapersad (2002:38) states that poverty exists in both rural and urban areas, as the vast majority of rural poor migrate to the urban areas. According to Goldsmith and Blakely (1992:24) and Herholdt (1997:93) urban poverty is centered in the nation's largest cities. Although rural and urban poverty have much in common, urban poverty can be more severe as urban poor depend more entirely on an income for their survival.

Pillay-Lathapersad (2002:38) believes that urban poor are not any better off as they dwell in slums or squatter settlements that are dangerous and illegal. In addition, she states that urban poor have to contend with overcrowding, bad sanitation, contaminated water, high levels of crime and pollution.

2.4.3 Age of family members

The age of the family member is another characteristic because the risk and extent of poverty vary with age. Children and the elderly are severely affected by poverty. They have a much greater probability of falling victims to poverty because of their dependence on others for their well-being. Children reared in poverty have poorer physical and mental health. Seccombe (2000:7) confirms that poverty puts the health of children at risk

by increasing the frequency of low birth weight babies and under-nutrition. This in turn increases the likelihood of serious chronic and acute illness.

Mamabolo (2000:29) and Seccombe (2000:8) agree that children from poor families often go without food, resulting in hunger and long-term consequences of malnutrition. As a result of poor nutrition, these children are more prone to infectious diseases, impaired brain functioning and stunted growth. In addition Seccombe (2000:8) states that children living in poor families are not only at high risk of serious medical problems, but often these problems go untreated because of the inability to afford medical costs. Malnourishment may have effects on poor children's school performance.

Families headed by elderly people are also at risk of being poor because of their varying dependence on external support (UNPFA 2000:iii). Changes in social circumstances and economic relations play a major role in the poverty of the elderly. According to Sherlock (2000:2162) a lack of employment opportunities for younger relatives have a greater impact on the elderly. The elderly are often compelled to share their pension income with their children and grandchildren. The high rate of HIV and AIDS infection and deaths has resulted in the elderly acting as caregivers to their infected adult children as well as their orphaned grandchildren (UNPFA 2000:iv).

2.4.4 Families with disabilities

Disability within the family is another characteristic of poor families. People with disabilities are among the poorest of all the population groups. Poverty is disability's close companion (Alcock 1997:181). Often disabled people may experience difficulties or problems in providing for themselves or participating in social activity. Batavia and Beaulaurier (2001:139) and Alcock (1997:181) argue that problems arising from disability vary widely because of the nature and extent of disability itself. People with disabilities often bear financial burdens, depending on their special needs associated with their impairments and functional limitations.

People with disabilities tend to be more dependent on costly human assistance and assistive technology; hence they are subject to a high cost of living (Batavia & Beaulaurier 2001:152). The most expensive component of human assistance for these individuals is services specifically designed to address their disabilities, such as specialized medical services and personal assistance. It is also argued that it is often difficult for disabled people to afford the extra costs associated with living with disability, because most of these people rely on state benefits.

Disabled people are often victims of exclusion. According to Batavia *et al.* (2001:152) environmental factors appear to impose the most significant barriers to inclusion in all aspects of life for people with disabilities. In addition Alcock (1997:183) states that people with disabilities are exposed to poorer housing conditions. Many disabled people are discriminated against and excluded from the labour market. Alcock (1997:185), Bezuidenhout (1998:167) and Batavia *et al.* (2001:148) state that inadequate levels of education and training combined with prejudicial attitudes affect disabled peoples' possibilities to get a job. They also state that, because of disabled people's greater susceptibility to health problems, their risk of being unemployed is above average.

Employers view disabled people as being unsuitable for many kinds of work and possibly unreliable on health grounds (Alcock 1997:185, Bezuidenhout 1998:167; Batavia & Beaulaurier 2001:148). Those who are employed are often in low-paid jobs or have low incomes because they work restricted hours due to their disability. According to Alcock (1997:185) people who care for the disabled also suffer from loss of earnings, because caring for a person with disabilities may make it difficult to go out to work. He further states that carers who are able, may have low incomes due to the need to restrict working hours in order to carry out caring activities.

2.4.5 Family type

Another characteristic of poor families is the family type. Seccombe (2000:6) suggests that family break-up and the rise in the number of single-parent families have been the main factors in the growth of poverty. Poor single-parent families are defined as families

that have incomes below the official poverty line, who have an unmarried head of household and have at least one child under age 18 (Starrels *et al.* 1994:591).

Gender is viewed as having a significant effect on the likelihood of experience of poverty. Women have a higher poverty rate than men. Poverty is more likely to be a chronic problem among single-mother families. Pillay-Lathapersad (2002:39), Seccombe (2000:6) and Starrels *et al.* (1994:590) provide reasons which they claim, contribute to the severity of poverty in single-mother families. These authors state that women are confronted with a number of inequalities like lower wages and lower literacy rates. Women earn lower wages than men and have lower literacy rates. They also claim that women are more likely to be single, custodial parents during their working lives. In addition, as custodial parents, women are more disadvantaged if their former partners provide insufficient child maintenance support. This forces women to rely on the child support grants from the state.

Moreover, according to Pillay-Lathapersad (2002:40), women's disadvantage in employment is increased by the lack of affordable childcare facilities. She also claims that women's disadvantage starts at an early age because poor households tend to support education for boys and not for girls.

With the extent of HIV and AIDS, a certain type of high-risk family has emerged. Because of the high death rates from this disease, more and more children are becoming orphaned, thereby increasing the number of child-headed families. Since HIV and AIDS have a strong association with poverty, children run the risk of being left with nothing by their deceased parents (UNPFA 2000:ii).

2.5 COMPONENTS OF POOR FAMILIES

Understanding the components of poor families helps the social worker to make the appropriate decision about which community work projects and programs to introduce. Poverty is clearly identified with social and economic causes. The way the society is organized and the effects of social and economic policies influence the conditions under

which people live. The components of poor families that will be discussed are unemployment, social exclusion, illiteracy, population growth and lack of asset ownership.

2.5.1 Unemployment

The first component that characterises poor families is unemployment. Alcock (1997:157), Ropers (1992:177) and Goldsmith and Blakely (1992:38) state that unemployment and underemployment place many families at a great risk of poverty. These authors argue that most people involuntarily work part-time or have short-term jobs; hence they are called the working poor. In addition these authors blame the high rate of unemployment and underemployment on changing labour market conditions.

According to Herholdt (1997:97), Loots (1997:28) and Viljoen and Levin (2000:44), unemployment has grown to become one of South Africa's major economic and social problems. These authors state that the country's unemployment rate has increased from 6,6 per cent in 1970 to a record high of 32,6 per cent in 1994, with these increases representing an average annual increase of 9,3 per cent. In addition, these authors state that the latest official unemployment rate is 29,3 percent, which implies that unemployment in South Africa has more than doubled over the past decade. The official unemployment rate implies that approximately 4,2 million economically active persons are without formal or informal employment opportunities (Loots 1997:28). Viljoen and Levin (2000:44) argue that these levels of unemployment place South Africa among the high unemployment countries of the world.

According to Loots (1997:29), unemployment has definite racial and gender dimensions. She states that unemployment is higher among women than among men. She also provides racial statistics of unemployment as being higher among Africans. She further states that South Africa's unemployed comprise mainly young and unskilled workers. The 1995 October Household Survey shows that 68 per cent of the unemployed is younger than 34 years of age (CSS 1996:46). Of the total unemployed people, 51 per cent

are functionally illiterate. In other words, they have a qualification below grade 9; and 96 per cent do not possess a post-school qualification (CSS 1996:47).

Eighty-seven per cent of the unemployed people are not trained or skilled for a specific job, and 69 per cent have no previous job experience (CSS 1996:48). With the annual rate of job creation, there is no hope that unemployment will soon be something of the past. Herholdt (1997:97) claims that job creation in the formal sector increases at an annual rate of 1,8 per cent, whereas the potential South African labour force increases at an annual rate of 2,9 per cent.

Loots (1997:29) states that although the majority of South Africa's unemployed comprises unskilled workers, a fairly high incidence of unemployment is found among people with a grade 12 qualification. She puts the blame on the current education system, stating that it is not aimed at providing school leavers with the skills required by the labour market and that it leans towards producing job seekers rather than job creators. In addition she states that levels of unemployment are unequally distributed among South Africa's nine provinces. Some areas in these provinces are populated by a great number of economically active people who are unemployed and unemployable.

The high levels of unemployment have resulted in a large number of people getting involved in the informal job sector. Participants in informal sectors are identified as people who remain in poverty while still in employment. Pillay-Lathaparsad (2002:39) claims that the informal sector is hybrid in income structures and activities. It comprises of one-person firms and small-scale entrepreneurs that employ a few workers. Incomes in this sector are low, volatile and insecure.

Loots (1997:30) provides factors of unemployment which have devastating effects on the poor as:

- The absence of adequate economic growth;
- The inability of the economy, especially the formal economy, to create sufficient employment opportunities for the growing population;

- The increasing trend towards capital intensiveness in the South African economy due to labour market unrest, the influence of trade unions, the general low levels of skills as well as the rigid and inflexible labour market;
- The presence of foreign work-seekers or illegal immigrants;
- The general low levels of skills in the labour force; and
- External factors like globalization of markets, fewer trade restrictions, availability of cheaper imported goods and the rapid development of new technology.

South Africa has experienced high levels of inflation over the years. The rise in inflation affected the economic growth of the country resulting in the decrease of job creation. On the other hand, inadequate economic growth had resulted in retrenchment of employees and the closing of most industries.

Furthermore South Africa is faced with the massive influx of illegal immigrants from the surrounding countries. The presence of the illegal immigrants contributes to the unemployment of the local people because these immigrants provide cheap labour to the local employers. The employers employ the illegal immigrants to avoid contributing to funds such as the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

The development of technology is another factor contributing to unemployment because most people do not have the necessary skills required for technology. In addition, technology decreases the number of people to be employed. For example, one machine developed for digging will require one person to operate it instead of ten people who would have to use spades for the same purpose.

2.5.1.1 Types of unemployment

There are various types of unemployment, which differ according to the period spent outside employment. Viljoen and Levin (2000:46) present the three types of unemployment as:

(a) Frictional unemployment

This includes people who are unemployed for a relatively short period of time while searching for employment. It is caused by imperfect labour market information and immobility in the labour force. Improving the information available to the employers as well as the prospective employees may lower frictional unemployment. Improved labour market information enables job seekers to locate desirable jobs more quickly and thus shorten their period of unemployment.

(b) Cyclical unemployment

Cyclical unemployment is mainly caused by fluctuation in the business cycle. It is assumed that when a business cycle shows an upward trend, the demand for labour will increase and the cyclical unemployment will decrease.

(c) Structural unemployment

This is also known as long-term unemployment. It is unemployment that lasts longer than 24 weeks. Structural unemployment is a result of a lack of skills or a mismatch between skills and job requirements. It is considered a more serious problem than the other types of unemployment because of the long period of joblessness. Extended periods of unemployment may be caused by changes in demand or technology, shifts in world trade patterns and a lack of attractive skills or a good work record.

The accelerated pace of economic restructuring in South Africa has a direct impact on employment shifts across sectors and occupations. It is further stated that the high levels of long-term unemployment in South Africa have resulted in an ever-increasing portion of the unemployment pool becoming less employable. South Africa's history of legalised social exclusion is an important causal factor influencing long-term unemployment.

2.5.2 Social exclusion

Social exclusion is another component of poor families. Alcock (1997:98) refers to social exclusion as the process that occurs, or a set of social relations that exist between poor people and the rest of the society in which their poverty is created and recreated. Wagle

(2002:160) defines social exclusion as the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live. Furthermore he views social exclusion as a cause of poverty because exclusion from economic, social and political activities has tended to constrict people's capacities to access resources.

Wagle (2002:160) provides the individual and institutional dimensions of social exclusion, which he believes impact on poverty economically, politically and civically or culturally.

- Economically the extent of social institutions and orders that act as agents of social exclusion impose barriers on certain groups or individuals while carrying out economic activities. In some societies, the economic sphere of social exclusion is activated through racial, gender, spatial or other forms of discrimination.
- Politically some individuals or groups are excluded from citizenship rights and political equalities, including participation in such political activities and processes as political organization, party formation and voting. Therefore, the lower levels of political participation serve as a disadvantage for the poor because public policies and programs that are introduced through political processes do not reflect their needs and interests.
- Cultural social exclusion occurs when individuals or groups are denied access to civic or cultural activities.

In South Africa, apartheid was introduced as a form of social exclusion. According to Mamabolo (2000:22) apartheid became official government policy in 1948 when the National Party came into power. It was characterized by racial discrimination. The system of apartheid in South Africa was one of the main causes of poverty in the country (Herholdt 1997:94). According to Mamabolo (2000:22) and Herholdt (1997:98) the policy of apartheid reserved jobs and advancement for whites. The apartheid government introduced The Influx Control Act. This racially-based legislation was introduced to control the movement of African people and made it impossible for them to migrate to urban areas. People wanted to move to urban areas because of the availability and

adequacy of resources such as schools. In the rural areas, the resources were either unavailable or inaccessible. This resulted in problems such as illiteracy. In the next section illiteracy will be discussed.

2.5.3 Illiteracy

Another characteristic of poor families is illiteracy. Poverty and illiteracy go hand in hand. The highest rates of illiteracy are encountered in rural areas where two thirds of the world's population lives. In South Africa, illiteracy is a major component of poverty all over the country. It is estimated that the figure of illiteracy among Blacks living in rural areas is up to 80 per cent (Herholdt 1997:99; Pillay-Lathaparsad 2002:38).

Herholdt (1997:100) blames the apartheid government for the high rates of illiteracy. He provides the causes of illiteracy during the apartheid era:

- A low emphasis on education for blacks.
- Economic shortages in black families which forced young school-going children to leave school to try and find employment.
- Urban violence and strikes, which disrupted education in black schools.

Pillay-Lathaparsad (2002:38) states that poor families often keep children away from school because of the opportunity cost incurred. So despite the subsidization of primary education, schooling is costly for the poor. Illiteracy among poor people results in the less use of family planning. This leads to high population growth, as these people give birth year after year.

2.5.4 Population growth

High population growth is another characteristic of poor families. High population growth in relation to the limited and often fragile base is both a cause and a consequence of poverty (World Bank Report 1997:7). According to Herholdt (1997:101), the average annual rate of population increase in South Africa was 2,58 percent in the 1980s. He further states that South Africa's population increase is higher compared with rates in other developing countries. The population growth rate is higher among the poor than the

non-poor. Starrels *et al.* (1994:592) suggest that poverty contributes to early fertility whereas high fertility, also increases poverty. In addition, these authors state that this high fertility level increases levels of absolute poverty by retarding economic growth and by skewing the distribution of consumption against the poor.

Most areas such as rural areas and squatter camps lack adequate infrastructure. In these areas the population increase is caused largely due to the fact that people do not have access to family planning. The State of South Africa's Population Report (2000:28) confirms that in poor societies fertility is normally higher because of lower living standards, lower status of women and less access to health, including family planning services and modern contraception. In some cases people are not informed or aware about family planning.

There are also myths surrounding the issue of family planning. It is believed that the use of contraceptives before having a child will prevent one from bearing children for the rest of one's life. It is for this reason that adolescents bear children at an early age. According to Starrels *et al.* (1994:592) adolescent childbearing is related to larger families.

Culture can also be a contributing factor to high population growth. Some cultures encourage child bearing due to the belief that when children grow up they will provide for their ageing parents. Gender imbalances in decision-making regarding the choice of the number of children and when to have children increase population growth (World Bank Report 1997:7). These imbalances contribute to the lack of asset ownership, which will be discussed in the next section.

2.5.5 Lack of asset ownership

Lack of asset ownership is another contributing factor to poverty. According to Pillay-Lathapersad (2002:38), the poor tend to lack assets, income and land. Access to land is an essential condition for alleviating poverty. Herholdt (1997:101) believes that land is the most important means of production in rural societies, and the lack of access to it compromises living standards. Pillay-Lathapersad (2002:38) argues that even those that

do own land find that its quality is inferior and its size is insufficient to secure survival needs. She further states that many people have land but no ownership rights, and they have to cope with the insecurity of tenancy.

According to Herholdt (1997:101) the poorest of the poor live on 13 per cent of the available land in South Africa. He argues that this concentration of people within such a limited space has accelerated land degradation. This results in low production yields from which people cannot make a living. The unavailability of credit worsens the chances to acquire assets. Scant ownership of assets locks the poor into desperation as the lack of assets and income are mutually reinforcing (Pillay-Lathaparsad 2002:39). This absence of land forces the poor to sell their labour.

Apartheid laws contributed to landlessness of poor people. Access to land was limited by rules and regulations set by the apartheid government. According to Economist (1994:1) 3,5 million people were forcibly removed from their land by the apartheid government between 1960 and 1980, and dumped in the homelands. These people were removed without any form of compensation. The removal of these people disrupted family life. It also led to the developments of squatter camps and informal settlements, which had negative effects on families. In the next section, the effects of poverty on families will be discussed.

2.6 EFFECTS OF POVERTY ON FAMILIES

For people living in poverty, the effects thereof are severe. Ashiabi (2000:155) states that poverty results in the depletion of economic, psychological and physical resources. In addition, it weakens coping abilities and it exhausts social support networks as a consequence of continuous need for help.

According to McKendrick (1991:13) families and their individual members face problems when individuals cannot cope with the demands made on them by forces and processes operating within or outside of the family system. He further states that these forces affect interpersonal relationships between members in the family. Poor health,

parenting style and domestic violence as the effects of poverty will be discussed in this section.

2.6.1 Poor health

The experience of persistent poverty and deprivation has implications for family health. According to Ashiabi (2000:163) the health status of poor people is low, mainly due to the prevalence of poor nutrition and poor environmental sanitation. Children from poor families are at higher risk for many adverse health outcomes. This, according to Ashiabi (2000:155), is caused by the fact that children are a particularly vulnerable group whose welfare hinges on the resources of their parents.

Aber, Bennet, Conley & Li (1997:463) and Ashiabi (2000:161) agree that poor children exhibit higher morbidity rates. They suggest that the morbidity rates are the results of the lower odds of intervention and increased risks of accidents and illness. In addition they state that children from poor families are at higher risk for host developmental problems.

Ashiabi (2000:161) argues that poverty is also linked with malnutrition through a family's lack of access to material resources. He further states that, without resources, poor families cannot purchase food items necessary for nourishment. The incidence of malnutrition in poor families is high as a result of reduced household food supply and substantially higher food prices. This means that the poor families become vulnerable because they cannot afford basic food items and therefore reduce their consumption.

Malnutrition in childhood also has effects in adulthood (Ashiabi 2000:162). According to Pillay-Lathaparsad (2002:40) life expectancy among the malnourished is very low. She further argues that poor diet is associated with a variety of problems, including poor physical and intellectual growth, obesity and diseases associated with vitamins and mineral deficiencies.

Although most poor people suffer from poverty-related health problems, according to Seccombe (2000:21) and Ashiabi (2000:163) they use health care services less. These

authors argue that higher costs are resulting in limited utilization of hospital services by the poor. The poor health status among poor families increases the probability for these families to remain poor for a long time because they cannot work. Pillay-Lathaparsad (2002:39) suggests that hunger, malnutrition and related illnesses render the poor unable to utilize their labour effectively, even though labour is the main asset they have. For the poor, the difference between a tolerable quality of life and mere survival depends on their capacity and opportunities.

Blackburn (1991:42) and Ashabi (2000:163) believe that income influences the quality of housing and the family's standard of living. In South Africa, poor families suffer the negative environmental health effects of subsistence lifestyle (The State of South Africa's Population Report 2000: 32). In addition, it states that poor shelter and housing, limited access to potable water, inadequate sanitation and polluting energy sources are directly related to the prevalence of preventable diseases. This report also provides examples of preventable diseases such as TB and diarrhoeal disease. To conclude, Blackburn (1991:30) argues that the health of poor families is not within their personal control and is the outcome of low income and poor access to health resources.

2.6.2 Inadequate parenting

Another effect of poverty on families is inadequate parenting. Poverty affects how parents interact with their children. Parents can mistreat their children by being cold and indifferent toward them. Aber *et al.* (1997:476) and Seccombe (2000:10) confirm that parents in poor families are less nurturing and more authoritarian and use more inconsistent and harsh physical discipline. There are also low levels of parental supervision. Poor children have a higher probability of being abused and neglected.

Ghate and Neal (2002:45) argue that some children are more difficult and less rewarding to parents than others. They further state that children with long-term health problems or disabilities are more likely to be abused than normal children. They also suggest that some parents are predisposed to have difficulties in meeting challenges of parenting by virtue of their personal characteristics and circumstances.

Aber *et al.* (1997:476) and Seccombe (2000:10) state that factors related to inadequate parenting behaviour are stress, depression and marital conflict. These authors state that parents who are living in poor conditions have a high level of stress related to their situation. These authors blame the high levels of stress to financial insecurity or interruption of employment and lack of social support, either financially or emotionally. In addition, economic pressure may increase marital conflict and disruption within the family. The other factors that are viewed as negatively influencing the quality of parenting are family conflict, anxiety and concerns over the family's financial situation.

Ghate *et al.* (2002:75) identify single parenthood as a risk factor for poor parenting because single parenting tends to be associated with lower household income, greater financial strain and material disadvantage. These authors view environmental problems as another factor contributing to poor parenting. In addition, these authors claim that living in a poor neighbourhood compounds the problems families already face on account of their personal or family circumstances.

Poor parenting may be disadvantageous to children's development because Aber *et al.* (1997:477), for instance, associate poor children's delinquency with poor parental behaviour. These authors argue that children who have experienced harsh parenting and socialization practices tend to externalize behaviour problems. Poor parenting not only causes the child's behavioural problems, it can also lead violent adult adults. Domestic violence will be discussed in the next section.

2.6.3 Domestic violence and abuse

Domestic violence is another effect of poverty on families. Male violence, in particular, is a problem for families of all income, race and ethnic groups, but the poorest families experience higher rates of violence (Kurz; 1998:105). Motsei (1994:1) and Van der Hoven (2001:13) are of the opinion that in South Africa violence against women and children is widespread and on the increase. These authors provide statistics that a male

partner abuses one in six South African women. They also state that about 83 per cent of women are raped in South Africa.

Cheal (2002:81) distinguishes between violence and abuse. She defines violence as any act which is intended to cause physical pain or injury to another person. Abuse is defined as any act which has a high probability of causing long-term harm to the person on whom it is inflicted. It also includes non-violent acts that cause long-term emotional problems.

Barnett *et al.* (1997:27) provide several factors that cause violence. For the purpose of this study, only the patriarchal formulations and social-structural factors will be discussed. Barnett *et al.* (1997:25), Berkowitz (1993:244) and Cheal (2002:85) suggest that society's conception of the man, as the head of the household is an important contributor to family violence, specifically wife abuse. In addition, they argue that patriarchy gives men the right to dominate and control women and children. Men always have the final say in whatever choices the family makes.

According to Eade (1998:3), Barnett *et al.* (1997:27) and Motsei (1994:1) poverty undoubtedly provides a fertile seedbed for many of the grosser forms of violence and conflict. They further state that the unequal distribution of opportunities, along with the inevitable stress associated with poverty, produces high levels of frustration in poor families. Because of the fewer job opportunities available for women, they tend to be more economically dependent upon their husbands. As a result most poor women find it difficult to leave their abusive partners. This dependence gives men enough power to control their wives.

Male unemployment is a major factor which threatens male domination within the family. It increases the level of tension and friction within families. It also shifts a family's division of labour and allocation of income earning away from male bread-winning (Eade 1998:2). This shift may result in males experiencing undue stress. Stress contributes to conflicts that occur within the family. Berkowitz (1993:262) confirms that economic deprivations and problems are the major sources of unhappiness. He further

states that unemployment and poverty increase violence simply because men cannot handle the feelings of impotence that accompany their low social and economic status. Men's social identity tends to be built around their role in economic production. To them, unemployment seems to signify personal inadequacy and failure.

Eade (1998:2) suggests that violence is one way that many men re-assert control in the face of changes that are perceived as in some way threatening to them. Domestic violence and abuse in families have devastating effects on its victims physically, emotionally and spiritually. According to Van der Hoven (2001:13) violence threatens the stability of the family and has a negative impact on all members. She further states that children often learn that violence is an acceptable way of coping with problems and gaining control over another person. In a study conducted by Kurz (1998:109), it was discovered that the victim's confidence in their ability to work often gets destroyed.

2.7 CONCLUSION

Everybody belongs to a family. Each family has boundaries that either include or exclude other people. The structure of a family consists of a set of roles and the patterned interactions between them. In most cases families pull resources together for their survival. Families do not exist in isolation. They are connected to a number of groups. To meet their needs, families interact with other groups and institutions within the society. Changes in these institutions affect the functioning of the family. These changes may result in social problems like poverty. Economic changes, for example, have resulted in many families experiencing poverty. More than half of the population of South Africa is poor. Poor families lack required income to maintain the minimum standards of living.

Poverty is multidimensional. Most poor families differ according to race and age of the family members. Poverty also has no regional dimension in that it exists in both rural and urban areas. Single-parent families, more especially the female-headed families, tend to experience chronic poverty. People with disabilities experience poverty because they are often discriminated against in the labour market. Sometimes the nature and extent of the

person's disability restricts the disabled person from participating in the labour market. Often disabled people have to depend on the state's financial assistance for their survival. Poverty is caused by several factors and these factors are interrelated. Unemployment and underemployment are the major factors contributing to poverty. Most poor families are either unemployed or are involved in low income jobs. South Africa is one of the countries that experience the highest levels of unemployment in the world. This is because most of the unemployed lack skills. Social exclusion is another factor contributing to poverty.

In South Africa, apartheid was introduced as a form of social exclusion. It restricted people's movement and they were also deprived of certain rights. Most poor families are illiterate and this makes them unemployable. Population growth increases people's probability to remain poor. The lack of adequate infrastructure, like family planning clinics, contributes to high fertility among poor families. Land is an important means of production in most societies. Poor families often lack access to land, and this compromises their living standards. Their lack of income prevents them from gaining land ownership.

Effects of living in poverty are severe. It affects poor family's health tremendously. Poor families often experience very poor health standards because of the family's lack of access to material resources. Children are the most vulnerable groups among the poor. They are often victims of malnourishment. Children from poor families are at high risk to suffer from serious medical problems that often go untreated. Women are also at high risk of poor health because of the extra work that they have to perform within the family. Their health status prevents poor families from participating in the labour market.

Poverty affects parent-child relationships. Due to tremendous stress that they experience, parents from poor families are often less nurturing. This poor parenting has negative outcomes for the children's behaviour. Poor families are often at high risk of experiencing domestic violence. This results from patriarchal formulations and social structural factors. Men dominate their wives and children. Their unemployment status

threatens this domination. It also results in undue stress. To re-assert control, men tend to use violence. Family violence has negative impacts among the family members.

The socio-economic circumstances of poor families call for an intervention strategy that can be used to help these families deal with their problems. In the next chapter, the utilization of community work as an intervention strategy will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3: UTILIZATION OF COMMUNITY WORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, poor families and the problems that they face were discussed. The poor are often described as having characteristics that cause their problem. The blaming of the poor prevents one from having a comprehensive understanding of their problems. It also prevents one from finding a suitable solution to reduce those problems. This chapter focuses on the strategy that can be used to help poor families solve their problems.

Kamp (1996:230) states that community work can be a suitable and relevant strategy to tackle these problems. Community work is directed at the vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the society. Lombard (1992:238) regards community work as a planned problem-solving process, which seeks to encourage poor families to tackle the problems they face. Empowerment is one of the important concepts of community work. According to Sharkey (2000:1), community work seeks to empower poor families to change things by developing their own skills, knowledge and experience.

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNITY WORK

There are various definitions of community work. Weyers (2000:19) defines community work as "*the method of social work that consists of various process and helping acts of the social worker that is targeted at the community system, as well as its subsystems and certain external systems, with the purpose of bringing about social change*". According to Twelvetrees (1991:1), community work is the process of assisting ordinary people to improve their own communities by undertaking collective action. Kamp (1996:231) explains that community work puts emphasis on people's power and participation. In addition Popple (1996:154) states that the emphasis of community work is to promote self-help by means of education.

Community work can thus reach a variety of poor families helping them in dealing with the social needs and problems they face. One way of meeting these needs is by bringing

about change in the environment. Community work is done by way of a process. The following section will attempt to show how a community work process can be implemented when empowering poor families.

3.3 PROCESS IN COMMUNITY WORK

The community work process has various phases. In this section the assessment, intervention, evaluation and termination phases of community work will be discussed.

3.3.1 Assessment phase

Assessment is the first and the most crucial phase in community work. It is performed to provide an overall picture of the client system's problem. Lee (1999:206) and Zastrow (1999:59) define assessment as a gathering, analyzing and weighing of the objective and the subjective facts of the situation of the client system. The client system in this case is the representatives of the community in which the poor families live. Assessment is a phase during which a social worker discovers and explores the community's strengths and weaknesses.

Potgieter (1998:150) sees assessment as a complex, continuous and mutual process in which the client system and the social worker are both involved. He further states that assessment entails a collection of observations, explanations and interpretations, and that it is used to explore both the breadth and depth of a problem condition. The assessment component in community work includes the collaborative partnership between the social worker, the client system and their combined efforts to define the needs and problem. According to Lee (1999:206), that avoids the risk that the social worker will ignore the client's responsibility to take part in the assessment of his or her problem condition.

3.3.1.1 Tasks in assessment

There are different tasks that the social worker should perform during the assessment phase of community work. These tasks are situation analysis and goal formulation. They will be discussed next.

(a) Situation analysis

Situation analysis should be done because it is important for a social worker to know and understand the community in which she/he is practicing. According to Weyers (2001:69) a situation analysis helps the social worker to understand the nature of the practice situation. He furthermore states that situation analysis also prepares the social worker for the selection of the practice approach, which will be used as a basis for intervention.

Lombard (1992:245) confirms that a situation analysis refers to an analysis of the present situation and circumstances in a community in order to obtain a synthesis of what the community really looks like. The social worker gathers information about various systems in order to fully understand the unmet needs and problems of the community (Gray 1998:63; Homan 1999:120). A systems analysis involves the understanding of the organization and the community's functioning. Therefore an analysis of both the organization and community should be done.

(i) Organizational analysis

The organizational analysis is usually done in order to understand the following elements of the organization:

- The structural-functional dimension of the organization.

The structure of the organization includes the division of labour and the hierarchy of authority. According to Fox, Schwella and Wissink (1991:73) and Johnson (1989:62) the organization structure represents the sum total of the ways in which labour is divided into distinct tasks and in which co-ordination is achieved between these tasks. Netting, Kettner and McMurtry (1993:125) mention that a social worker needs to understand the structure that is conducive to the effective functioning of the organization. These authors argue that in bureaucratic organizations the focus should be on accomplishing specific instrumental tasks and on maximizing efficiency of service rendering. They further emphasize the importance of analyzing the working environment and the factors that motivate the organizational staff. Different organizations have different funding sources. According to Netting *et al.* (1993:23), understanding how a particular agency is financed is often the key to understanding the agency itself.

- The management, staff and infrastructure of the organization.

The social worker also needs an understanding of the management, staff and infrastructure of the agency when planning a community work project. The social worker needs to understand how the organization is managed, whether the management is autocratic or democratic. It is also important to understand how flexible management is to change. This includes the relationship between management and the staff members of the organization. The social worker should analyze how the organizational management provides opportunities that are conducive to staff professional growth (Fox *et al.* 1991:82).

Johnson (1989) mentions that the social worker should analyze the staff as persons and as professionals, as well as the relationship among them. The social worker should also analyze whether the staff members are capable of working as a team. It is also important to analyze the adequacy of the organizational infrastructure.

- The nature of the services of the organization.

Another area that should be analyzed is the nature of services of the organization. Community work is a participatory approach, which can also be used to empower poor families through collective action. Netting *et al.* (1993:170) and Green (1999:294) state that the social worker must find out what type of clients the organization serves and what type of services the organization renders.

(ii) Community analysis

The second system which should be analysed is the community. To empower poor families, social workers need to have good knowledge of the community. Netting *et al.* (1993:68) note that trying to understand a community is not an easy task. According to Homan (1999:110) a community may be made of several sub-communities. Some members of the community may belong to various sub-communities because of common interests they share. A community also has several divisions and functions at a variety of levels. Understanding the sub-communities, divisions and levels may not be easy. It may also be time consuming. Netting *et al.* (1993:68) recommend that a systematic needs

assessment of the target group should be done. Lee (1999:207) and Netting *et al.* (1993:68) put emphasis on the importance of understanding the person in the environment as crucial in community work practice. These authors argue that the community has an influence on the person's being and sense of self. Families and communities are the two most significant social institutions in the development of individuals. The viability of the family relies on the support of the local community. Communities are the context where families prosper or fail.

Netting *et al.* (1993:69) propose that the social worker should define a community by selecting the target population. These authors suggest that the community be understood from the perspective of the concerns and needs of the target population. It is then important for a social worker to compile a community profile. The purpose of the community profile is to gather information about the needs of the client system in the community. It is also to provide the basis for a possible course of action.

A community profile gives a broad picture of the community and its inhabitants. Green (1999:289) defines community needs profiling, as a method of gathering information about the needs of a community that provides opportunities for community action. He argues that community needs profiling should be seen as an umbrella term for an approach to use as the basis for change and community development. In addition, this task will help the social worker to be well informed about the processes that create and maintain family poverty. Henderson and Thomas (1987:93) mention the importance of the social worker's understanding of how the community defines and labels the problem. The social worker should also determine the size and scope of the problem, and gather information that will help to explain the causes and persistence of the problem.

According to Green (1999:295), Homan (1999:120) and Lombard (1992:251), involving the poor families and the community in identifying their needs and encouraging them to speak about their unmet needs and problems is a key way in which the social worker can begin to help poor people to reclaim and re-empower themselves and their communities.

This can also act as a motivation for community participation. For the purpose of this study, the components of the profile will be discussed.

(iii) Components of community profile

The following components should be addressed in the community work profile.

❖ History

The first component of the community work profile is the history of the community. Every community has a unique history. A community profile should include the historical background, the size and the characteristics of the population (Lombard 1992:245; Weyers 2001:71).

❖ Power

The second component of the profile is the power within the community. To empower poor families, the social worker needs to be knowledgeable about the dynamics of power and powerlessness, and how these forces operate in human functioning. Understanding power dynamics helps the social worker to focus on the systematic nature of power and control in people's behaviour. It also helps to clarify the relationship between the powerful and the powerless in the community (Linthicum 1991:11; Lombard 1992:247 Pinderhughes 1995:133 and Weyers 2001:70).

Pinderhughes (1995:134) stresses the importance of the social worker's understanding of how poor people perceive and respond to their lack of power. She further argues that social workers must also understand how people perceive and respond to having power. She believes that such understanding helps the social worker in developing strategies for change and empowerment.

❖ Strengths

Strengths of the community are the third component of the community profile which has to be analyzed. It is important that a social worker assesses the client system's strengths. Lee (1999:210) and Zastrow (1999:61) state that a social worker should assess the client system's coping behaviours in order to determine the strengths they have. These authors

claim that this may help in determining what aspects of functioning need to be developed to solve the problem. This approach assumes that poor families and communities have expertise, resources and strengths to solve their problems. It is in contrast with the pathological approach that focuses on deficiencies and inability. The social worker forms a relationship with the client system and perceives the system for its qualities and skills (Leon 1999:19; Zastrow 1999:61). This reinforces the social worker's identification and utilization of the client system as an asset and a resource.

❖ Resources

The next component is the resources in the community. The social worker needs to assess the availability and accessibility of community resources. Netting *et al.* (1993:85) suggest that a number of domains be explored when assessing community resources. This includes exploring the power dynamics in the distribution of community resources. Leon (1999:20) notes that by maintaining a person-in-environment perspective, the social worker helps clients identify individual, family and community resources. She further emphasizes the importance of identifying formal and informal resources that exist within the community and integrating them with new service delivery systems. For example churches, schools, municipality structures and clinics may be identified as formal community resources. An example of an informal resource can be any member of the community who can offer information about the community. The social worker may use an individual member from the poor family as an informal resource.

(b) Goal formulation

Situation analysis leads to goal determination. According to Henderson and Thomas (1987:99), before deciding on what to do in the community, the social worker should first clarify his/her goals and those of the agency in which he/she is working. These authors state factors that influence goal formulation, including selecting the area and target group to focus on, and deciding which of the identified problems should receive the first priority.

Once the community needs are identified, the objectives and goals are set to address these needs. This stage is characterized by the identification of available resources that can be utilized to reach the desired outcome (Gray 1998:63). The social worker collects all the information using different methods of data gathering, which will be listed in the following section.

3.3.1.2 Methods of data collection

There are various methods that can be used to gather information about the community. For the purpose of this study, these methods will not be discussed in detail, but will be mentioned. Green (1999:290), Homan (1999:120), Lombard (1992:248) and Zastrow (1999:62) highlight the following methods as essential for data gathering:

- Interviews with clients or professionals working in the community to be surveyed.
- Postal surveys to agencies in the area.
- Focus group discussions with community representatives.
- Participant observation.
- Walking or driving around an area.
- Use of secondary data, such as official statistics.

The social worker selects, analyzes and records the information gathered through these methods. This information helps the social worker to make decisions on how to carry out the intervention phase. The intervention phase will now be discussed.

3.3.2 Intervention phase

After the assessment phase the intervention phase should be carried out. During the intervention phase contact should be made with the community.

3.3.2.1 Contact with the community

According to Lombard (1992:244) and Gray (1998:65) contact with the community is established during the assessment phase. It is important that the social worker gets in touch with the community to develop a relationship and gather information about the target system and the community as a whole. This may not be an easy task, because

people in the community may not trust the social worker. The social worker must therefore first gain the trust of the community in order to get them involved in sharing the information needed for assessing their needs and compiling an action plan.

The purpose of this phase is to gain an understanding of the needs and problems experienced by the community. It is also to discuss actions that can be taken to solve these needs and problems (Gray 1998:62; Lombard 1992:253). According to Lee (1999:189) and Linthicum (1991:45) people in the community know more about their community than the social worker. They know its problems, its history and its struggles. These authors suggest that the social worker must learn from the community. The community is the expert and teacher, whereas the social worker is the inquirer and the learner.

(a) Making contact

There are different ways of making contact with the community. Linthicum (1991:44) suggests that the social worker should visit the community and start talking to people. He emphasizes the importance of contacting ordinary people. He states that the social worker can casually join people sitting in the park and be part of their conversation. Weyers (2001:122) identifies two forms of contact making as the direct and the indirect route.

Contact making via the direct route is more formal. The social worker can make contact with representatives of the community, identify organizations and gain access to these organizations through their representative. These organizations can be any organization that operates in the same community. For example, the social worker may make contact with the local councillor.

In the indirect route, a worker makes contact with individual members of the community. Contact making via the indirect route is usually casual.

(b) Ensuring participation

After making contact with different people in the community, the social worker should try to get them to participate in the change process. The social worker can do very little if the community members are not motivated to become involved in the project. Lombard (1992:257) sees the basis for community motivation as essential in their beginning to feel uncomfortable about prevailing circumstances. With the help of the social worker, the community begins to realize what the real situation in the community is and how it should be.

According to Linthicum (1991:31), the poor and the powerless are often excluded from full participation in the social, political and economic life of their community. In community work, community participation is very crucial for the empowerment of the poor. Community participation is promoted by involving the members in the community project. Often the community involvement makes people feel they own the project and therefore enhance their participation.

(c) Representation from the community

Although community participation is important when empowering poor people, Lombard (1992:260) argues that it is impossible for everybody in the community to be involved in the change process. She suggests that a committee should be elected as the representatives of the community. Linthicum (1991:46) and Lombard (1992:260) emphasize that the people who will be represented by it must elect the committee. This committee is called an action committee. Professionals and ordinary people within the community can form the action committee.

As representatives of the community, the action committee needs skills to be able to serve the interests of the community. According to Gray (1998:66) the action committee should be helped to develop skills for cooperative action and independent decision-making. Leadership skills are also necessary in community work because the social worker needs leadership skills to influence community members toward the attainment of community objectives. She/he also has to encourage the inexperienced and less confident

members to take an active part in the change process. The social worker plays an enabling, educating and facilitating role in helping people acquire necessary skills to apply in the project. Often participating members of the community may have to perform certain tasks, and these tasks require skills. Writing skills and chairing a meeting are examples of the skills that participating members should acquire.

According to Lombard (192:26) the community should have direct participation in the planning and decision-making processes. The action committee should therefore keep the community informed about their planning of the community work project, so that they can decide on the most effective plan of action. She suggests that the action committee should call regular meetings with the community in order to report back regarding the progress of the project.

3.3.2.2 Contract with the community

The next phase is the contract phase. The contract is negotiated between the social worker and an action committee regarding the problem identified and how ways in which will be brought about. Lee (1999:198) defines contracting as the process by which the client system and the social worker agree what the work entails, what is to be done and who is to do it. In addition she states that the process of contracting must include an agreement on the nature of the problem, realistic goals and determining steps to solve the problem. A contract may be an oral or a written agreement between the social worker and the action committee. Different tasks must be performed during this phase. These tasks will now be discussed.

(a) Problem definition

The first task is problem definition. Problem definition is the process of defining what problems will be the centrepiece of the work (Lee 1999:198). Communities may identify many issues that they may view as problems. The main purpose of this stage is to agree on a common conceptualization of the problems and to transform it into realistic goals and a workable action plan. Lombard (1992:255) defines the two kinds of needs in the community which should be addressed as felt and real needs. She argues that there is

sometimes confusion about the existence of these needs. To avoid this confusion, she states that the community should be educated to experience their real needs as felt need. The identification of problems helps in determining the desired goals for the community work project.

(b) Goal formulation

The second task is goal formulation. Potgieter (1998:155) states that goals and objectives are the important elements of a contract. After identifying the problem, the social worker and the action committee agree on a goal to be reached. Zastrow (1998:250) defines goals as long-term aims of the project. In addition, he states that goals are statements about a desired outcome.

Once a goal is established, objectives must be identified. Objectives are steps towards the achievement of goals. Lombard (1992:263), Zastrow (1998:251) and Netting *et al.* (1993:242) state that objectives are more specific and must be measurable. These authors further state that an objective is measurable with regards to what is to be done and within what time period. There are three types of goals that should be decided on in the community work process. They are task goals, process goals and operational goals. In the next section these goals will be discussed.

❖ Task goals

The first goals of community work are task goals. Task goals are concerned with the change of the material situation of the poor families. For example, poor families may be experiencing inadequate electrical services in the community. The concern of the task goals will be to improve the electrical services for poor families. According to Rothman and Tropman (1995:34) task goals are concerned with the solution of delimited social problems of the client system. These authors argue that task goals embody the completion of a concrete task or the solving of a defined problem as far as the functioning of the social system in the community is concerned.

❖ *Process goals*

Process goals are the second goals that should be formulated for community work. According to Rothman and Tropman (1995:34) process goals are oriented to system maintenance and enhancement, and local empowerment, with the following aims:

- Establishing problem solving structures;
- Stimulating wide interest and participation in community affairs;
- Fostering collaborative attitudes and practices among people;
- Enhancing indigenous leadership.

These goals are linked to enhance community integration and local problem-solving capacity. Lombard (1992:84) states that process goals are often formulated with an aim to develop community abilities and potential in order to address the needs of the community. Netting *et al.* (1993:243) identify process objectives as objectives that specify the process to be followed in order to achieve the desired result. These objectives focus on the result expected at the completion of the community work process.

❖ *Operational goals*

The last goals of community work are operational goals. Operational goals are concerned with what the organization wishes to achieve. According to Lombard (1992:85) organizations define their goals in relation to a given task environment. In this case communities with poor families are the task environments. The organization will be concerned about the quality of services that it provides to poor families. The organization should be flexible and should adapt to changes in service provision. The operational goals involve the organization's strive to deliver its services with maximum efficiency and consistency.

3.3.2.3 Planning of projects

The main focus of community work projects is empowerment. Therefore community work projects should be designed to empower poor families to make their own decisions and have control over their lives. It is important that the projects are participatory in the

sense that they involve the poor families in the identification of their priority needs. Poor families should also be involved in the design and implementation of the project (Kamp 1996:230; Leon 1999:16). In this section, empowerment will be defined; various empowerment strategies and goal determination will be discussed (White Paper for Social Welfare 1997; Chaskin, Joseph & Chipenda-Dansokho 1997:438).

(a) Defining empowerment

Kamp (1996:231) defines empowerment as the process by which the social workers or other professionals engage in a set of activities with a client aimed at reducing the powerlessness stemming from an experience of discrimination and stigmatization. Empowerment, according to Mokgohloa (1995:2), is taking charge, being in control and participating in one's own development. Kurtz (1997:5) refers to empowerment as a multilevel construct that involves people assuming control and mastery over their lives towards a sense of purpose.

The notion of empowerment recognizes that the only people who have the capability to change the community and to deal with its problems are the people of that community. According to Linthicum (1991:23) this means that the community is not perceived as objects of intervention, but as participants. Zippay (1995:23) regards empowerment as representing a means for accomplishing community work tasks. In the case of community work with poor families empowerment should be part of the community work process. For empowerment to be successful, certain strategies should be implemented. Strategies of empowerment will be discussed in the next section.

(b) Strategies of empowerment

There are primary strategies which lead to the empowerment of poor families (Linthicum 1991; Kamp 1996). Such strategies include networking with the community, and building coalitions and collaborative relationships with the community.

(i) Networking with the community

The first strategy of empowerment is networking with the community. Linthicum (1991:44) defines networking as the intentional and systematic visiting of people in the community by the social worker to identify the community's felt needs. He argues that the primary purpose of networking is to provide the social worker with the base she/he needs to empower poor families. According to Sviridoff and Ryan (1997:132), organizing community networks to create cultural, social and recreational opportunities for poor families is a common empowerment strategy. Networking enhances the effectiveness of the organization. Networking also increases the social worker's credibility in the community.

Linthicum (1991:45) and Sviridoff and Ryan (1997:132) suggest the following guidelines that the social worker can use to promote networking:

- Determine what people see as a problem.
- Identify the real leaders in the community.
- Identify the people who are really concerned about the problems in the community.

It is important that, when networking, the social worker should contact community leaders and any local person, because these people can give information about what had been done with regards to the identified problem. The social worker may visit the homes of the poor families with the purpose to gather information about what the poor families see as a problem, what had been done before and who had done it. Networking with the poor families will also help the social worker to determine who is interested in taking action.

(ii) Building coalition with the community

Building a coalition with the community is the second strategy of empowerment. Linthicum (1991:96) and Kamp (1996:237) state that a coalition provides the means by which people of the community can mobilize around commonly identified needs and problems and together carry out actions which can alter those problems. Poor families can gain power from collective action because to be able to change their community,

people must unite to form an alliance. A coalition may start with the realization of a community's real issues.

Coalition building involves consciousness-raising with regards to the real issues in the community. When building coalitions, the social worker should approach various members from poor families who are concerned about the problem in their community. The social worker helps these people to take action regarding the identified problem (Kamp 1996:238; Pinderhughes 1995:137). For example, the social worker may consider that services for poor families are inadequate. She/he may introduce the subject to the poor families. She/he may get these people together and let them begin to discuss this issue. Pinderhughes (1995:137) regards this discussion as the narrative approach. According to Linthicum (1991:57) and Pinderhughes (1995:138) a narrative approach involves poor families in a joint inquiry about the problems they are experiencing. They then analyze the problems and develop a strategy for change. According to these authors, the community may find resources out of this strategy for change. With these resources, the community can begin to implement their strategy.

In what he refers to as action-reflection-action, Linthicum (1991:58) states that the social worker often talks to the community about the progress of their strategy for change. He states that the nature of building coalitions is that people act, reflect and learn from the strategy they developed. Coalitions also involve confrontation and negotiations. Confrontation is mostly applied when the community has identified a barrier blocking the continuation of the project. The community can therefore negotiate with the government departments in fighting for better resources and power distribution. Through coalitions, poor families can be mobilized to have discussions and to investigate public policies, such as municipal rates, affecting their lives (Linthicum 1991:59).

(iii) Collaborative relationships with the community

The third strategy of empowerment is building collaborative relationships with the community. Graham and Barter (1999:7) and Netting *et al.* (1993:250) define collaboration as a working relationship in which two or more systems agree on working

together to bring about change. These systems pool resources in order to meet objectives that neither could meet individually. According to Sviridoff and Ryan (1997:133) collaboration among agencies or organizations is often critical to community-building strategies, because it enhances effective service delivery to the poor families. Empowerment as an intervention strategy involves collaboration of communities with social workers, and social workers with other professionals and organizations.

Collaborative relationships also involve sharing of staff power, responsibilities and expenses. According to Graham and Barter (1999:6) collaboration highlights current needs for effective teamwork and professional cooperation. Collaboration also emphasizes the enhancement of existing collaborative relationships. In addition collaboration proposes joint sharing and decision making in the interest of change. Collaborative relationship between social worker and client system has an effect of giving back dignity, respect and self-control to poor families whose problems instil a lack of self-confidence (Graham *et al.* 1999:7).

(c) Determine resources

The other activity in the community work process that should be carried out when planning projects is determining the availability of resources. According to Homan (1999:121) the fact that the needs are not met does not mean that resources do not exist in the community. The problem may be with the distribution of resources and with the communities' ability to recognize and develop resources. Netting *et al.* (1993:232) and Lombard (1992:265) agree that resources may be in the form of money, people, time available, and space and material resources. The social worker should determine who should execute certain tasks in the project. This means that human resources such as assigned staff and volunteers are required for the execution of various tasks. Leon (1999:20) explains that the social worker should explore the human resources, such as individuals with various talents and skills, which are available in the community, because individuals may be willing to become involved in the provision of services. Netting *et al.* (1993) also encourages social workers to determine what kind of money is available that

can be used to pay for hired staff and other material such as machinery in order to bring change in the community.

The social worker should also determine where the project should be launched. According to Lombard (1992:265) the question of where the project should be launched can be answered only after the specific target group for a project has been identified. After identifying the target group, the social worker should draw up time-scales for achieving the objectives of the project. The availability of resources may help the social worker and the community to decide which alternative plan of action to select in order to reach the objectives of the project.

3.3.2.4 Alternative plans of actions

After the social worker has determined the community resources, alternative plans for action should be made. Alternative plans of action include deciding on how the changes in the community should come about. The action committee and the social worker should compile alternative plans of action that can be used to accomplish a desired outcome of the project.

Cohen, cited in Lombard (1992:265) provides the following useful guidelines for the social worker and action committee when developing alternative plans:

- Draw up a list of possible action strategies and the consequences of each.
- Evaluate each plan.
- Determine how the final plan should be implemented.
- Evaluate the final plan action.

Potgieter (1998:286) suggests that a selection of a suitable strategy should be based on the target for intervention and the contributing factors to the problem. In addition, Lombard (1992:266) states that a selected plan of action should be within the capabilities of communities. She further states that it should also provide development opportunities according to those capabilities in order to be feasible. The selected alternative plan of action should also be sustainable.

Evaluation of each alternative plan of action should take the goals and objectives of the poor families into account. In the evaluation the probabilities of success, costs, benefits and the practical applicability of various options have to be considered. Implementation of the selected plan will usually be linked to the available resources such as human resources and material resources, which have been discussed earlier in this chapter. For the purpose of implementation decisions about the standards of performance, responsible persons and time schedules have to be made.

The needs and circumstances of individuals and families living in impoverished communities are interconnected. According to Chaskin *et al.* (1997:435) and Potgieter (1998:190) these needs and circumstances originate from the interaction between the environment and the client system. These authors note that these problems require an integrated intervention strategy. According to Netting *et al.* (1993:237) the problem condition requires a program change and a project change. These authors provide the difference between a program and a project. Programs are prearranged sets of activities designed to achieve a set of goals and objectives. Programs are usually intended to provide services directly to clients. Sometimes programs are of a supportive nature. Projects are similar to programs but have a time-limited existence. Projects are more flexible so that they can be adapted to the needs of a changing environment. Depending on their success, they are permanently installed as programs (Netting *et al.* 1993: 238). In the next section, various programs and projects that can be used to empower poor families will be discussed.

(a) Projects to empower poor families

(i) Income generating projects

The first kinds of projects that can be used to empower poor families are income-generating projects. Income-generating projects are projects that are aimed at improving the financial conditions of the poor families because lack of income is one of the factors contributing to family poverty. This lack of income is usually the result of the high levels of unemployment among the economically active section of the population. According to Weyers (2001:140) the high levels of unemployment impel task groups to view income-

generating projects as a priority. He highlights the possession of knowledge and skills as necessary requirements for the potential participants. The skills may include financial management, business and entrepreneurial skills.

Weyers (2001:140) suggests the following ideas that can be considered for projects aimed at income generation:

- The establishment of informal retail ventures
- The establishment of a home industry
- The undertaking of contract work
- The establishment of small-scale or backyard farming
- The establishment of community-based industries
- The establishment of home-based service businesses
- The rendering of other types of services.

From the above it is clear that there are many ideas that the community can consider for income-generating purposes. The examples of income-generating projects will now be discussed.

As a way of generating income, poor families can buy products such as meat and cold drinks from wholesales and sell these products to other members of the community. Home industry is difficult to start due to the lack of material resources that are needed to start this kind of industry. A group of women from the poor families can be helped to start this industry. For example, these women may manufacture products such as jam and candles. These products can then be sold to the communities and the local shops. Rearing chickens to sell their meat and eggs is an example of backyard farming that can be established for income-generating purposes. In addition to financial management, business and entrepreneurial skills required, the participants should acquire marketing skills in order to sell their products.

(ii) Housing related projects

Another kind of project that can be introduced for poor families is housing-related projects. Many poor families lack appropriate housing. Weyers (2001:141) mentions the following two points of focus for projects relating to housing:

- Providing the needed structures. These structures could range from informal structures to any type of housing.
- The improvement of available housing and development of related infrastructure and skills.

These housing-related projects should be introduced to provide houses to poor families. An example of a housing-related project is the introduction of the government's Reconstruction and Development Program (1994) to serve the purpose of providing houses to the poor families. These houses range from two-roomed to four-roomed houses.

Chaskin *et al.* (1997:438) suggest the integration of intervention strategies to respond to the interconnection among the poor families' needs and circumstances. These authors recommend linking efforts in different spheres to promote change within the community. The linking of various efforts can lead to the effective use of resources, such as human resources. It can support the creation of small business enterprises. It can also provide easy access to needed services. For example, in a community characterized by high unemployment and lack of vocational training, a housing renovation project can be introduced. This project may seek to hire and train local residents. The hiring of the local people rather than employing outside contractors can help in developing human capital resources within the community.

(iii) Environmental and health-related projects

The third kind of project that can be introduced to empower poor families is an environmental and health-related project. Poor environmental conditions may result in health problems. Most low-income communities experience degradation of the environment. This environment degradation may be caused by lack of municipal services due to the inability of the poor families to pay for the services. These communities can

come together to introduce a clean-up project. According to Chaskin *et al.* (1997:438) a clean-up project can be linked to the development of a recycling facility. This recycling facility can provide income for some poor families. These authors further suggest that a clean-up project can be linked to the cultivation of a community garden. Local people can be trained how to grow food gardens. These community gardens can then lead to further development of a cooperative farmers' market.

Many poor families suffer from health problems caused by malnutrition. The introduction of food gardens may improve the provision of nutritious food. According to Weyers (2001:143) various educational programs regarding nutrition issues within the community can be introduced. Chaskin *et al.* (1997:437) and Weyers (2001:144) note that some community efforts can be focused on promoting health care services. These authors state that another type of project can be to focus on negotiations with the authorities for the provision and improvement of health care services. Poor families can form an alliance that will conduct negotiations with the government to improve service delivery in their community.

(b) Programs to empower poor families

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) encourages the development and implementation of several programs to enhance social integration.

(i) Family support programs

Family support programs play an important role in the empowerment of poor families. Poor families experience extreme levels of stress and strain because of lack of support. Pinderhughes (1995:132) highlights that these families lack emotional support, financial help, companionship, marital guidance, and assistance in caring for and disciplining their children. Family support programs focus on recreating and strengthening sources of support for those families. These help to enhance family stability.

Lightburn and Kemp (1994:17) note the importance of family support programs in the development of parental competencies. These authors state that these programs promote

the healthy development of children. Family support programs include parenting skills, adult education, marital communications, problem-solving, home management and conflict resolution. Lightburn and Kemp (1994:23) and Webster-Stratton (1997:167) assume that the involvement of parents in parenting and family life education empowers them to become educators to their children. Families should therefore be encouraged to work together on projects that address community needs. Every parent attending the program should be encouraged to bring a spouse, partner or any other member of the family. During the parent group's meetings, partners should be enabled to define ways in which they can support each other when one is feeling discouraged or unable to cope. Poor families that are active participants in these programs can serve as mentors to other families in the community (Lightburn and Kemp 1994:23; Webster-Stratton 1997:167).

The survival of the family depends on various roles taken by its members. The inability of a family member to take a role assigned to him/her may result in frustrations and conflict. Lightburn and Kemp (1994:21) note that family support programs help family members to understand and negotiate ways to manage performance of the roles assigned to them. These authors further state that family support programs should also focus on the development of informal preventative and support networks.

(ii) Positive youth development programs

The other kinds of programs that can be introduced are positive youth development programs, because youth from poor families are less likely to receive support from their families and the community. This often results in delinquency and truancy. The programs that will become vehicles to achieve broad developmental goals for youth must be established. Morrison and Alcorn (1997:2) suggest that youth programs should provide opportunities for youth to develop in a variety of ways. These programs should help youth avoid risk factors such as crime and substance use, which interfere with positive outcomes.

The political history of violence and boycotts in South Africa had tremendous consequences for the development of youth. Youth's involvement in political protests

disrupted their school attendance. As a result South African young adults lack skills that can help them obtain and keep jobs (Gray 1998:184; Potgieter 1998:248). Therefore youth development programs should focus on skills building and vocational training.

Morrison and Alcorn (1997:3), Potgieter (1998:249) and Webster-Stratton (1997:168) put emphasis on the importance of family and community involvement in youth programs. They identify the following components of youth development programs as:

- Safety and protection
- Self-worth and an ability to contribute
- Mastery and social competence
- A sense of belonging
- Spirituality and self-awareness.

From the above it is clear that youth programs should focus on creating an environment in which young people will feel safe and protected. It is also important that youth from poor families should become involved in certain activities that take place in their communities. This involvement will result in the youth feeling confident of their abilities. Positive youth development programs provide increased peer support, which is another benefit of the group format. Peer support fosters parental engagement and satisfaction with the program. It also creates a sense of belonging (Morrison and Alcorn 1997:3; Potgieter 1998:249; Webster-Stratton 1997:168).

3.3.2.5 Implementing the plan

At this stage in the process of community work, the community should put the plan selected from the list of alternative plans into action. The involvement of the community is crucial during the implementation of the plan and therefore the action committee should consult with the community for the approval of the selected plan. According to Potgieter (1998:256) and Lombard (1992:267) the community should decide on the feasibility of the selected plan, or whether it should be refined or altered, because a feasible plan should address the needs and problems of the community.

Gray (1998:65) and Potgieter (1998:257) state that there are certain tasks that should be performed at this stage, to ensure the smooth running of the project. This includes the testing and reviewing of the goals of the project. In addition, available resources should be mobilized towards goal attainment. This stage may involve the hiring and training of staff and the orientation of the existing staff. Kotze and Swanepoel (cited in Lombard 1992:268 and Potgieter 1998:257) summarize the most important requirements for action during the implementation phase as the following:

- The action should be executed in general concurrence with the planning process
- The action should be aim orientated
- The action should include participation at grass-roots level
- The action should co-ordinate all efforts
- The action should be flexible and adaptable as the plan is put into practice

From the above it is evident that the selected plan of action should be implemented in accordance with the planning process. This plan should be directed towards attaining the required goal, which is to empower poor families. During implementation the social worker should take into account the views of the poor families as people being served. Therefore, implementation should provide for democratic participation. The selected plan of action should be flexible and be able to be adapted to unexpected changes during the implementation process.

Lombard (1992:268) puts emphasis on the continuous consideration of modifications. This should be done to avoid stumbling blocks that can prevent the achievement of the planned objectives. She further highlights the necessity of periodic evaluation in order to know if adaptations should be made. Evaluation will be discussed in the next section.

3.3.3 Evaluation phase

Evaluation is an important part of any helping process. Gray (1998:70), Potgieter (1998:172) and Weyers (2001:110) argue that evaluation is an ongoing process. It starts at the beginning and is implemented until the end of the helping process. The most important characteristic of this phase is to determine the success and failure of the

community work process. According to Gray (1998:70) and Lombard (1992:269) evaluation involves monitoring of the activities of the project. These authors argue that monitoring helps to detect possible obstacles that may hinder the achievement of the desired outcomes of the project. Therefore each step of the community work process should be evaluated. Both the social worker and the client system must be involved in this evaluation.

When evaluating, the social worker and the client system should find out whether the process is progressing as planned. If not, they should determine what to do to proceed as planned. They should find out whether their goals were achieved. For a project aimed at empowering poor families, the involvement of the families in the project, change in attitudes and improvement in parenting, for example, may be considered as the achievement of the aim of the project (Gray 1998:70; Lombard 1992:273; Weyers 2001:111).

Lombard (1992:274) and Potgieter (1998:175) emphasize the importance of measuring change in the circumstances of the poor families. They suggest that a measuring instrument that will determine the extent to which the goals of the project have been achieved must be selected. According to Gray (1998:71) project records are a valuable source of information for project evaluation. She emphasises the compilation of a project report. She states that project records provide time schedule and all the activities that took place during the process.

If the project has been found to be successful, it can either be terminated or a new project may be started to address another problem. If the project has been unsuccessful, it can either be started from scratch or be referred to another system for attention.

3.3.4 Termination phase

This is regarded as the final stage of the community work process. Potgieter (1998:182) states that termination is a stage when intervention is concluded and some or all of the

goals of the project have been achieved. Lombard (1992:277) assumes that termination depends on either the client systems' or the social worker's wishes to terminate.

Termination is not always an easy task to perform. Lombard (1992:278) and Potgieter (1998:182) confirm that termination may trigger different feelings. Both the social worker and the client system may find it difficult to let go. They may also experience mixed emotions and feelings of loss.

To ensure the client's readiness for termination, they must be prepared by the social worker for this stage. According to Potgieter (1998:182) termination should be a joint decision between the social worker and the client system, which should already be included in the working agreement. As a way of avoiding problems during termination, Linthicum (1991:48) suggests that the social worker should facilitate leadership within the group. He argues that if the group has leadership skills, they will be able to proceed on their own during the worker's absence. In addition Lombard (1992:278) and Potgieter (1998:184) suggest that the social worker should inform the group about the alternative resources that can be utilized to further achieve their goals. The readiness of the poor families for termination will be determined by their ability to manage the project and to create more resources on their own.

In conclusion, community work process not only provides the social worker with clear guidelines about how to utilize community work, but it also includes the way the social worker and community members should work together to enhance the communities' social functioning.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter it was explained that the community plays an important role in the life of families. It was noted that the problems experienced by families might be the result of their interaction with the environment. To solve these problems, an approach that will focus on both the family and the environment must be introduced. Community work is regarded as the relevant approach for empowering poor families.

It was explained that community work as a process has various phases. The various phases of community work were discussed. It was explained that in the assessment phase, the relevant data about the client system and the problem is collected. Different tasks that should be performed during the assessment phase were discussed. During the intervention phase, contact is made with the client system and other systems within the community. The working agreement between the social worker and the client system is reached. This phase involves the implementation of the selected plan of action. In the evaluation phase the progress of the project is monitored. When the goals are achieved, the community work process is terminated.

This chapter focused on the community work and community work process. In the next chapter, attention will be given to the findings regarding the utilization of community work in empowering poor families.

CHAPTER 4: THE UTILIZATION OF COMMUNITY WORK TO EMPOWER POOR FAMILIES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Social workers must not only begin to accept that poverty is a social problem, but they must also begin confronting it by utilizing a collectivizing intervention method. Community work is proposed as a suitable method of addressing poverty (Kamp 1996:231). Social workers rendering services to poor families need to have guidelines on how to empower these families using community work. Empowered poor families will escape the risk of remaining in poverty. The social worker who uses community work has to know which procedures to follow.

This chapter entails the results of the study undertaken with the social workers from the Department of Social Development in the Free State Province. This chapter is also an attempt to show how social workers should utilize community work to empower poor families.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study was limited to the social workers from the Department of Social Development in the Free State Province. The sample of this study was drawn from the social workers' population in the Department of Social Development. The sampling method used was the purposive sampling, as the researcher chose the respondents according to their availability and the nature of their job and kind of service rendering (Babbie & Mouton 2001:31). The study sample consisted of 25 social workers.

Quantitative research methods were used in this study. The primary instrument of data gathering used was a questionnaire. Quantitative data is presented in the form of tables and figures (Neuman 2000:34).

4.3 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The following section contains the results of the empirical research undertaken. The survey results in this regard have been broken down into several categories. The categories include the employment details of the respondents, the socio-economic circumstances of the poor families and the utilization of community work in the family context.

4.3.1 Employment details

4.3.1.1 Present employment

Respondents were asked to identify their present functional appointment. The results are displayed in Figure 4.1.

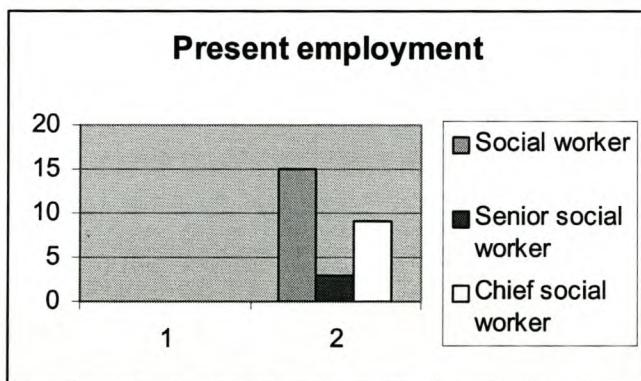


Figure 4.1: Present employment of respondents

As can be seen in figure 4.1, the highest number (15) of respondents is social workers. The second highest number (seven) is chief social workers and three of the respondents are senior social workers.

4.3.1.2 Present position

The respondents hold various positions within their place of work. Some of the positions differ according to period of service in the Department of Social Development. It was requested of the respondents to identify their present position. The results are displayed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Present position of respondents

PRESENT POSITION	f	%
Section head	0	0
Supervisor	4	16
Consultant	2	8
General practitioner	3	12
Other position	19	76
Total	25	100

n=25

Table 4.1 reflects that the highest number of respondents (19) is holding other positions such as social work position. Four of the respondents are supervisors, two consultants and two general practitioners.

From these findings, it seems that there are few social workers who are practicing as generalist practitioners. This is in contrast with the view of Sheafor, Horejsi and Horejsi (2000:87) who mention that the generalist practitioner has a broad knowledge and skills, draws on several practice theories and models and can move with minimal difficulty from one field of practice to another. These authors further say that the opposite of a generalist practice is characterized by specialization, either by type of client served, by methods used, by level of intervention or by primary role assumed by the social worker. Looking at the uniqueness of problems and needs mentioned in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), it seems that the situation in South Africa requires generalist practitioners.

4.3.1.3 Period of service

The period of service as a social worker in the Department of Social Development as well as the period of service as a social worker is presented in figure 4.2.

(a) Period of service in the Department of Social Development

Figure 4.2 summarizes the number of years respondents have held positions in the Department of Social Development.

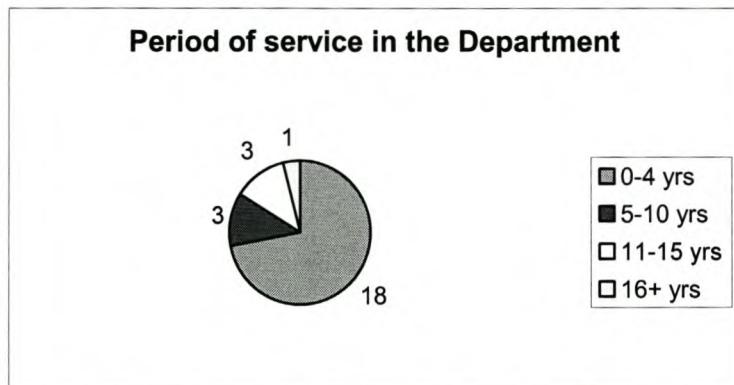


Figure 4.2: Period of service in the Department of Social Development

n=25

Figure 4.2 reflects that most respondents (18) have been working in the Department of Social Development for less than four years. Three respondents worked for between five and ten years, three other respondents worked for a period between 11 years to 15 years and only one respondent has worked in the Department of Social Development for more than 16 years. The reason for the social workers that have worked for the department for less than four years being the highest number is because the Department of Social Development in the Free State has recently employed a large number of social workers. Some of these social workers were recruited from the NGOs and others have just graduated from school.

(b) Period of service as a social worker

The respondents were requested to indicate the total number of years they have been practicing as social workers, including the years of service in the Department of Social Development. In Figure 4.3 total years of service as a social worker are indicated.

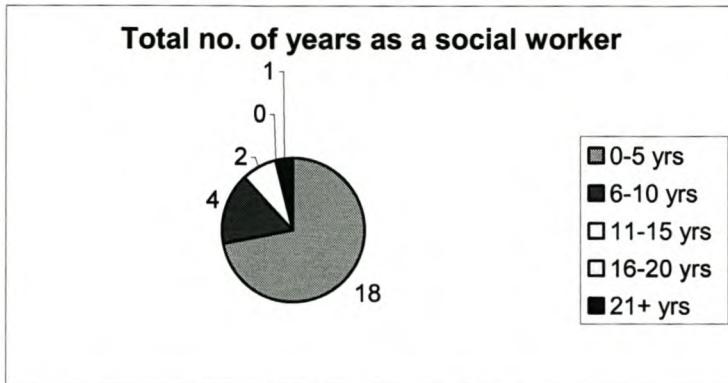


Figure 4.3: Total number of years as a social worker

It is evident from Figure 4.3 that the majority of respondents (18) were practicing social work for less than five years. Four respondents had between six to ten years experience of practice. Two respondents had more than 21 years' practice experience, and only one respondent had between 11 to 15 years' practice experience.

Looking at the total number of years of practicing social work both inside and outside the Department of Social Development, it is evident that the majority of respondents have less than five years of practice experience.

4.3.1.4 Qualifications

The respondents were asked to indicate their highest qualifications. The results are shown in Figure 4.4.

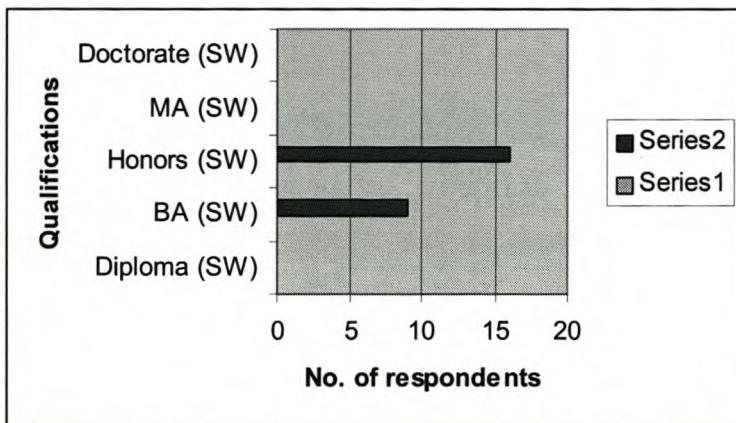


Figure 4.4: Highest social work qualifications.

The majority of respondents (16) have obtained honours degrees in social work. Nine respondents obtained bachelor's degrees in social work. None of the respondents had a diploma, master's degree or a doctorate degree in social work or any other qualification except for the above-mentioned qualifications.

From this finding, it seems that most respondents have only the first degree of social work.

4.3.1.5 Nature of service

In this section, the fields of social work and the methods of social work will be discussed.

(a) Fields of social work

There are various fields in which social workers in the Department render services. Table 4.2 displays different fields of service.

Table 4.2: Fields of service

FIELDS OF SERVICE	f	%
Child and family welfare	2	8
HIV and AIDS	3	12
Older persons and people with disabilities	1	4
Community empowerment	3	12
Statutory services	10	40
Poverty alleviation	2	8
Probation services	4	16
Total	25	100

n=25

It is evident from Table 4.2 that the majority of respondents (10) render statutory services. Four respondents render probation services, three respondents render community empowerment and three respondents render services to the people affected and infected with HIV and AIDS. Two respondents render poverty alleviation services, two other respondents render child and family welfare services and only one respondent renders services to older persons and persons with disabilities.

These findings confirm the view of Sheafor *et al.* (2000:87) who characterise the opposite of generalist practice as focusing on specialization, classified either by type of client served, by methods used, by the level of intervention or by the primary role assumed by the social worker.

It is therefore evident that in the Department of Social Development, emphasis is put on the specialization by the client served and by the level of intervention.

(b) Methods of social work

Social workers utilize various methods of social work to render services to poor families (Lombard 1992:11). Table 4.3 contains social work methods utilized by social workers in the Department of Social Development.

Table 4.3: Methods of social work

METHODS OF SOCIAL WORK	f	%
Casework	14	56
Community work	0	0
Group work	4	16
Integration of methods	7	28
Other	0	0
Total	25	100

n=25

As can be seen from Table 4.3, of the 25 respondents, fourteen utilize casework, seven utilize an integration of methods, four utilize group work, and none utilizes community work. This finding confirms Gray's (1996:199) and Sharkey's (2000:3) view that the social worker's push for professionalism has led to the abandonment of community work. In addition, it seems that most Social Development Departments had developed and interpreted the Social Welfare legislation with an emphasis on the individual method of intervention. This has resulted in the decrease in the scope for collectivizing problems.

It is evident from these findings that none of the respondents utilize community work as a method of intervention.

4.3.2 The socio-economic circumstances of poor families

It is important for a social worker to understand certain aspects of poor families. This will help determine a suitable plan of action (Leon 1999:15; Webster-Straton 1997:157). This section focuses on how an understanding of poor families and ways in which communities work can address the causes of poverty.

4.3.2.1 Understanding of poor families

The respondents were asked to indicate their understanding of a poor family. The findings are reflected in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Understanding of poor family

POOR FAMILY	f	%
Lack of income	13	52
Unable to meet basic needs	7	28
No visible means of support	5	20
Total	25	100

n=25

As shown in Table 4.4 most respondents (13) understand the term "a poor family" as a family that does not have enough income. This finding seems to be consistent with Rank (2001:883) and Wagle (2002:156) who define a poor family as a family with an income that falls below the poverty line. Wagle (2002:157) explains that the family that lacks income lives in absolute poverty. Absolute poverty signifies the lack of basic means of survival, such as food (Rank 2001:883; Wagle 2002:157).

Seven respondents indicated that a poor family is a family that is unable to meet basic needs. The remaining five respondents understand a poor family as the family that has no visible means of support. These findings correlate with those of Alcock (1997:67) who defines a poor family as one that lacks resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have living conditions and amenities which are customary in the society to which they belong.

From the above findings, it seems that according to the understanding of the respondents, the lack of income in the family results in the family being labelled as poor.

4.3.2.2 Addressing the causes of poverty by community work.

Another aspect that was investigated was how community work can be utilized to address the causes of family poverty. The results are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Addressing causes of poverty by community work

ADDRESSING CAUSES OF POVERTY	f	%
Community projects	9	36
Income generating projects	8	32
Individual empowerment	4	16
Reduce unemployment	3	12
Assessment	1	4
Total	25	100

n=25

As indicated in Table 4.6, nine respondents mentioned initiating community projects, and eight respondents indicated initiating income-generating projects as ways of addressing the causes of poverty. Four respondents indicated that reduction of unemployment is important in addressing causes of poverty. These findings correspond with the views of various authors. Rank (1996:897) and Chaskin *et al.* (1997:438) suggest that initiating income-generating projects and other community projects is another innovative step towards addressing the poor families' lack of income. Loots (1997:28) stated that the unemployment rate in South Africa not only is of economic significance but of social significance as well, since it is also a key variable in alleviating poverty.

Four respondents emphasized individual empowerment. This finding is consistent with Kamp's (1996:230) view that community work can be useful in changing poor families from passive clients into active and empowered individuals. A guideline can be formulated from this finding.

One respondent mentioned that assessing the situation of the poor families is another way in which community work can be utilized to address the causes of poverty. This finding is in line with the explanation of Green (1999:287) that community needs assessment is a useful tool in addressing service user poverty.

It is evident from these findings that the respondents understand how community work can be used to address the causes of poverty.

4.3.3 Utilization of community work

4.3.3.1 Understanding of community work

When asked to indicate their understanding of community work, respondents gave various statements. The findings are summarized in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Understanding of community work

COMMUNITY WORK	f	%
Involvement of community in intervention process	8	32
Upliftment of living standards	6	24
Process where people gather together	2	8
Empowering community members for self reliance	5	20
Process of helping people improve social functioning	4	16
Total	25	100

n=25

Table 4.6 reflects that eight respondents stated that community work entails the involvement of the community in the process of intervention. These findings correlate with the explanation of Kamp (1996: 231) and Zippay (1995:263) who explain that community work promotes the participation of community members in the change process with a focus on self-initiative.

Six respondents indicated that community work focuses on the upliftment of the standard of living. Four of the respondents see community work as a process of helping people to improve their social functioning. The findings correspond with Weyers' (2001:19)

definition of community work, which emphasizes the purpose of community work as bringing about social change, such as improving social functioning.

Two respondents understand community work as people gathering together with one mission of starting a better life together. Five respondents understand community work as a method that empowers community members to be self-reliant. Kamp (1996:231) also supports this finding, and states that empowerment is one of the important concepts of community work. It is evident from the above findings that there is no single agreed-upon definition of community work. This supports Lombard's (1992:70) confirmation that there is no generally accepted definition of community work. As a result various contributions were added to develop the concept of community work.

4.3.3.2 The use of community work to render services to poor families

The respondents were asked how they would use community work in rendering services to poor families. The findings are reflected in Figure 4.5.

Use of community work to render services to poor families

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1: Initiating projects. | 4: Network with other organizations |
| 2: Involve poor families in community work projects | 5: Distribute food parcels |
| 3: Community organize themselves | 6: Elect delegates from the community |

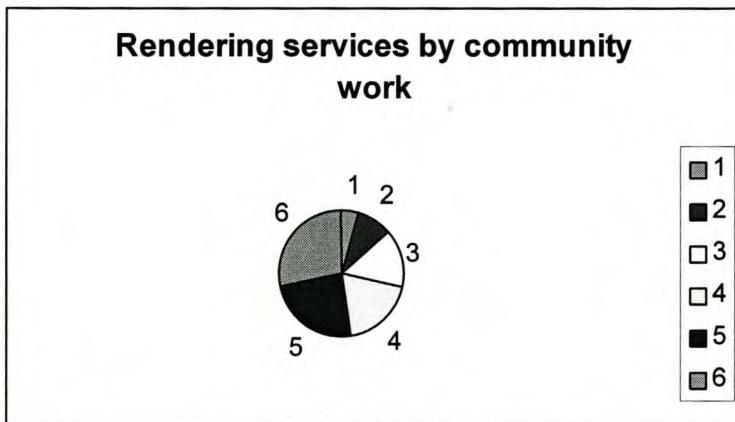


Figure 4.5: Using community work in service rendering

Figure 4.5 reflects that ten respondents mentioned that initiating community work projects is the best way of rendering services to poor families, while five respondents believed that community work can be used in service rendering by involving poor families in community work projects. Four respondents stated that letting the community members organize themselves could be regarded as using community work. Three respondents indicated that community work could be used by networking with other organizations, two respondents mentioned the distribution of food parcels, while one respondent mentioned that community work could be used by electing delegates from the community.

These findings correlate with opinions of various authors. According to Chaskin *et al.* (1997:438) the physical improvement, economic opportunity and social needs of poor families can be addressed through a set of consciously integrated projects. The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:3) encourages the partnership of different stakeholders to improve service rendering. Furthermore, the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) puts emphasis on the participation of poor people and communities in the planning and delivery of services.

From the other findings and other studies mentioned above, it would appear that there are several ways in which community work could be used by social workers in addressing the causes of poverty.

4.3.4 Process in community work

The process in community work was investigated to determine how the various phases of the process are implemented by social workers when working with poor families.

4.3.4.1 Following of process in community work

The respondents were asked whether they follow a process in community work or not. The results are displayed in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Following a process in community work

PROCESS IN COMMUNITY WORK	f	%
Yes	25	100
No	0	0
Total	25	100

n=25

All the respondents indicated that they follow a process in community work. From this finding, it seems that the respondents know the importance of following a process.

Motivation for using a process in community work

The respondents were also requested to motivate their answers to the question of whether they follow the process in community work.

Table 4.8: Motivation for using community work process

COMMUNITY WORK PROCESS	f	%
Importance of having specific procedure	14	56
Community work involves various phases	5	20
The need to identify the said problem	3	12
No motivation	3	12
Total	25	100

n=25

To motivate their answers, fourteen respondents emphasized the importance of having a specific procedure to follow and doing things in sequence. This finding correlates with the explanation of Henderson and Thomas (1987:23) that the act of establishing a process provides a way of identifying, distinguishing, ordering and categorizing the activities of the community worker.

Five respondents stated that community work process involves various phases. Another three respondents indicated that the first important thing in community work process is the need to identify the said problem, followed by the intervention. The remaining three respondents did not motivate their answers. These findings correspond with the explanation of Lombard (1992:229) that the community worker may, during different

phases of community work process, identify the needs of certain groups and thus acquire an indication of the specific roles and skills required from her/him.

It is evident from these findings that following a process when implementing community work is important.

4.3.4.2 Phases of community work process

Process in community work is done according to various phases (Lombard 1992:38). The respondents were asked to indicate which phases they use in community work process. Table 4.9 reflects the findings.

Table 4.9: Phases in community work process.

PHASES IN COMMUNITY WORK PROCESS	f	%
Assessment phase	6	30
Intervention phase	2	8
Evaluation phase	4	16
Termination phase	0	0
All phases	13	52
Total	25	100

n=25

Table 4.9 shows that most of the respondents (13) indicated that all phases should be implemented during community work process. This finding correlates with the explanation of Gray (1998:60) and Lombard (1992:239) that various phases such as assessment, intervention, evaluation and termination, phases are applicable in community work process.

Six of the respondents identified assessment as the only phase that should be implemented while four respondents see evaluation and intervention phases as the phases that should be implemented. Two respondents think that the intervention phase should be implemented during community work process. None of the respondents indicated the use of the termination phase. These findings correlate with the views of the various authors. Lee (1999:206) and Zastrow (1999:59) state that assessment is an important phase in

which the social worker gathers, analyses and weighs the objective and subjective facts of the client's situation. According to Gray (1998:62), Linthicum (1991:46), Lombard (1992:244), Potgieter (1998:168) and Weyers (2001:108), intervention and evaluation are phases which should be implemented during community work process.

From these findings, it can be deduced that various phases are important during community work process.

(a) Assessment phase

Assessment is the first and the most crucial phase in community work (Potgieter 1998:150). In this section, the implementation of assessment, tasks during assessment and the methods of data gathering will be discussed.

(i) Implementing assessment during community work process with poor families

The respondents were asked how they implement assessment with poor families. The findings are displayed in Figure 4.6.

Implementing assessment

1: Gather information in respect of family background

4: Do situational analysis

2: Individual interviews.

5: Task administering

3: Engage poor families in needs assessment

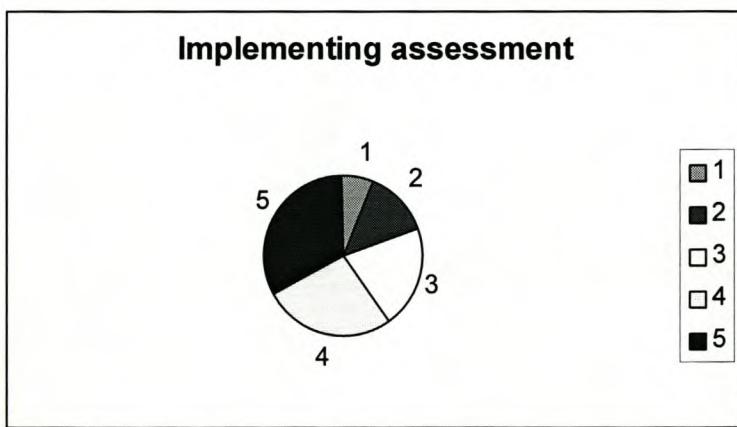


Figure 4.6: Implementing assessment with poor families

According to Figure 4.6 the highest number of respondents (nine) indicated that assessment should be implemented by gathering information in respect of the poor family's background. Six respondents emphasized the involvement of poor families in needs assessment, which Green (1999:295), Homan (1999:120) and Lombard (1992:251) also confirm.

Eight respondents mentioned that assessment should be implemented by interviewing individual members from the poor families. These findings correspond with Homan (1999:120) and Lombard (1992:248) who explained that talking to individuals in the community is a way of implementing assessment. Two of the respondents stated that the social worker should do a situational analysis, while one respondent sees task administering as the way of implementing assessment with poor families.

These findings indicate that it is important to involve poor families when implementing assessment, as they are the ones who are experiencing the problem at hand.

(ii) Tasks during assessment phase

There are various tasks that should be performed during the assessment phase (Gray 1998:63; Homan 1999:120; Lombard 1992:245; Weyers 2001:70). The respondents were asked to indicate which of these tasks should be performed. The findings are shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Tasks during assessment phase.

TASKS DURING ASSESSMENT PHASE	f	%
Compile a community profile	8	32
Situation analysis	7	28
Goal formulation	5	20
All tasks	5	20
Total	25	100

n=25

Table 4.10 reflects that the highest number (eight) of respondents stated that compiling a community profile is the only task that should be performed during assessment phase.

Seven respondents identified situation analysis, whereas five respondents identified goal formulation as the only task that should be performed. Five of the respondents indicated that all tasks are performed during the assessment phase. These findings correlate with the views of various authors. Lombard (1992:245) and Weyers (2001:69) confirm that situation analysis is a task during assessment in which the social worker gains an understanding of the circumstances in the community. Henderson and Thomas (1987:99) state that before deciding on what to do in the community, the social work should clarify his/her goals.

These findings indicate that although the respondents have some knowledge about assessment, very few are sure about the task to perform during this phase.

(iii) Methods of data gathering

The social worker can use various methods of data gathering to obtain information from poor families (Homan 1999:123 and Lombard 1992:248). The methods that were identified by respondents are displayed in Figure 4.7.

Methods of data gathering

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1: Interviews | 4: Observation |
| 2: Focus discussions | 5: Use of secondary data |
| 3: Walking or driving in the area | 6: Postal surveys |

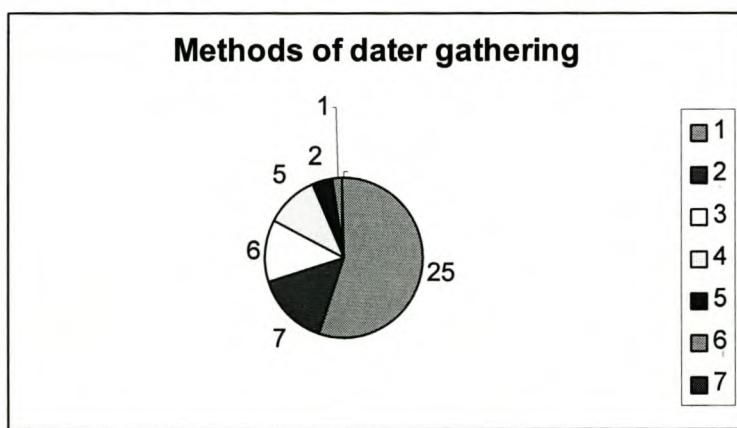


Figure 4.7: Methods of data gathering

n=25

***More than one answer could be given**

Figure 4.7 indicates that all respondents (25) indicated that interviews are the most relevant methods of data gathering. Seven respondents selected focus discussions as the method of data gathering, while six respondents recommended walking or driving in the area as a way of gathering information. Five respondents recommended the observations of the poor families' daily activities. Two respondents suggested the use of secondary data as another method of data gathering, while one respondent mentioned postal surveys.

These findings correlate with Homan (1999:123) and Lombard (1992:248) who suggested that all the above-mentioned methods of data gathering could be used to collect relevant information about the community.

(b) Intervention phase

In this section making contact with poor families, tasks during intervention, planning of projects and alternative plans of action will be discussed.

(i) Contact with poor families

This section focuses on making contact with poor families. The questions concerning why should poor families be contacted, how the social worker makes contact with poor families, how to get poor families to participate in community projects as well as how to get representation for poor families will be discussed.

The respondents were asked why is it necessary to make contact with poor families. The respondents' reasons for why contacting poor families is necessary are presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Necessity of making contact with poor families

WHY MAKE CONTACT WITH POOR FAMILIES	f	%
To get first hand and reliable information	6	24
To observe conditions around	8	32
To have assurance of the matter	3	12
To make sure problems are addressed accordingly	2	8
To understand the seriousness of the problem	4	16
To be directly involved with the community	2	8
Total	25	100

n=25

Table 4.11 reflects that the highest number of respondents (eight) mentioned that social workers make physical contact with the poor families in order to observe conditions around their homes, as this will help them determine what to do. These findings correspond with the statement of Lombard (1992:244) that the initial phase of the process of community work is a period of orientation based on general observations. Six respondents indicated that contact making helps them to get first-hand and reliable information. These findings are in line with the explanation of Linthicum (1991:45) and Lee (1999:189) that the people in the community know more about their community than the social worker, so they are in a position to provide the most relevant information about the community.

Four respondents stated that making contact enhances the understanding of the seriousness of the problem. This finding confirms Lombard's (1992:244) view that orientation regarding the community means to observe certain characteristics of the community.

Three respondents indicated that making contact helps the social worker to have assurance of the matter. A few respondents (two) stated that contact is made with the poor families to make sure that problems are addressed accordingly. Two respondents saw contact making as increasing the direct involvement with the community. These findings are in line with the views of Gray (1998:62), Linthicum (1991:46) and Lombard (1992:246), that making contact with the poor families help the social worker determine the actual needs and problems of these families. These authors further mention that determining the needs and problems of the poor families helps the social worker to plan an effective plan of action.

From these findings, it is evident that making contact with poor families is important.

◆ Making contact with poor families

The respondents were asked how they would make contact with poor families. The findings are illustrated in Figure 4.8.

Making contact

1: Hold community meetings

2: Have stakeholders involved

3: Home visits

4: Establish contact through media

5: Utilize community leaders

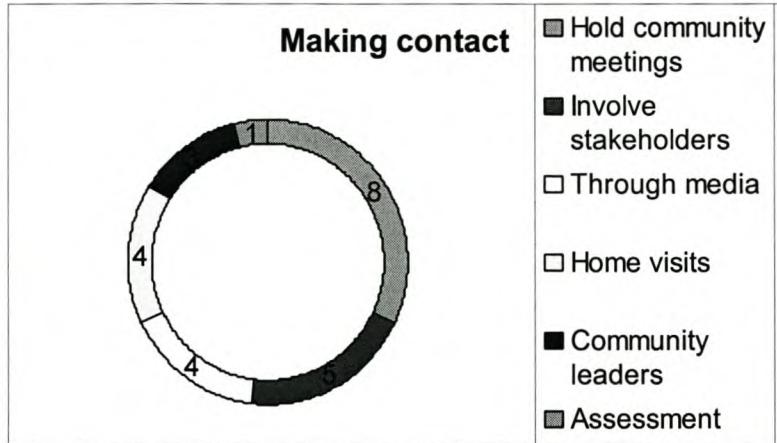


Figure 4.8: How to make contact with poor families

In response to the question, eight respondents recommended holding community meetings, which Lombard (1992:249) mentions as another way of making contact. This author explains the purpose of the community meeting as being to question people in the community context about the needs and problems of the community.

Five respondents mentioned the involvement of stakeholders; four respondents suggested the establishment of contact through the media, while three other respondents indicated the utilization of community leaders for making contact. These respondents suggested community leaders because they know who the poor families are in their communities. Four respondents mentioned that home visits are effective when making contact. The statements of Linthicum (1991:44) and Lombard (1992:248), that the door-to-door visits and talking to community leaders are important ways of making contact, support these findings.

One respondent stated that contact is made through assessment. This finding is in line with the view of Gray (1998:65) and Lombard (1992:244) that contact with poor families is established during assessment.

From these findings, it appears that there are several ways of making contact with the poor families.

♦ Getting participation of poor families

It is important that community members participate in the community projects (Linthicum 1991:31; Lombard 1992:257). The respondents were asked to state how they get the participation of poor families in the community work process. Table 4.12 summarizes the findings.

Table 4.12: Getting participation of poor families

GETTING PARTICIPATION	F	%
Explain the importance of the project and its benefits	8	32
Involve poor families from the onset	6	24
Allocate tasks	5	20
Awareness campaigns	4	16
Motivation and encouragement	2	8
Total	25	100

n=25

Most respondents (eight) suggested that the social worker should explain to the poor families the importance of their involvement and of the community work project, and how they will benefit. Six respondents indicated that involving poor families from the onset of the project would enhance their participation. Some respondents (five) recommended the allocation of tasks among members of the poor families as a way of getting them to participate. Two respondents suggested the motivation and encouragement of the poor families, and four respondents indicated the introduction of awareness campaigns.

Green (1999:295) and Lombard (1992:257) confirm that involving poor families and the community in the needs assessment, encouraging them to speak about their problems and motivating them to see the real issues in their community can increase their participation in the community work project.

Looking at the above findings, it seems that getting people to participate is a crucial part of the success of the community work project.

- ♦ Getting representation for poor families

Another aspect that was investigated was how to get representation for poor families. According to Linthicum (1991:46) and Lombard (1992:260), it is not possible for the whole community to participate in the community work process, therefore representation for the community is required. The findings are displayed in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Getting representation for poor families

GETTING REPRESENTATION	F	%
Work with stakeholders	7	28
Community choose representatives	6	24
Through volunteers	5	20
Identify role-players	4	16
Conduct community meetings	3	12
Total	25	100

n=25

The ways of getting representation for poor families were differentiated. Seven respondents stated that working hand in hand with stakeholders could help in getting representation for poor families. Several respondents (six) suggested that the community should choose its own representatives. These findings correlate with those of Linthicum (1991:46) and Lombard (1992:260) who strongly suggest that the community should elect their own representatives.

Five respondents mentioned that representatives could be established through volunteers, as certain individuals might volunteer to represent the poor families. Four respondents indicated that the social worker should identify role-players to represent poor families. Three respondents suggested that community meetings should be held for this purpose. These findings are in line with the view of Linthicum (1991:47) that various people, such as professionals and ordinary people of the community, can form the action committee.

(ii) Tasks during contract with poor families.

The respondents were asked to indicate the tasks that should be performed when contracting with the poor families. The findings are illustrated in figure 4.9.

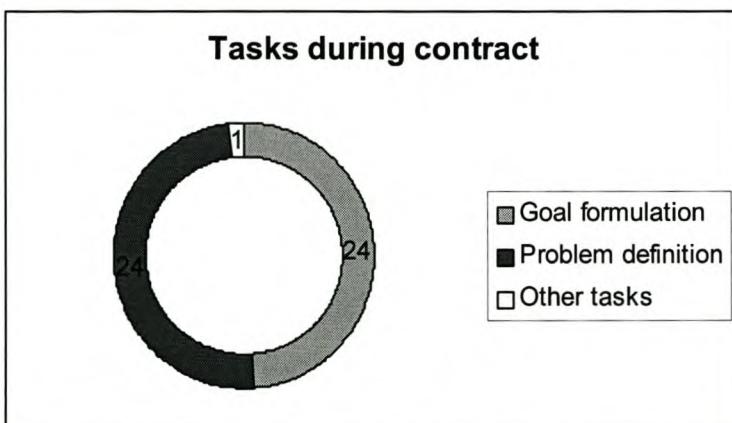


Figure 4.9: Tasks during contract with poor families.

Figure 4.9 indicates that the majority of the respondents (24) indicated that problem definition and goal formulation are tasks that should be performed during the intervention phase. Of the 25 respondents only one respondent selected others tasks to be performed during contracting with the poor families. These findings correlate with the views of various authors. Lee (1999:11) states that problem definition is a task, which entails that the community identifies and defines the problem that will be the centrepiece of the community work. Potgieter (1998:155) mentions that goals and objectives are the important elements which should be considered when contracting with poor families.

The findings indicate that both problem definition and goal formulation are important tasks for contracting.

(iii) Planning of projects

It is important to plan for community work projects in order to make sure that they serve the determined purpose. Each project and its aim should be clearly defined (Kamp

1996:230; Leon 1999:15). Understanding of empowerment, the possible strategies of empowerment and the essential resources for community work project will be discussed.

♦ *Understanding of empowerment*

The respondents were asked to explain their understanding of empowerment. The results are presented in table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Understanding of empowerment

UNDERSTANDING EMPOWERMENT	f	%
Provide skills	10	40
Give knowledge	8	32
Help people to help themselves	5	20
Tool to build morale	2	8
Total	25	100

n=25

Table 4.14 indicates that the highest number of respondents (10) understands empowerment as a process, which is directed at providing skills to the members of the poor families. The explanation of Bartle *et al.* (2002:32) that the goal of empowerment is based on helping families acquire the power, resources and skills to gain control over their lives, support this finding. Eight respondents indicated that empowerment is a process of giving knowledge. Some of the respondents (five) mentioned that empowerment is a method of helping people to help themselves. Two of the respondents understand empowerment as a tool to build the morale of the community. These findings correspond with Zippay (1995:264) who views empowerment as building community capacity. This author explains that empowerment gives community members the authority to make decisions and choices, and facilitates the development of knowledge.

♦ *Possible strategies of empowerment*

The respondents were asked to identify the strategies that can be used to empower poor families. The findings are reflected in Figure 4.10.

Strategies of empowerment

- 1: Engaging in collaborative relationships with the communities.
- 2: Networking with communities.
- 3: Building coalitions with communities

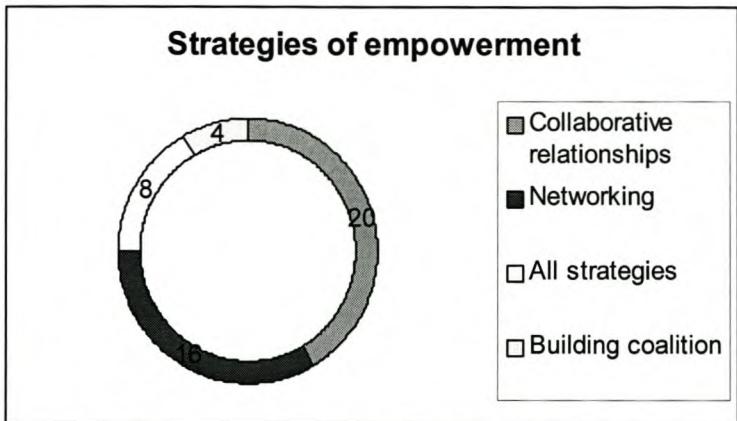


Figure 4.10: Possible strategies for empowerment

n=25

More than one answer could be given

In response to the question, the majority of respondents (20) identified engaging in collaborative relationships with the communities as the most suitable strategy of empowerment. This finding supports statements by Leon (1999:18), Graham *et al.* (1999:6) and Sviridof and Ryan (1997:130) that collaborative relationships are often important for the empowerment of poor families. Sixteen respondents chose networking with communities as a possible strategy. These findings correspond with views of various authors. Sviridof and Ryan (1997:132) note that community networks should be organized to create opportunities for poor families. Linthicum (1991:44) adds that networking provides the social worker with the base he/she needs to empower poor families.

Eight respondents indicated that all strategies could be used to empower poor families. Four respondents identified building coalitions as possible empowerment strategy. The statements of Kamp (1996:237) and Linthicum (1991:96), who say that to be able to change their communities poor families must unite support this finding.

From the above findings it is clear that several strategies of empowerment are important for the empowerment of poor families.

♦ Essential resources for community work projects

Several resources are utilized for the success of every project (Homan 1999:121; Lombard 1992:265; Netting *et al.* 1993:232). Figure 4.11 illustrates different resources, which were identified by the respondents as being essential in community work process.

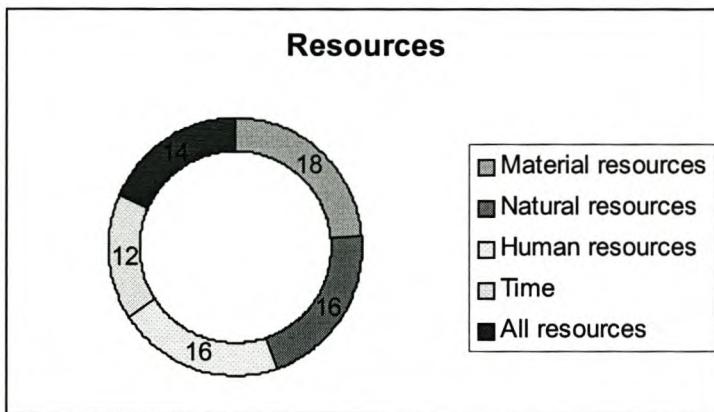


Figure 4.11: Essential resources for community work projects

According to figure 4.12 eighteen respondents identified material resources as the essential resources for community work projects. Several respondents (16) indicated human and natural resources as essential resources. Another twelve of the respondents identified time as the essential resource and the other fourteen respondents indicated that all resources are needed for community work project. The findings are consistent with the statement of Lombard (1992:264) that the resources that are necessary to meet the community needs could be in the form of money, time, individuals and natural resources such as water. This author further states that if some of the needed resources are not available, they should be created.

(iv) Alternative plans of action

In order to empower poor families certain projects and programs should be initiated. The community and the social worker list the projects and programs that they think will be effective. From this list, the project and program that seems to meet the basic criteria will be selected (Chaskin *et al.* 1997:437; Lightburn & Kemp 1994:17; Morrison & Alcorn 1997:2; Weyers 2001:140; White Paper for Social Welfare 1997).

♦ Community work projects for the empowerment of poor families

The respondents were asked to indicate community work projects that could be initiated to empower poor families. The findings are presented in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Community work projects to empower poor families

COMMUNITY WORK PROJECTS	*f	%
Income-generating projects	23	92
Housing-related projects	4	16
Environmental and health-related project	4	16
Other projects	0	0

n=25

***More than one answer could be given**

It is evident from Table 4.15 above that the majority (16) of respondents indicated income-generating projects as important for the empowerment of poor families. This finding is in accordance with Weyers (2001:140) who states that the high levels of unemployment impel task groups to view income-generating projects as a priority. Four respondents identified housing-related projects and four respondents indicated environmental and health-related projects as the projects that should be considered for the empowerment of poor families. No respondent selected other projects to be considered to empower poor families.

The above findings indicate that, there seems to be a need for income-generating projects, since the lack of income is seen as a major cause of poverty.

♦ Community work programs for the empowerment of poor families

Another aspect that was investigated was the community work program that can be introduced for the empowerment of poor families. In Table 4.16 the findings are offered.

Table 4.16: Community work programs to empower poor families

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAMS	*f	%
Family support programs	15	60
Positive youth development programs	18	72
Other projects	0	0

n=25

***More than one answer could be given**

Table 4.16 reflects that eighteen respondents indicated positive youth programs as important for the empowerment of poor families. These findings relate with those of Morrison and Alcorn (1997:2) who encourage the introduction of youth development programs, as they provide opportunities for youth to develop into responsible young adults and be able to avoid risk factors such as substance use and crime.

Fifteen respondents indicated that family support programs should also be considered for the empowerment of poor families. This finding correlates with that of Lightburn and Kemp (1994:19) who mention that family support programs strengthen the families.

According to these findings, it appears that positive youth development and family support programs are critical and contribute to the empowerment of poor families. Furthermore, the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997:7) promotes the implementation of appropriate programs to enhance social integration.

♦ The use of community work projects and programs to address effects of poverty

The respondents were asked how community work projects and programs could address the effects of poverty. Figure 4.12 reflects the results.

Addressing effects of poverty

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1: Equip people with skills | 3: Help generate income for a family. |
| 2: Lessen alarming rate of poverty | 4: Improve self-reliance |

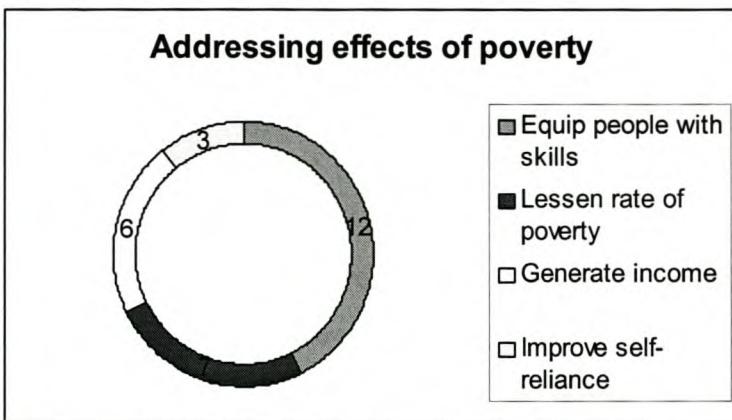


Figure 4.12: How community work projects and programs address effects of poverty

Figure 4.12 shows that the majority of respondents (12) indicated that community work projects and programs equip people with skills. These findings are in line with Chaskin *et al.* (1997:437), Lightburn and Kemp (1994:19), and Morrison and Alcorn (1997:2), who confirm that certain projects and programs become vehicles to broad achievements by providing family members with specific skills such as coping skills and vocational skills. Seven respondents mentioned that community work projects and programs lessen the alarming rate of poverty, while six respondents stated that projects and programs help generate income for the families. The findings support the idea of Chaskin *et al.* (1997:438) that a neighbourhood clean-up project could be linked to the development of a recycling facility, which in turn could provide income for families. Three respondents stated that projects and programs improve self-reliance, which corresponds with the view of Morrison and Alcorn (1997:3) that community programs enhance competency among individuals.

(c) Evaluation phase

The community work projects need to be evaluated to measure changes in the circumstances of poor families (Lombard 1992:274; Potgieter 1998:175). In this section

the respondents' understanding of the evaluation phase and the importance of the evaluation phase when implementing community work process will be discussed.

(i) Understanding of evaluation phase

The respondents were asked to indicate their understanding of the evaluation phase of community work. The results are illustrated in Figure 4.13.

Understanding of evaluation

1: Review of what has been achieved

2: Process in which community work is evaluated to determine further planning

3: A phase that monitors progress and decline of the project

4: Process done to improve project

5: It is continuous in all phases

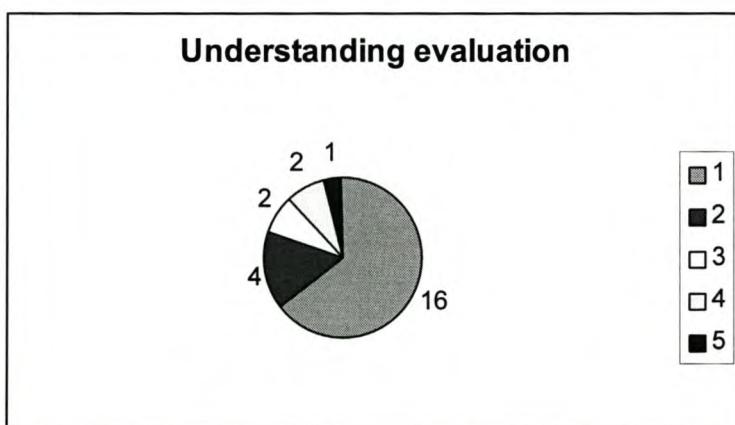


Figure 4.13: Understanding of evaluation

It is evident from Figure 4.13 that the majority of respondents (16) indicated that they understand evaluation as a process of monitoring the progress or decline of the project. Four respondents understand evaluation as a review of what has been achieved while two of the respondents stated that evaluation is a process whereby community work is evaluated to determine further planning. Two respondents also understand evaluation as continuous in all phases. Various authors support these findings. Gray (1998:70), Lombard (1992:272), Potgieter (1998:172) and Weyers (2001:110) mention that evaluation is an ongoing process, which starts at the beginning and continues until the

end of the community work process. These authors explain that the most important feature of evaluation is to determine the success and failure of the community work process. Only one respondent mentioned that evaluation improves the community work project.

From these findings, it is clear that the respondents have a clear understanding of the function of evaluation in community work.

(ii) The importance of evaluation when implementing community work project

Table 4.17 displays the findings concerning the importance of evaluation during the implementation of the community work process.

Table 4.17: The importance of evaluation

IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION	f	%
Gives opportunity to judge progress	11	44
Helps to see changes in the project	7	28
Helps to determine goal achievement	6	24
Helps to save money	2	8
Total	25	100

n=25

Table 4.17 shows that eleven respondents indicated that evaluation gives the opportunity to judge the progress of the community work project. Seven respondents stated that evaluation helps to see changes in the project, while six respondents indicated that evaluation helps to determine goal achievement. Two respondents stated that evaluation helps to save money as the project progresses. These findings correspond with Gray (1998:70), Lombard (1992:273) and Weyers (2001:111) who explain that evaluation gives the opportunity to judge whether the project is progressing as planned. Furthermore, evaluation helps to detect the changes that may hinder the progress of the community project. The early detection of these changes may prevent any problems that would have developed during the running of the project.

The above findings show the importance of continuous evaluation from the beginning until the end of the project.

(d) Termination phase

(i) Understanding of termination phase

The respondents were asked to indicate their understanding of the termination phase in community work. The results are presented in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18: Understanding of termination

TERMINATION PHASE	f	%
Ending phase	15	60
Disengagement of social worker's role in the project	5	20
End of the project	3	12
Unavailability of funds	2	8
Total	25	100

n=25

It is evident from Table 4.18 that the majority of respondents (15) understand termination as the ending phase. Five respondents indicated that termination is the disengagement of the social worker's role in the project. Three respondents understand termination as the end of the project, while two respondents indicated that termination means the unavailability of funds.

These findings correlate with the view of Henderson and Thomas (1998:285) that there are various reasons that might lead to the termination of the community work project.

These authors state that these reasons are:

- The achievement of goals.
- The group's decision to amalgamate with another group.
- A lack of funds.
- A decision to change the nature of services provided.
- The social worker's decision to terminate his/her services.
- An unplanned termination due to some problem in the group.

(ii) Preparing poor families for termination of services

In Table 4.19 the findings concerning how to prepare poor families for termination of services are displayed.

Table 4.19: Preparing poor families for termination of services

PREPARING FOR TERMINATION OF SERVICES	F	%
Inform them at the onset of the project	13	52
Encourage them to be responsible	5	20
Teach poor families to take ownership of the project	3	12
Have information session with poor families	2	8
Mention it when on middle phase	1	4
Make sure they gain self-reliance	1	4
Total	25	100

n=25

Table 4.18 shows that most respondents (13) mentioned that in preparation for termination, the social worker should inform the poor families about termination at the onset of the community work project. Five respondents stated that the social worker should encourage the poor families to be responsible for the project, while three of the respondents indicated that poor families should take ownership of the community work project. Two respondents suggested that the social worker should conduct information sessions with the poor families to discuss their feelings about the termination and their experiences in the project. One respondent mentioned that the social worker should make sure that poor families gain self-reliance, and another respondent suggested that the issue of termination should be mentioned during on the middle phase of the process.

These findings correspond with views of various authors. According to Potgieter (1998:182), termination should be a joint decision between the social worker and the poor families, which should already be included in the working agreement. This implies that the social worker prepares the poor families for termination from the beginning of the community work process. Linthicum (1991:48) suggests that the social worker should facilitate leadership within the poor families so that they will be able to proceed on their

own. According to Lombard (1992:278) the social worker should assist the family to evaluate their experiences and achievements during the preliminary phase of termination.

From the above findings, it seems that preparing poor families for termination is important.

4.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The research findings contained in this chapter entail information about community work and the community work process. Most of these findings correlates with the views and findings of studies conducted by other authors that were reflected in the literature review presented in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

The findings clarified the role of the social worker during the implementation of the community work process. In the next chapter the conclusions and recommendations with regards to the findings of this study will be presented. These conclusions can serve as guidelines that the social worker can follow when implementing the community work process.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Community work is an essential method in social work that can be used to empower poor families. According to the findings of the study, community work is not used to its full potential by social workers in the Department of Social Development.

The goal of the study was to present guidelines to social workers for empowering poor families by means of community work. The objectives that were formulated for the achievement of this goal are presented in several chapters of this study. Socio-economic circumstances of the poor families were discussed in Chapter 2. The utilization of community work as a method to empower poor families was discussed in Chapter 3. The findings of this study were presented in Chapter 4.

This chapter focuses on the conclusions and the recommendations with regards to the findings in Chapter 4.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions will be based on the findings concerning the employment details of the respondents, the socio-economic circumstances of poor families and the utilization of community work.

5.2.1 Employment details

This section will focus on the nature of service, which entails the fields of service and the methods of social work.

5.2.1.1 *Fields of service*

According to the findings, the majority of respondents render statutory services with the focus on casework. It is concluded that the service rendering is still based on traditional social work, which puts emphasis on individual intervention.

5.2.1.2 Methods of social work

Most respondents utilized the casework method. It can be concluded that community work is either not utilized or is utilized at very minimal level. This conclusion is in contrast with the developmental approach that is required in the South African context (White Paper for Social Welfare 1997).

5.2.2 Socio-economic circumstances of the poor families

5.2.2.1 Understanding of poor family

Most respondents understand a poor family as a family that does not have enough income. Based on this finding, it can be concluded that lack of income is a major contributing factor to the poverty of the family. This lack of income results in more problems, such as poor health and domestic violence.

5.2.3 The utilization of community work

This section will focus on community work and community work process.

5.2.3.1 Community work

Most respondents do not utilize community work. This may be because there are no clear guidelines for the utilization of community work as a method of intervention. Despite the fact that none of the respondents utilizes community work, it can be concluded that, based on the findings, the majority of respondents understand what community work is.

According to the findings, most respondents mentioned that initiating community work projects is the best way of rendering services to poor families. It can also be concluded that the majority of social workers have a clear knowledge of how they would use community work to assist poor families.

5.2.3.2 Community work process

According to the findings, all the respondents would follow a process when utilizing community work. The majority of respondents would use all the phases of community

work process. It can be concluded that the respondents know that they have to follow a process in community work.

The majority of respondents stated that poor families should be involved in the needs assessment. Based on this finding, it can also be concluded that most respondents know how to implement assessment with poor families. Very few respondents know all the tasks that should be performed during the assessment phase. Lack of practice in community work is a causal factor in the lack of knowledge displayed. It can be concluded that the respondents lack knowledge about tasks that should be performed during assessment.

During the intervention phase, the social worker tries to put into action the information gathered during the assessment phase. The majority of respondents stated that the social worker makes contact with poor families to observe their condition. Based on this finding, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents understand why it is necessary to contact poor families, how to make contact with poor families, getting participation of poor families and how to get representation for poor families.

According to the findings, most respondents mentioned that both problem definition and goal formulation are the tasks that should be performed when contracting with poor families. It can also be concluded that the majority of respondents know the tasks that should be performed when contracting with poor families and their representatives.

Most respondents defined empowerment as a process directed at providing skills to the poor families. Based on this finding, it can be concluded that all the respondents understand what empowerment means.

Several projects and programs should be initiated and implemented to empower poor families. According to the findings, most respondents indicated income-generating projects as important for the empowerment of poor families. It can be concluded that the

majority of respondents recommended the initiation and implementation of income-generating projects for the empowerment of poor families.

The majority of respondents suggested the introduction and implementation of both positive youth development programs and family support programs to empower poor families. Based on this finding, it can also be concluded that most respondents proposed the introduction and implementation of both positive youth development programs and family support programs for the empowerment of poor families.

Evaluation is an essential element of community work process. According to the findings, most respondents understand evaluation as a process of monitoring the progress or decline of the community work project. It can be concluded that the majority of respondents understand the importance of evaluation, and realise when the community work process should be evaluated.

The majority of respondents stated various reasons, such as the achievement of goals, the deployment of the social worker, or the lack of necessary funds that can lead to the termination of the community work project. Based on this finding, it can be concluded that most respondents understand the meaning of termination, the importance of preparing poor families for termination and the reasons the community work project should be terminated.

It seems that although the respondents do not utilize community work as a method of intervention, they have a clear knowledge of community work and community work process. The reason for this can be because in social work practice, all methods of social work utilize the same process. It is also clear that the few factors of community work process that the respondents did not understand might be the result of a lack of community work practice. It can also be concluded that the authorities fail to provide clear regulations with regards to community work practice.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations will be based on the findings and the conclusions of this study. It is recommended that the Department of Social Development in Free State Province:

- Should formulate a new regulation that will oblige all the newly appointed social workers to practice community work as a social work method during their first two years of appointment.
- Should ensure that all the social workers in magisterial districts of Botshabelo, Thaba Nchu and Bloemfontein who utilize community work should receive regular supervision that will only be offered by supervisors who have extensive experience of community work practice.
- Should ensure that all the social workers in the magisterial districts of Botshabelo, Thaba Nchu and Bloemfontein, including their supervisors, should receive regular in-service training with regards to the utilization of community work method.
- Should ensure that when possible managers in the Department of Social Development should at least have, as a minimum requirement, a qualification and five years experience in social work.

5.3.1 Further research

It is further recommended that future research can be conducted on the following topics:

- The role played by the supervisor in improved service rendering by community workers.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

TITLE: THE UTILIZATION OF COMMUNITY WORK IN EMPOWERING POOR FAMILIES

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

This questionnaire consists of three sections; sections A, B and C. Section A consists of employment history, section B consists of socio-economic circumstances of poor families and section C consists of the utilization of community work.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine the attitude, knowledge and skills of social workers concerning community work as a strategy to use for empowering poor families.

GENERAL

Read all the questions and answer them. Do not put your name on the questionnaire.

Certain questions require only a cross in the relevant block, while other questions may require an explanation. Please note that you can select more than one answer for some of the questions.

SECTION A

1. EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

1.1 Present employment

1.1.1 Indicate your present functional appointment.

Social worker	
Senior social worker	
Chief social worker	
District manager	

1.1.2 What is your present position?

Section head	
Supervisor	
Consultant	
General practitioner	
Other	

1.2 Period of service

1.2.1 How long have you been employed in the Department of Social Development.

1.2.2 How long have you been working as a social worker.

1.3 Qualifications

1.3.1 Indicate your highest qualification.

Diploma in Social Work	
BA in Social Work	
Honors degree in Social Work	
Masters degree in Social Work	
Doctorate in Social Work	
Other	

1.4 Nature of service

1.4.1 Indicate in which of the following fields of social work you are involved in service rendering.

Child and family welfare	
HIV and AIDS	
Older persons and disability	
Community empowerment	
Statutory services	
Poverty alleviation	
Probation services	
Other	

1.5 Social work methods

Which of the following social work methods do you use when rendering services?

Casework	
Community work	
Group work	
Integration of methods	
Other	

SECTION B

2. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES OF POOR FAMILIES

2.1 How would you define a poor family?

2.2 How do you think the causes of family poverty can be addressed by community work?

SECTION C

3. UTILIZATION OF COMMUNITY WORK

3.1 Explain your understanding of community work.

3.2 Explain how community work can be used to render services to poor families.

3.3 Process in community work

3.3.1 Do you follow any process during community work?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.3.1.1 Motivate your answer.

3.3.2 Which of the following phases do you use when implementing the community work process?

Assessment phase	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intervention phase	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation phase	<input type="checkbox"/>
Termination phase	<input type="checkbox"/>
All phases	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.3.3 Assessment Phase

3.3.3.1 How would you implement assessment during the community work process with poor families?

3.3.3.2 Indicate which of the following tasks in assessment should be performed when assessing poor families? (More than one answer can be selected)

Situation analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compile community profile	<input type="checkbox"/>
Goal formulation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.3.3.2 Indicate which of the following methods of data gathering would provide relevant information about poor families? (More than one answer can be selected)

Interviews with clients or professionals working in the community to be surveyed	
Postal surveys to agencies in the area	
Focus discussions with community representatives	
Participant observation	
Walking or driving around an area	
Use of secondary data such as official statistics	
Other	

3.3.4 Intervention phase

3.3.4.1 Why would it be necessary for the social worker to contact the poor families themselves?

a) How would you make contact with poor families in order to involve them in a community work project?

b) How would you get poor families to participate during community work process?

c) In what ways could the social worker get representation of poor families in the community?

3.3.4.2 Indicate which of the following tasks should be performed when contracting with poor families. (More than one answer can be selected)

Problem definition	
Goal formulation	
Other	

3.3.4.3 Planning of projects

- a) Explain your understanding of empowerment as an outcome of community work.

- b) Which of the following do you regard as possible strategies of empowerment for poor families? (More than one answer can be selected)

Networking with the community	
Building coalitions with the community	
Engaging in collaborative relationships with the community	
Other	

- c) Which of the following resources would you regard as essential for community work projects?

Human resources	
Natural resources	
Material resources	
Time	
All resources	
Other resources	

3.3.4.4 Alternative plans of action

- a) Which of the following community work projects and programs you would use for the empowerment of poor families.

Income generating projects	
Housing related projects	
Environmental and health related projects	
Family support programs	
Positive youth development programs	
Other	

b) How could community work projects and programs address the effects of poverty?

3.3.5. Evaluation phase

3.4.5.1. Explain your understanding of the evaluation phase.

3.3.5.2. Of what use is the evaluation phase when implementing a community work project to address the problems and needs of the poor families?

3.3.6. Termination phase

3.3.6.1 Explain your understanding of the termination phase.

3.3.6.2. How would you prepare the poor families for termination of your involvement in a community work project?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION