UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN RURAL SOUTH AFRICA: THE CASE OF TSHIDILAMOLOMO VILLAGE THUSONG SERVICE CENTRE

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DECLARATION

I Boikaego Dolphus Seadira, a Masters Communcation student at North West University Mafikeng campus hereby declare that this dissertation is a product of my own research work, and all other sources of materials are duly acknowledged. This work has not been submitted for any academic degree to any university.

Signature.....

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19/09/2013

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ABSTRACT

This study looked at the Thusong Service Centre in Tshidilamolomo which was established by the government of South Africa with the intention of bringing integrated services within reach of these rural communities. This centre has ICT telecentre built inside with the primary aim of providing ICT services to the Tshidilamolomo communities, particularly the youth, and to bridge the distance and digital divide between these villagers and their urban based counterparts.

The method of research used by this research include both the focus group and unstructured interview. Some of the findings showed that the rolling out of ICTs in rural Tshidilamolomo was done haphazardly and without proper consultation of the communities. From the empirical study conducted, it is very apparent that there is a dearth of information about the existing Thusong ICT telecentres and it is strongly recommended that a detailed survey of them be carried out to establish their current status, potential future, short and medium term needs.

This study draws from the Participatory Communication through Freire's notion of dialogue and Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation theories to investigate the use of the ICT services harboured at the Tshdidilamolomo telecentre and whether the centre serves its anticipated purpose.

Julius Nyerere

"People cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves".

Paulo Freire

"Those who commit themselves to people must re-examine themselves constantly. This conversion is so radical as not to allow ambiguous behavior."

DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Conscientisation

Conscientisation is the process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action. Action is fundamental because it is the process of changing the reality. Paulo Freire noted that we all acquire social myths which have a dominant tendency, and so learning is a critical process which depends upon uncovering real problems and actual needs (Freire 1970).

Content

According to Cutlip (1994) for communication to be effective, the content of the message must have meaning for the receiver, and it must be compatible with her value system. It must be relevant to the receiver's situation.

Dialogue

Gertruida Du Plooy (1991:20) define dialogue as verbal communication between at least two people, which is characterised by authenticity, inclusion, confirmation, presentness, spontaneity and/or spirit of mutual equality.

Diffusion of innovation

Diffusion is the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. It is a special type of communication, in that the messages are concerned with new ideas. Communication is a process in which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach mutual understanding (Rogers 2003:5).

Naming:

Naming refers to the name given to an innovation (ICT initiative). The name given to an innovation often affects its perceived compatibility, and therefore its rate of adoption.

Rogers (2003) highlights that inadequate attention has been paid to what innovation are called by potential adopters, and as result many mistakes have been made.

Participatory Communication

Participatory communication is about involving individuals and communities through a process of empowerment in development projects aimed for them. This process is usually facilitated by outsiders by engaging a community in a dialogue to identify the community's problems, provide the necessary resources, information or skills to overcome the problem, and in turn allow people to gain control over their lives (Figueroa, Kincaid, Rani & Lewis, 2002).

Telecentre

A telecentre is a public place where people can access computers, the internet, and other digital technologies that enable them to gather information, create, learn, and communicate with others while they develop essential digital skills. While each telecentre is different, their common focus is on the use of digital technologies to support community, economic, educational, and social development, reducing isolation, bridging the digital divide, promoting health issues, creating economic opportunities, and reaching out to youth for example (Stockholm, 2000).

Positioning

This refers to how the product or service should be positioned in the minds of the identified target audience. (Skinner *et al., 2007)*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This chapter examines the background to the research, outlining the importance of the research, highlighting the problem statement and pointing the way forward.

According to the South African Government Communication and Information system (1999), a one-stop service centre provides information and services to communities through the development communication approach, in an integrated manner. These information and communication services include government information and on-site guidance regarding services as well as community information and awareness (GCIS 1999).

The importance of access to Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) for rural communities has been recognised in various countries across the globe. Many countries have managed to leapfrog some of the development hurdles and have enjoyed the socio-economic benefits of these technologies. These have been evidenced in countries such as Colombia where ICTs have been used in education, in Brazil, Malaysia and Kenya where the benefits were verified in NGOs, and in India where significant benefits have been confirmed in rural entrepreneurs (Batchelor, 2003). These countries are prototype of what access to information can do for rural communities if ICTs are effectively used.

Growth in ICTs has the potential to propel development in rural areas as these technologies are effective communication tools in today's society. The information that these technologies carry, as well as the communication enabling them, is increasingly becoming an important factor of production (Jacobs & Herselman, 2006: 295). However, in poor and underdeveloped countries there are still gaps between those who have access to these technologies and those who do not. This is referred to as the digital divide. This divide can result in in information and knowledge poverty, contributing to underdevelopment (ibid).

Since 1994, South Africa has experienced remarkable changes in the communications sector, characterised by rapid changes in technology and potential technological growth (Barker 2001). However, despite these changes there is still a significant difference between the information-rich, a small minority, and the information-poor, the majority of the population in South Africa (Naude, 1999). These differences are more noticeable when urban and rural areas are compared.

ICTs are those devices which have information capturing, storage, processing and displaying capacity by electronic means (Rao, 2004).They are also defined as a range of electronic technologies which when converged in new configuration are flexible, adaptable, enabling and capable of transforming organisations and redefining social relations (Michiels & Van Crowder 2001). These technologies are seen as very important for rural development as they help in facilitating a set of activities in rural development.

A rural area is a sparsely populated area in which people farm or depend on natural resources. These include villages and small towns that are dispersed throughout these areas. Large settlements in the former homelands, created by apartheid removals, also form part of rural areas (Lesame, 2005:100). On the same breadth, the South African government in an Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy Document (2000) notes that rural areas generally have common characteristics such as dispersed populations with agriculture as the only dominant economy. Resource mobilisation opportunities are very limited in rural areas. Thus, the spatial dispersion of rural communities brings about tremendous challenges to development. This makes it difficult for the provision of quality services as service providers face the challenge of bringing services at a very high cost to these areas (South Africa 2000).

Many rural communities across South Africa face several challenges in benefiting from the ICTs initiatives. As a result of these challenges, the rural communities are starved of various services including the area of information dissemination. An example of such rural community is Tshidilamolomo village in Ratlou local municipality just outside

Mahikeng. This community consists of the aged, the people who cannot read and write the disabled, the youth and the unemployed. According to media reports (Motsweding FM, 2012), the Tshidilamolomo Thusong telecentre section is run by untrained and unqualified people who were illegitimately employed by the local Ratlou municipality and GCIS. Subsequently, this led to the under-utilisation of the telecentre services. Therefore, this sparked debate on the actual purpose of the centre, that is, whether it really serves the information needs of Tshidilamolomo community.

It is against this background that this study is undertaken. That is, to find out the obstacles which prevent the Tshidilamolomo community to use ICTs harboured in the Thusong telecentre for their own development, and to explore what other strategies that can be used to improve the use of ICTs in this village are.

1.1. Statement of the problem

The ICTs have the potential to offer significant development opportunities to rural-based communities in South Africa. However, the Tshidilamolomo community faces several obstacles in using the ICTs services in the Thusong telecentre section, and thereby struggle with the best approaches to leverage these ICT services into economic development strategies. This has been confirmed by the recent SABC Motsweding FM current affairs programme, Itlhabe Botlhale broadcasted on 10 June 2012. The programme (which is in our records) confirmed that people employed at the centre do not possess the relevant skills to operate the telecentre. It confirmed that the centre which is supposed to provide services such as internet, among others, has employed people who are unskilled in ICT and therefore unsuitable for the position they occupy. They do not have relevant technical know-how. In addition, there is no clear definition of roles between the GCIS and the Ratlou local municipality with regard to who is supposed to be employing people at the centre (SABC 2012). It is worth noting that the centre also serves other neighbouring villages such as Logageng, Mmakgori, Dingateng and Masamane to mention just a few.

Cassius-Lubisi (2005) and Gendall (2008) argue that the previous rural ICT initiatives focused mainly on providing physical (hardware) access, thus overlooking other types of access such as socio-cultural, software and content access, which has been evidenced in the case of Tshidilamolomo centre. This study argues that if these factors were integrated at the infant stage of the community based project, they would have brought a sense of ownership of the centre among the community members. The study will find out whether the socio-cultural, software and content access were addressed prior to the implementation of Tshidilamolomo centre. To consider these factors, people consultation as well as profound awareness programmes on the availability of the centre should have been observed. These factors were measured in terms of how they affect the diffusion of ICTs in Tshidilamolomo village. The present study seeks to investigate the neglected question of socio-cultural, software and content access in Tshidilamolomo Thusong telecentre. Based on the above-mentioned problem, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1.2. Research question

The study is guided by the following research question:

Why are ICTs not providing the expected developmental results in Tshidilamolomo Village in Ratlou Local Municipality?

In order to answer above question, the study addresses the following sub-questions:

- What are the barriers that hinder the use of ICTs in rural Tshidilamolomo ?
- How can the use of ICTs be improved to develop the rural communities of Tshidilamolomo?
- What are appropriate ICT awareness strategies which policy makers and policy implementers can employ to support the development of Tshidilamolomo communities?

1.3. Significance of the study

The study will contribute to possible solutions in overcoming barriers experienced in rolling-out ICT projects in rural areas. As such, the study will therefore help policy makers and policy implementers of ICTs in rural areas of South Africa to devise relevant strategies and awareness programmes on the use and benefits of ICTs.

1.4. Aims

The aim of the study is, to determine the effective use of the ICT section of the Thusong service centre by the Tshidilamolomo rural community.

1.5. Objectives

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the following objectives are addressed:

- to identify barriers that hinders the use of ICTs in Tshidilamolomo.
- to develop possible mechanisms of overcoming those barriers.
- to explore possibilities on how to improve the use of ICTs in the development of rural communities in Tshidilamolomo.
- to examine appropriate ICT strategies which policy makers and policy implementers can employ to support the development of Tshidilamolomo communities.

1.6. Demarcation of the study

The study was undertaken at the Tshidilamolomo village in the Ratlou Local Municipality. This is an area in the jurisdiction of the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality. The village is surrounded by a number of villages, such as, Logageng, Mmakgori, Mabule, Masamane, to mention but a few. It is located in one of the most remote and undeveloped areas in the North West Province of South Africa. The village is situated far from the capital city of the province Mafikeng, within the Ratlou local municipality. For conducting this study, the Ratlou local municipality's statistics for 2007

were used. According to descriptive community survey by Statistics South Africa (2007), the Ratlou local municipality which Tshidilamolomo falls under has a population of 98 102. 71.45 % of the said population is made up of the youth who are mainly not employed, the illiterate, the disabled and the aged.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Chapter 2 is divided into five sections. Section 1 deals with the literature review, which was reviewed by other scholars on ICTs use in rural development in different sectors across the globe. Section 2 deals with ICT use in South Africa context. Section 3 observed the two structures of governance in rural South Africa, the traditional leaders and the local government, the effects of these two structures on people participation, the laws which govern the participation and the relationship between these two systems and ICT literature in the traditional government set up. Section 4 provided the overview of the report by Communication task team (Comtask) of 1996 which preceded the formation of GCIS and subsequently Thusong service centres. Section 5 which is the last section of Chapter 2, focused on the theoretical framework which this study undertook, namely, participatory communication through dialogue and diffusion of innovation.

SECTION 1

2.2. The use of ICT across the globe

2.2.1. ICT use in rural Entrepreneurship

A study was conducted in a village called Kerala in rural India on the role of ICTs in social development and entrepreneurship (Kuriyan, Ray, and Toyama, 2008). The Akshaya project strived for social development through computer services, and financial

viability through cost recovery. The project was implemented by the Kerala government with the participation of the private sector.

The project intended to use the Bottom of the Pyramid Model (BoP model) which promotes development through entrepreneurship in business circles. The project fused the BoP model with telecentres in rural Kerala. The model recognises that a well-calculated business strategy can simultaneously be a development strategy. It recommends that, for rural people to experience development, rural markets should participate in leading poverty alleviation strategies not through subsidies but through generation of opportunities and wealth (ibid). However, achieving these two objectives, i.e., revenue generation or/and cost recovery which were the entrepreneurial goals for private sector, and meeting the developmental goals, the state's goals was not simple. The researchers categorised the entrepreneurs into three types, namely, 1) the Socially Driven, 2) the Business Driven, and 3) the Balance Driven (ibid).

It was found that the social driven entrepreneurs expected the government to take total control of their centres, and even to pay for their debts. The business driven entrepreneurs on the other side expected the government to create markets for their businesses. It was only the balance driven entrepreneurs who were able to strike a balance of fusing the two goals of financial sustainability and social development together. They did not depend on Akashaya (the government project) to meet their business expectations. They rather saw the project as partners, hence their successes. They also had their social responsibilities embedded in their businesses before Akashaya was initiated (ibid).

From the above analysis, we may conclude that the success of ICT projects for rural development depends on a clear definition of roles. Stakeholders involved in development projects must know precisely what is expected of them, a point which the authors did not reflect on. It also surfaced that conflicts of interest must be eliminated by consulting and involving communities from the onset so that development projects are not hindered. It is also significant to note that the importance of role definitions in addressing possible conflicts of interest in future must be clarified. It surfaced from this

study that most rural development initiatives are not owned by the people, but rather are imposed and driven by the donors on the communities, as a result, these projects end up being ineffective and fail in the process.

2.2.2. ICT use in Non-Profit Organisation in Brazil

A study was conducted by a non-profit, non-governmental organisation on how to promote the social inclusion of disadvantaged communities by using ICTs as the tools for citizens' rights and development. The Committee for Democracy in Information Technology (CDI) was the body behind this initiative. It facilitated the operation of Information Technology and Citizens' Rights schools (ITCRs) in Brazil by providing equipment (hardware and software), training of local educators, and local administrative and technical support. The schools were self-managed and self-sustaining, but supported and monitored by regional CDI offices. The majority of CDI target groups were children, visually impaired youth, indigenous people, prisoners, the physically and mentally disabled, and other disadvantaged groups (Bachelor *et al.*, 2003).

The successes of this project were credited to CDI's aptitude to structure a methodology in a way that a diverse range of disadvantaged communities were reached. In the CDI model, the major partner is the local community. Volunteers, with help from CDI, set up the regional offices, which in turn created the schools in partnership with local community centres, neighbourhood associations, and religious groups, among others. Regional CDI offices used existing buildings to establish the ITCRs and train community organisations as well as members of the community. The organisation used local community centres, churches, and other available institutions to produce new schools. This approach eliminated many overhead costs. Partnership with the local community was the key to the model's success but CDI provided the methodology, equipment, and training, and the community used these tools to address its specific needs (Bachelor *et al.,* 2003).

The information technology training provided by the schools allowed the youth from low-income communities to learn to use the Internet as a basis for professional

development; and therefore, increased their chances on the job market. In addition, CDI and ITCRSs regional offices were more like franchises. Local staff was then trained to run them, with CDI providing hardware, software, and technical support until such support was no longer necessary. Educators received a five-month initial training; their first class was supervised before they were deemed qualified. School staffs were also trained in network support. The CDI headquarters in Rio, which supervised regional offices across Brazil, was responsible for program monitoring and evaluation. Each regional office sent detailed monthly reports to headquarters based on information they received from individual ITCRSs (ibid).

From the above assertion, we can deduce that the success of CDI project depended on two aspects. Firstly, we have to note that the initiative was non-governmental; the Committee for Democracy in Information Technology (CDI) was an NGO which resided in the same community. Most likely, there were no political and bureaucratic hurdles from the inception of the project. Secondly, the participation of the beneficiaries of the project, namely, the local communities who were the drivers of the projects, and this included, children, visually impaired youth, indigenous people, and the physically disabled. In a nutshell, everything was done locally, educators were locally trained, and administration and technical support were done by the local population.

On the basis of the assertion made on the CDI project, the present study advocates that for rural ICT projects to be successful people participation should take the leading role. As Dargon (2003) argues, for ICT to contribute to rural development certain conditions have to be met which are rarely found nowadays. The most crucial one being ownership and appropriation which can only be achieved through the process of participation from the beginning of the project.

2.2.3. ICTs use in NGOs in Kenya

A study conducted in Kenya's rural communities showed that a Kenyan resource centre adapted its information services to the needs of the community, with ICTs playing a major role in gathering and sharing information.

Ugunja Community Resource Centre (UCRC) was founded in 1988, and registered as an NGO in 2004. It served the Siaya, and neighbouring countries west of Kenya. UCRC is a grassroots organisation, providing a community ICT hub for information on agriculture, environmental conservation, human rights and advocacy issues. The centre offered internet access to people living in the neighbouring communities, via a 3G connection over the cell phone network. The connection is reliable, and provides enough bandwidth for UCRC staff to carry out their work writing e-mails and for visitors to browse the web (ICTupdate, 2012).

To help people in the community become more familiar with technology, the centre organised computer literacy courses, based on Microsoft's Unlimited Potential curriculum. These are open to everyone, but are mainly intended for women and young people living in the area. UCRC also has a traditional library, housing a variety of collections, but with a particular focus on publications related to agriculture. All of the centre's activities and information services are initiated and developed according to the needs of the people living in the area. The growing popularity of cell phones in recent years means UCRC staff now assists people in making mobile money transfers, getting agricultural market information via SMS, relaying news stories, and connecting farmers with potential partners in transport, processing and marketing. UCRC has already used FrontlineSMS, free software for sending multiple SMSes, and education programme delivering information to people living with HIV/Aids. Trainers at the centre are now formalising a similar process that allows farmers to learn agricultural techniques via SMS (ibid).

Lastly, UCRC staff work with the farmers and offer technical support during regular visits to the farmers. At this centre farmers have been trained to use digital cameras,

audio recorders, video cameras, and drawings and report writing skills to capture and store data (ibid). Dargon (nd) argue that the sustainability of any development project can only be assured through the commitment and participation of the community of beneficiaries.

2.2.4. NGO's in South Africa

There are several public ICT projects in South Africa that were spearheaded by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The purpose of most of these projects was to provide computers to schools. These include projects facilitated by the following NGOs, School Net SA, Think Quest, Digital Partnership and Africare. Most public ICT projects that are solely implemented by the NGO are not sustainable, especially when the NGO leaves. It is advisable for the NGOs to work with the public sector, especially the traditional leaders, (in case of rural projects) and the local government when implementing ICT projects for public usage. If, or when, the term of the NGO's participation expires, the local government can take over the operation. In this way, the local government will know the history of the project and funding could be provided.

2.2. 5. ICT use in Education (E-learning)

The application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is already changing the organization and delivery of higher education. The pedagogical and socio-economic forces that have driven the higher learning institutions to adopt and incorporate ICTs in teaching and learning include greater information access; greater communication; synchronous and asynchronous learning; increased cooperation and collaboration, cost-effectiveness and pedagogical improvement. However, ICTs have not permeated to a great extent in many higher learning institutions in most developing countries due to many socio-economic and technological circumstances (Graziadei *et al.,* 1997).

ICTs can be used in electronic learning pedagogies (e-learning). E-learning refers to the use of ICTs to enhance and support teaching and learning processes. It is the

instructional content or learning experiences delivered or enabled by electronic technologies, and it incorporates a wide variety of learning strategies and technologies. E-learning ranges from the way students use e-mail and accessing course work online while following a course on campus to programmes offered entirely online (Commission on Technology and Adult Learning, 2001; OECD 2005). It is thus an alternative solution, which enlarges accessibility to training and becomes essential to complement the traditional way of teaching (i.e. face-to-face). E-learning encompasses a continuum of integrated educational technologies. At one end are applications like PowerPoint, which have little impact on learning and teaching strategies or the organization. At the other end are virtual learning environments (VLEs), and managed learning environments (MLEs), which can have significant impact upon learning and teaching strategies (OSU, 2003; Julian *et al.,* 2004).

Broadly, OSU (2003) views the continuum of e-learning as the educational technology from the supplemental use of technology in the classroom, through blended or hybrid uses comprising a mix of face-to-face and fully online instruction, to fully online synchronous and asynchronous distance learning environments delivered to remote learners. In the supplemental use of ICTs to complement traditional learning experiences, the instructor teaches all sessions in the classroom but with the occasional use of technology, such as Web based activities, multimedia simulations, virtual labs, and/or online testing (Arabasz and Baker, 2003). Blended learning denotes a solution that combines several different delivery methods, such as collaboration software, web-based courses; computer communication practices with traditional with traditional face-to-face instructions (Mortera-Gutierrez 2005). On the other hand, distance learning is conducted solely online where interaction may be synchronous or asynchronous (OSU, 2007). Synchronous learning requires the teachers and students to interact at the same time though they may be dispersed geographically. On the other hand, asynchronous learning allows teachers and students to interact and participate in the educational process at different time irrespective of their locations (Chen *et al.*, 2004). Actually, the use of synchronous with asynchronous activities is determined by the available

technology, cost, and maintenance and is adjusted to suit each course, instructor and audience (Graziadei *et al.,* 1997).

2.2.6. E-learning technologies

ICT applications used in e-learning include television and radio; Compact Discs (CDs) and Digital Versatile Discs (DVDs); video conferencing; mobile technologies; web-based technologies; and electronic learning platforms. Television (TV) refers to a receiver that displays visual images of stationary or moving objects both live or pre-recorded and mostly accompanied by sound which is electronically captured, processed and re-displayed. Likewise, this applies to the term radio – both live generated sound as well as pre-recorded sound is used. Both TV and radio can improve teaching and learning process in different ways such as by showing processes and activities that may not otherwise be available to the learner.

However, digitalization has taken over analog audio and video systems. Compact Discs (CDs) and Digital Versatile Discs (DVDs) are based upon laser technologies for writing and reading data. They provide a way in which a large amount of multimedia training material can be stored and made available to end-users. CD-ROM can store up to 1GB while DVD can store up to 17 GB. CD-ROM and DVD-based products can be linked with online information sources. This hybrid approach provides the user with access to media-rich up-to-date information.

Video conferencing is a system where two or more participants, based in different physical locations, can see and hear each other in real time (i.e. live) using special equipment. It is a method of performing interactive video communications over a regular high-speed Internet connection. A videoconference can be either two-way (point-to-point) or multipoint, linking three or more sites with sound and video. It can also include data sharing such as an electronic whiteboard where participants can draw on, or text based real time 'chat'. Interactive whiteboard is simply a surface onto which a computer screen can be displayed, via a projector (Department for Education and Skill, 2004).

Mobile e-Learning (sometimes called 'm-Learning') is a new way to learn using small, portable computers such as personal digital assistants (PDAs), handheld computers, two-way messaging pagers, Internet-enabled cell phones, as well as hybrid devices that combine two or more of these devices into one (Hunsinger, 2005). These technologies have enormous potential as learning tools.

World Wide Web (WWW) is set of software tools and standards that allow users to obtain and distribute information stored on a server and connected to Internet. WWW is a decentralized information system, in which anyone can add new information whenever he/she wants. Lecture notes and other teaching materials are placed on the WWW and linking useful websites to these resources for students to access. In the recent years, web and Internet technologies have matured significantly by providing a uniform access media for both asynchronous and synchronous learning. This phenomenon has significantly increased the popularity of on-line learning (Chen et al., 2004). The usage of web technologies in e-learning is further enhanced with the web 2.0, which is a set of economic, social, and technology trends that facilitate a more socially connected Web where everyone is able to add to and edit the information space (Anderson, 2007). These include blogs, wikis, and multimedia sharing services, content syndication, podcasting and content tagging services (ibid).

E-learning platforms (sometimes called learning management systems (LMS) are applications used for delivery of learning content and facilitation of learning process. They are developed for administration and teaching in tertiary education. This software enables the administrators and lecturers to treat enrolment data electronically, offer electronic access to course materials and carry out assessments (OECD, 2005). The activities managed by the LMS vary from instructor led classroom training to educational seminars to Web-based online training. In addition to managing the administrative functions of online learning, some systems help create, reuse, locate, deliver, manage, and improve learning content. These systems are called Learning Content Management Systems (LCMS) (Rengarajan, 2001). LCMS actually provide tools to deliver instructor-led synchronous and asynchronous online training.

The LCMS provides tools for authoring content as well as virtual spaces for learner interaction (such as discussion forums and live chat rooms). Rengarajan (ibid) emphasizes the importance of integrating both LMS and LCMS because they share different levels of administrative interests in the same entities. Lack of smooth integration between the products results in a broken solution with administrative conflicts. Many e-learning platforms (both LMS and LCMS) currently available are based on either proprietary e-learning software (PES) or open source e-learning software (OSS). OSS usage in implementing e-learning systems is more emphasized in developing world due to the challenges faced when implementing the PES (Coppola 2005).

2.2.7. Successes of ICTs

The study was conducted by Conexiones in 1993 in a research project which intended to develop new information and communication technology (ICT) supported learning environments to improve the quality and equity of education in Colombia. The project targeted schools in both rural and urban areas without prejudice to their socio-economic level. The main aim was to create a model by which schools could use information technology to enhance the learning environment as well as to improve the quality and accessibility of Colombian education (Batchelor *et al.,* 2003).

The Conexiones study targeted school children under 15 years old and their schoolteachers in the provinces of Antioquia, Santander, Bolívar, and Valle del Cauca in Colombia. In designing the project study, Connexions tried to involve all members of the community including children and teachers. The activities initially proposed by Connexions were modified during implementation to respond to the needs of user groups. For example, communities expressed interest in combining cultural and recreational activities with technological training activities. This ensured that the community took ownership of the technology clubs, participates in the entire process, and generates high levels of motivation and interest (ibid).

The notable results are that with ICT, the Connexions project improved the institutional climate within Colombian schools and the self-esteem of teachers and students alike. It is assumed that the project inculcated a sense of sensitivity on children especially on cultural issues in Colombia. This included among others, the conditions of poverty, intolerance, violence, insecurity, and corruption which affected them very deeply. The assurance that joint construction and sharing of knowledge turned ICT into an important opportunity to integrate school, community, and life to address these problems (ibid).

It is noted that the successes of the Connexions project depended on consultation with the communities (namely, student and teachers) before the implementation of the project. However, there is a notable exclusion of the vast sector of rural communities as minimal focus was placed only on rural schools. It was access to rural schools that was measured, not access by all sectors of the rural community.

2.2.8. ICTs in Municipalities

2.2.9. Poland

In the study on effective communication conducted on local municipalities in Poland, Sakowicz 2001-2002, highlighted how the issues of freedom of speech and dissemination of information, transparency and openness as enshrined in the Poland constitution were implemented (Sakowicz 2001-2002:1). He contextualised and focused his study on the municipalities. He believed in people centred development which is multifaceted, complex and integrated. In addition, he believed that the local governments (municipalities) were regarded as more close to the people and able to respond to their request, needs, and demands on time.

Sakowicz (2001) brought to light that municipalities are smallest unit of government and carry power in terms of decision making relating to service delivery. He held that people act more responsibly when they own their environment, when they own the developmental initiatives and planning as opposed to when they have subscribed to

external service providers (Sakowicz, 2001-2002).This is the sentiment echoed by the International Context of Public Participation in Local Governance, which advocated citizen participation in the decisions that affect them at local level. Thus subscribing to the quote: "Nothing about us without us".

One of the strategies that Sackowicz highlighted as significant in addressing the lagging communication processes in the municipalities includes training the local leaders or communities on informatics and all the stakeholders. Taken concisely, the strategies should provide platform for different forms of information, provision and consultation process which will ensure lateral participatory communication across the communities (ibid).

In addition, to ensure benefit and effectiveness in the municipal communication, the following strategies were suggested:

- monitoring and supporting of legislative efforts to communicate effectively;
- training of local spokespersons and local people for communications in local offices, creating info-centres (telecentres and tele-cottages) and lastly; and
- Introducing community information centres (digital villages (ibid).

He recommends these strategies because he believed that they would make information accessible to communities, which information may be used to change the attitude of the communities to enhance the local communities through exchange of information, and to integrate local authority's enterprises, schools and libraries (ibid).

Sakowicz highlights that there was no spokesperson in the municipality. Therefore there was a need to train officials responsible for municipal communication, especially in rural areas. This would ensure that communication between the municipality and its publics is lively and interactive. The trained officials will be helped by the established telecentres to send and receive information (ibid).

2.2.10. ICT Access and use in South Africa

Another study was conducted at the Gaseleka telecentre in the poorest Limpopo Province of South Africa. The Gaseleka telecentre is owned by the local branch of the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), directed by a special sub-committee of 15 people, and operated by two telecentre managers and a computer trainer (Benjamin 2001).

The centre was used by an average of 50 people a day, and 60 % of whom were women. It had become the *de facto* community centre, that is, a place to hang out and chat. The telecentre supported 34 local students from South Africa's main distance education provider, the University of South Africa (UNISA). Local businesses used the centre for producing marketing and advertising materials. Training was provided to 46 people on an Introductory Computer Practice course that was certified by the Technical College. The course introduced participants to the computer, typing, file management, use of the operating system, word processing and spreadsheets. Many organisations within the area used the centre. SANCO used it heavily, as did the local schools, Community Policing Forum, Department of Health and Welfare, small businesses and local political groupings such as the African National Congress and the Communist Party (ibid).

The information about the establishment of the centre was well disseminated throughout the area. All three local chiefs gave their support to the project and close links were maintained with the local government. The telecentre maintained such support by allowing the chiefs and some senior councillors to make free phone calls and photocopies. Many people also used it for sending faxes and photocopying. The local schools were primary users, through bulk-copying or question papers, reports and typing up curricula. This usage was monitored monthly. This obviously made the telecentre very popular among the key local officials. And the approach paid off in another way as well because the centre was given free water and electricity from the local authority (Benjamin, 2001).

However, regardless of courageous efforts mentioned above, the Gaseleka telecentre was not really able to serve as an information centre, the centre still lacked formalised information systems. Proper training of telecentres' managers was lacking in the area of financial management, equipment maintenance, customer service, and business skills. The sustainability of most telecentre projects is still a challenge. In other instances, the unskilled and incompetent management were blamed for the collapse of many rural telecentres. Community conflicts were also highlighted as factors which caused tensions among the communities. Different factions over who should own the telecentre led to the closing down of those centres. Over half of the 60 projects initiated by the USA were not functioning well for a variety of technical, managerial, competitive and financial reasons. Masilo Mokobane, a community champion at Gaseleka telecentre was interviewed and he affirmed that there was a need for proper marketing because not everybody knew about the services that were offered at the centre. He asserted that telecentres had a good and promising future in South Africa. However, there was a strong need for their good management (ibid).

The Gaseleka telecentre study confirms that although these centres support learning, the information access and delivery of services are still desperately needed in rural areas of South Africa. It is against this background that the concept of people participation and awareness of the availability of these centres is of significance in the current study.

In addition, the study which advocated the centring of rural development through ICTs was conducted by Gendall (2008). She used the name centre approach in an attempt to show how important it is to bring ICT centres closer to the communities. She does not use the name telecentres but rather education centres. According to Benjamin, Stavrou, Burton and McCarthy (2000), the centre approach refers to the practice of establishing centres as information resources and communications nodes in disadvantaged rural areas to meet the telecommunications and information needs of such communities. This approach is widely commended as a solution to bridge the digital divide. However, this study did not delve much into Gendall's study as it did not

elevate the participatory dimension of development. What actually draw attention to it are the three types of access mentioned in her study, namely: the physical, epistemological and socio-cultural access.

In relation to physical access, Gendall (2008) addressed the barriers that limit the ability of learners and other members of the community to physically locate an institution of learning and telecentre respectively. She only addressed those things that limit communities to physically access ICT learning centre and this is very parochial view when one looks at the many development processes she overlooked.

However, Gendall (2008) notes that not all centres operated at the same capacity or with the same resources. Many, like the Kwa-Mashu Centre, lacked computers while space and a lack of resources were challenges for the computer centre at Maphumulo. Cost was another challenge facing development projects meant to create access to these information resources centres (ibid).

Epistemological access refers to addressing the barriers that limit the ability of the rural communities to acquire relevant knowledge and skills related to software (Cassius-Lubisi 2005). In order to address epistemological access, issues such as literacy, relevant curricula, the provision of quality teaching and appropriate texts and interactive IT software should be looked at, hence the importance of combining physical access (that is, resources) with skills training and education.

Moreover, Servon (2002) and Megwa (2007) argue that the rural poor, the illiterate, children, and the physically and mentally challenged, may have physical access, but are not part of the processes that design and produce content. As such, they may lack the intellectual and cultural capacity to not only produce knowledge but also evaluate its functional value. Servon (2002) and Megwa (2007) note that in an information society, the ability to process information is crucial for individuals and societal development. A lack of this capacity could further disadvantage and marginalize the poor and thus perpetuate the present power structures.

Furthermore, when discussing access, it is also important to highlight the question of culture. Culture is a sensitive issue in development, especially in rural communities. Despite the question of physical access, rural people still believe that ICTs will expose them to online content which to certain extent may pollute their norms and values (Obijiofor 2007). Therefore, there is a need to emphasise the observations of norms and values (culture) in the process of development. This is in contrast with the modernisation perspective which was criticised for taking a simplistic view of development. For the record, this simplistic view of development is still pursued by many developing countries and foreign donors in their development endeavours as the involvement of the targeted audience is not taken cognisance of (Ansu- Kyeremeh 1994). Therefore, access especially epistemological, needs to be considered in relation to the socio-cultural context.

SECTION 2

2.3. ICT state in South Africa

2.3.1. Bridging the Divide in South Africa

In an attempt to bridge the urban rural digital divide, the South African government launched a plethora of ICT hubs between the years 2000 and 2007. The Maluti Community Digital Hub which comprised of a telecentre, teleconferencing and refurbishment centre was opened in the Free State with the continued endeavours by the government to bring information and communication technology to the rural Maluti community. The hub was housed in the Department of Agriculture in a semi-rural area about 42 kilometres from Harrismith and 10 kilometres from Phutaditjhaba. The telecentre comprised of a client server network set-up with nine HP Intel Celeron Windows XP machines networked to an HP Intel Pentium 4 server with internet connection. The teleconferencing centre was equipped with a video conferencing unit and all the essential connections for the smooth operation of the centre. During the launch of the facility, the then Communications Minister Matsepe-Casaburi confirmed the position of this study when she said that: "the world economic development was

driven by the demands of new information and communication technologies" (Tshivhidzo, 2006).

The current operation of plethora of ICT hubs and agencies were foretold by the then Communication minister Matsepe-Cassaburri when she confirmed that Department of Communications and the Universal Service Agency were to launch an extensive network of community digital hubs, including telecentres and e-school cyber labs, throughout the country, especially in rural areas (ibid). The following are some of the state endeavours to realise the set goals of bridging the rural-urban divide.

2.3.2. Meraka Institute

In 2005 the South Africa government launched a new institute to boost social and economic growth through training, research and development in information and communication technology, three years after President Thabo Mbeki first raised the idea of a national "ICT university". The African Advanced Institute for Information and Communication Technology (AAIICT), also known as the Meraka Institute, was launched in Pretoria in 2005. "Meraka" is a Sesotho term for common grazing land, denoting sharing, mutual benefit and the potential for prosperity. The institute is housed in the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), and brings a number of existing CSIR projects under one umbrella while opening the way for new ones. Apart from developing ICT products and services, and providing intellectual capital to the industry, the Meraka Institute was to collaborate with local, regional and international ICT organisations through staff and student exchanges and co-operatives (BuaNews 2005).

2.3.3. Digital Doorway

The Digital Doorway project, a joint initiative with the Department of Science and Technology, aims to position robust, free-standing computer terminals in communities around the country. Communities will be able to teach themselves functional computer skills through free 24-hour access to computers with motivating content (BuaNews, 2005). The Digital Doorway is a robust digital kiosk with 4 screens, and keyboards with

touch pads, built to withstand the rigours of the African climate, enthusiastic use, as well as physical or technical vandalism. Its prime intended audience has been young people in poor and particularly remote South African townships, which have not had computer or internet access (Stillman, 2008) (Refer to Appendix 1 for DD kiosk).

The first Digital Doorway accessible to the public 24 hours a day was launched in Cwili village near Kei Mouth in the Eastern Cape's Libode district in 2002 (BuaNews, 2007). This was followed by a series of launching of these hubs which culminated to the one in rural Kwazulu Natal village called eNtshongweni to the west of Durban. This brought up to more than 150 the number of terminals installed since the programme began (ibid).

Digital Doorway seeks to verify results, in the South African context, of research conducted in India, through an initiative called Hole-in-the-Wall, indicating that children can acquire functional computer skills without any formal training, through their own intuition and exploration. The idea is to provide people in rural and disadvantaged areas with computer equipment, and allow them to experiment and learn with minimal external input. Digital Doorway terminals have been opened in four schools and in the municipality offices in eNtshongweni, which has a population of approximately 8 500 people with about 1 800 households (ibid).

2.3.4. Usage of Digital Doorway

Observations show that the Cwili Digital Doorway is used from as early as 5am until approximately 9.30pm, with groups of six to 10 children, both boys and girls, aged between nine and 15, regularly using the computer. Within a month of installation, about 60% of the village's children had already taught each other basic computer functions, including the ability to drag icons, re-arrange windows and open applications. A number of young adults, mainly males, also use the Cwili kiosk, though they prefer using it in the evenings "after work", when there are fewer people around and "the kids have finished playing". (ibid)

The most popular programmes for the Cwili children have been the educational programmes as well as the music programme, while the older groups preferred the internet and Word, as well as the music. CSIR business unit icomtek, which is responsible for the pilot implementation and evaluation of the project, has redesigned the Digital Doorway unit using Open Source software. The server PC runs on FreeBSD, providing a stable operating system, while the user PC uses DEBIAN Linux, for easy upgrading of applications and enhanced security, and KDE, a graphical manager which support indigenous languages. Icomtek specialises in information and communication technology projects which are geared to development and societal needs. These include human language technologies, using Open Source as a platform for creative expression, and easy learning in a multilingual environment. In addition, the terminals were equipped with satellite receivers and general packet radio service (GPRS) cellular data technology for updating content and to monitor user feedback (BuaNews,2007).

2.3.5. USAASA

The Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa (USAASA) is a state owned entity of government established through the Electronic Communications Act, No 36 of 2005, to ensure that "every man, woman and child whether living in the remote areas of the Kalahari or in urban areas of Gauteng can be able to connect, speak, explore and study using ICT's (South Africa, 2005).

The government has put in various initiatives to afford rural communities' access to the Internet. USAASA seeks to promote the goals of universal service and universal access. A universal service is a reliable connection to the communication network that enables any form of communication to and from any part of South Africa (ibid). It is the ability to offer communication network at a reasonable distance and affordable price by providing relevant information and necessary capacity in under-serviced areas of South African. The under-serviced communities comprise mainly of rural and peri-urban areas which are characterised by high levels of poverty, poor infrastructure, with a few

employment opportunities and limited access to a variety of services including telecommunications. (ibid)

In an a endeavour to carry its legislative mandate to address the above cited bottlenecks, by December 2005 the USAASA had established 133 telecentres nationwide in disadvantaged rural communities (USF 2005). The purpose of setting up these centres was to provide universal access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to communities in unserved and under-serviced areas of South Africa. The telecentres have enabled some communities to have access to basic services like computer services, telephones, data (fax, Internet, email), video, ICT training services, typing, printing and photocopying. In areas where formal building structures are limited ICT USAASA deployed Telecontainers. These serve as telecentres in such areas (ibid). It must be noted that in the case of this study we are focusing on the telecentre within the jurisdiction of Thusong service centre. It must also be noted that the telecentres usage within the Thusong service centres are used on cost recovery basis, a situation which is very insalubrious when we look at the socio-economic conditions of many rural communities (ibid).

2.5.6. Cyberlabs

In addition USAASA was also tasked with the responsibility of providing Cyber laboratories (Cyberlabs) in schools of under-served communities as access points to ICT. By December 2005, 235 Cyberlabs had been established in schools in all of the nine provinces of South Africa (USF 2005). These laboratories provide ICT services and computer literacy training to the schools in the communities. The schools are responsible for maintenance costs while Internet connectivity for the initial 12 months is paid for by the USAASA. The Cyberlabs are equipped with thirty computers, one photocopying machine, and one printer. Fax machines are provided when there is need. The USAASA provides for the whole setup and security of these labs (ibid).

2.5.7. Digital Hubs

Lastly USAASA's other assignment is to establish Community Digital Hubs (CDH). A concept of community centres to be deployed in demarcated areas for rural development (USF 2005). The areas of CDH are advanced ICT facilities deployed by USAASA to provide human capacity building and technical support to the remote telecentres and cyber laboratory. The hubs are set to provide support for content development and to deliver various applications such as e-government services, e-education, e-health, e-business development and other various services .The CDH is made up of a combination of technology centres offering various ICT services (ibid).

SECTION 3

2.4. The two structures of governance

2.4.1. Traditional leaders vs. Municipalities effect on people participation

It worth noting that this study included the role of traditional leaders because the environment on which the study was conducted is very rural as noted in Chapter 1 of this study. Therefore it was also essential that the situational analysis with regard to the type of governance setup be known from the rural South Africa perspective which by and large had a notable impact in people participation in Tshidilamolomo village respectively.

According to Robitaille (2005), in the western world celebrities use their fame to convey socially significant messages, and likewise in Africa, chiefs and queen mothers have the respect and authority to influence people's views and practices on difficult issues. Chiefs and other traditional leaders still exert considerable power in many African countries, despite the rise of elected governments, bureaucracies, and other apparatus of the modern state. This makes them uniquely powerful in their ability to express the will of their people and also, at times, to suppress that will. Their influence is strong especially in rural areas due to their strong preservation of traditional norms and values in these communities as well as their close geographical and political proximity. Not surprisingly, here too is where people are most underrepresented and their needs most

neglected. In such circumstances, chiefs often play a key role as community advocates (ibid).

Chiefs constantly act as spokespeople for the community, articulating locally felt needs, expressing grievances and mobilizing support for particular causes (Meer & Campbel 2007). Unfortunately, this to a certain extent is a negation of the very notion of participatory communication as sometimes these chiefs unilaterally take decisions which are driven by personal pursuit and subsequently rendering community projects futile.

According to Ngqongwa (2012), in South Africa, during the colonial and the apartheid eras, the institution of traditional leadership was marginalised. It only became valuable to these systems that are colonialism and apartheid, when they were affecting political dominance over their communities. The establishment of South Africa's new government in 1994 passed a new law, the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act in 2003. At the moment, the legal powers of traditional authorities are removed, pensions are now controlled by other government structures, and the land occupation processes were changed (although the land allocation issue is still the prerogative of chiefs). The broad deliberations that followed achieved very little in terms of clarifying traditional leaders roles when it comes to the delivery of services in tribal areas or development in rural areas. Currently, the role of traditional leaders is only limited to mobilising their communities to complement the efforts of the central government in the provision of services (ibid).

Furthermore, according to Remuneration Act (1995) of traditional leaders, the traditional leaders were to be paid by the government, as opposed to receiving income from the assets and persons under their control. The removal of these powers left traditional leaders with the perception that their roles at the local level have become 'insignificant' and 'marginalised' (Peires, 2000). This has to a certain extent, led to tensions between traditional leadership and other formal governmental structures (especially the elected local councillors) about paradigm, approach and areas of jurisdiction (Oomen 1998, Peires, 2000). Moreover, the lines of communication between traditional leadership and

local and provincial government often proved to be problematic, and this had an impact on the potential of chiefs to initiate developmental projects (ibid). The ownership of such projects is usually vested in formal government and the extent to which traditional leadership is involved depends on the quality of interpersonal relations at local level. Subsequently, the only possible alternative for dissatisfied traditional leaders who are aspiring to demonstrate the lost power will be to withdraw their support from such projects in order to allow these to fail (ibid).

Despite all the above-cited problems, traditional structures still have significant moral grounds on which to exert authority on local matters. Their physical presence and traditional legitimacy also still count strongly in their favour (Peires, 2000). The significance of their role in this study is extracted from the above affirmation by Peires.

According to the ECA (2007), traditional leaders should play the role of upholding the values and administer the affairs of their communities. They are meant to work with municipalities to identify the needs of their community and be involved in municipal affairs, including shaping IDPs (Integrated Development Plans) and participating in service delivery. Traditional leaders are meant to promote peace, foster social cohesion, contribute to the system of cooperative governance and to alleviate the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment in rural areas. However this set-up has not been without hurdles and sometimes hostile environment. Chapter four of this study will validate whether this kind of set up is salient and compatible.

In contrast to the above assertions, Chief Phathekile Holomisa, the President of the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA) and Chairperson of the SADC Council of Traditional Leaders rejects the idea of marginalising the role of traditional leaders in rural areas. The areas which is their stronghold and which they hold popular support. He argues that traditional councils are ideally placed to facilitate the entire processes of delivery of services to rural communities. According to him, the councils or their subsidiaries, the headmen, are much closer to the people they serve. To this effect, the process of service delivery would greatly be facilitated if government

departments and other organs of State established offices and relevant personnel within the Council establishment and be led from thereof. The same position has been corroborated by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, when he asserted: "We are the local government" (ECA, 2007).

Keulder (1998) concurs with the views of Holomisa and Buthelezi (2007) with regard to the traditional leaders' significance way of governing. The author states that the institution of traditional leaders and its procedures of governance is simpler, more accessible, better understood, and a more participatory one. It is more accessible, because it is closer to the subjects than any other system of government. Subjects have more direct access to their leaders, because they live in the same village and because any individual can approach the leader; decision making is based on consensus, which creates greater harmony and unity. It is transparent and participatory, because most people may attend tribal meetings and express their views directly, not through representatives. And lastly, harmony and unity prevail, because the interests of the tribal unit, rather than an individual or group of individuals, are pursued and expressed. Having this form of structure, Keuldre argued, may be valued because they provide a sense of continuity and stability in an era of great change.

Kessel and Oomen (1997: 561) argue that traditional leaders have displayed impressive flexibility, adapting to meet the needs of the day in an effort to preserve or enhance their position within local communities. It is however, this study argues, unfortunate that the institution of traditional leaders has been marginalised by other structure of governance, namely, the local government in the form of municipalities. Subsequently, the institution of traditional leaders is unable to deliver maximally because its service delivery responsibilities have been to a greater extent conferred to the local governments by legislative means.

Succinctly put, the above authors argue that if the institution of traditional leaders can lead local service delivery projects, the same will be placed context with their peoples' needs. The Tshidilamolomo structure of governance is not an exception in the dilemma faced by the traditional institutions which is being swallowed by the ineffective

municipalities. Subsequently, the brow tow between these two systems has affected the effective rendering of developmental services in the outskirts areas of the South Africa. Consequently, it suffocates the potential of projects meant for development of the communities in the bucolic areas.

After examining the operational circumstances of traditional leadership, Sithole (2005) concluded that an appropriate approach to traditional leadership would be to support traditional leaders with relevant tailor-made education and procedure or protocol formation. It should prioritise issues of land management with respect to forming core focal areas for traditional authorities. According to Sithole, traditional leaders should establish a good working relationship with departments whose work overlaps with their roles of traditional leaders. This view was also supported by Robitaille (2005) who argues that it is vital that government recognise the importance of traditional leadership to South African society and aides this assimilation process through appropriate legislation, education. One finds the views of the two authors very preposterous, because they give a wrong diagnosis that traditional leaders need to be educated before their role can be authenticated in the delivery of service. This is negation of the very notion of dialogue and participatory communication. Freire (1997) argued that this is one of the weapons that the anti-dialogics and oppressors use to invade the culture of their targeted prey. In this phenomenon, the invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group, in disrespect of their potentialities. They impose their views of the world upon those they invade and inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression. The views of Sithole and Robitaille, this study argues, sound very parochial, and more like prototype of political bigotry and misinformed annotations.

2.4.2. ICT literature in traditional set up.

Despite the above mentioned topsy-turvy brow-tow between the two systems of governance, the ICT literature does recognise the phenomenon of a hierarchical system maintained in traditional communities, in which the community attaches significant importance to the decisions of traditional leaders (Nnadi and Gurstein 2007). These various groups are usually consulted when a technology project is initiated in a rural

area (Byrne and Sahay 2007, Dagron, 2003). However, the perceptions that outsiders have of the significance of traditional leadership and those that insiders have differ significantly, and this has an impact on the integration of ICT projects in the community's social context. For example, Nnadi and Gurstein (2007) noted that if technology projects instituted in communities in some way erode the power of traditional leadership, this may be detrimental to the design and use of any ICTs in such communities.

The importance of the acceptance of ICT projects by community leadership is highlighted by various authors (Jacobs & Herselman 2005, Mosse, 1995). Examples exist of instances where traditional leaders who perceive externally initiated ICT projects as a threat, have successfully neutralised such projects through ensuring community non-participation (Mosse, 1995). Thus, the significant impact of traditional leaders on community attitudes should be understood (Nnadi &Gurstein 2007). In addition, Mosse (1995) noted that failure to understand the particulars of the social dynamics of community leadership in a particular community may lead to the failure of project initiatives.

The importance attached by, inter alia, community leaders to a project determines the eventual success of the project (Dagron, 2003). If community leaders have a positive attitude towards the outcomes of a project, this will generally result in better involvement of the community overall, as it leads to their encouragement of others within the community to participate, thus enhancing the project's chances of success (Pade, Mallinson & Sewry 2006). The roles and responsibilities on such projects need to be clarified upfront (Dagron2003). Gaseleka telecentres can be a prototype of projects that had the support of the local leaders, though good management is still a challenge. According to Cecchini and Scott (2003), ICT for development projects benefit from explicit demonstrations of the positive results emanating from such projects to traditional leaders. This is in contrast to the normal skepticism prompted by, for instance, empty

political promises and the short-term involvement of donors and developmental agencies (ibid).

It has also been suggested that ICT for development projects should support the goals of community leaders and should aim to build leadership capacity in communities. This implies that it is important to understand the needs and viewpoints of community leaders if projects are to be successfully executed (Jacobs & Herselman, 2005). Chapter four of this study put to the surface the role played by the traditional leaders in the establishment of Tshidilamolomo telecentre.

2.4.3. Municipalities in South Africa.

In South Africa the local government (municipalities) are seen as the coalface of service delivery. They are also often referred to as delivery arm of the government. Local governments are tasked with the responsibility of providing democratic and accountable government for local communities. The Municipal Structures Act of 1998 regards the three key principles as the responsibilities of the municipality namely: service delivery, good order and communication. Thus a municipal council must strive within its capacity to achieve the objectives set out in section 152 of the Constitution.

Municipal objectives are as follows:

A municipal council must annually review:

(a) the needs of the community;

(b) its priorities to meet those needs;

(c) its processes for involving the community; and

(d) its organisational and delivery mechanisms for meeting the needs of the community.

3.1. SECTION 4

3.1. 2. Towards the formation of Thusong Service Centres

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and applicable legislation consider municipalities only as a form of the local government. However, the Constitution does acknowledge the existence of the traditional authorities and there is legislation pertaining to their functions. Technically, traditional authorities are regarded as some of the "constituencies" of the local government (municipalities). Succinctly put, traditional authorities operate and exist within the jurisdiction of the local government, according to the constitution. The paragraph below provides an elucidation of the local government structure in South Africa.

According to Municipal structures Act of (1998), chapter four, part six subsection 2, traditional authorities who traditionally observe a system of customary law in the area of a municipality, may participate through their leaders in the following processes:

- in the proceedings of the council of that municipality, and those traditional leaders must be allowed to attend and participate in any meeting of the council.

- The MEC for local government in a province in accordance with Schedule 6 and by notice in the *Provincial Gazette,* must identify the traditional leaders who in terms of subsection may participate in the proceedings of a municipal council.
- The number of traditional leaders that may participate in the proceedings of a

Municipal council may not exceed 10 per cent of the total number of councillors in that council, but if the council has fewer than 10 councillors, only one traditional leader may so participate.

- If f the number of traditional leaders identified in a municipality's area of

jurisdiction. exceeds 10 per cent of the total number of councillors the MEC for local government in the province may determine a system for the rotation of those traditional leaders.

- Before a municipal council takes a decision on any matter directly affecting the area of a traditional authority, the council must give the leader of that authority the opportunity to express a view on that matter.

(4) The MEC for local government in a province, after consulting the provincial House of Traditional Leaders will: regulate the participation of traditional leaders in the proceedings of a municipal council and prescribe a role for traditional leaders in the affairs of a municipality.

(5) When participating in the proceedings of a municipal council a traditional leader is subject to the appropriate provisions of the Code of Conduct set out in Schedule 5 of this Act.

According to the Municipality Structures Act of (1998), participation by the local community in the affairs of the municipality must take place through political structures for participation; (b) the mechanisms, processes and procedures for participation in municipal governance established in terms of this Act and other processes which are not ideal for this study.

Thus on the basis of the above given policy scenario in South Africa, the local government in Tshidilamolomo should have addressed issues relating to the telecentre which form part of service delivery through the ward committee and not necessarily the traditional leaders. Hence, the grappling. For more on what transpired during the empirical investigation, the same is catalogued in Chapter 4 of this study.

The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) were officially launched on 18 May 1998. GCIS came into being after an investigation into government communications by a government communications task group abbreviated as Comtask (GCIS, 1999).

3.1.3. Launch of the Government Communication and Information System

Before 1994, the National Party government had a culture of secrecy, disinformation and restrictions on press freedom. Media restrictions caused limited exposure of government mismanagement and disinformation (Comtask, 1996:13).

This changed from May 1994, when the Government of National Unity brought in a new spirit of freedom of expression. The introduction of constitutional guarantees for freedom of the media and the public's right to information promised a new, open and accountable style of government. Government was also exposed to the full force of a free and independent media (ibid).

Comtask was appointed in 1995 by the then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki. The brief of the task group was to review government communications at the local, provincial, national and international level. It had to make recommendations on how government communication should be structured in line with constitutional principles of freedom of expression and transparency and openness of government. Recommendations had to address new policies, structures and budgets. Comtask also had to examine training and affirmative action policies, the way in which ownership of the media affects government communication and South Africa's international information dissemination (ibid)

Comtask consulted with a broad range of stakeholders (including academics, the media, civil society organisations and advertisers). It also did a study of international best practice to learn from other countries about ways of communication between government and its citizens. The task team delivered their final report to Deputy President Mr. Mbeki in October 1996. The report included 83 recommendations dealing

with the structure of government communication, media diversity and access to information legislation. *(Refer to Comtask report 1996).* The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) were officially launched on 18 May 1998. GCIS came into being after an investigation into government communications by a communications task group (Comtask). The Government Communication and Information System were formally established in terms of Section 7 (subsection 2 and 3) of the Public Service Act, 1994 as a strategic unit located in the Presidency. The mandate of GCIS, was to co-ordinate, guide and advise on government communication (including media liaison, development communication and marketing) (ibid).

The core vision was to achieve integrated, co-ordinated and clear communication between government and the South African citizens to enable them to be involved in the country's transformation. For more on this refer to Comtask 1996. The report had foreseen one notable point ideal for this study: the development and co-ordination of ongoing training in government communication (Comtask, 1996: 56-91).

To achieve the objectives of bringing government information and services closer to the people, Thusong Service Centre were established through the help of this department (unit) by Government Communication and Information Systems.

Thusong Service Centres, are defined as one stop service centres that provide integrated services and information from government to communities close to where they live, as part of a comprehensive strategy to better their lives. The centres are established as hubs of development communication based on Batho Pele values and principles, which put people first. These centres provide a hub of activities and a variety of services, organised according to the Six-Block Service Model. Since community needs are the driving factor in service provision, this model is modified to suit the context and environment of each Thusong Service Centre (GCIS, 1998).

3.1.4. The Six-Block Service Model

- ✓ **Government social and administrative services**

- Grants
- Personal documents
- Housing applications

✓ **Office services**

- Phone, fax, scan, copy, print
- Desktop publishing
- Postal Services

✓ **Education and skills development services**

- Adult Basic Education and Training
- Further Education and Training
- Specialised training

✓ **Local Economic Development (LED) services**

- Small business advice and development

✓ **Business services and community opportunities**

- Small, medium and micro enterprises
- Other private-sector services such as retail and ATMs

✓ **Information and communication activities**

- Government information and **on-site guidance** regarding services
- Community information and awareness

3.1.5. Strategic Objectives

The objectives of the Thusong Service Centre Programme among others include the following:

- To bring government information and services closer to the people to promote access to opportunities as a basis for improved livelihoods
- To promote cost-effective, integrated, efficient and sustainable service provision to better serve the needs of citizens.
- To create a platform for greater dialogue between citizens and government.

3.1.6. Mandate: policy and legislation

Government's mandate and approach to Thusong Service Centres are aligned to a number of policies. The concept of development communication is promoted in these policies, giving ample space to interface between government and citizens so as to facilitate access and progress at a local level. These policies are enshrined in the following documents:

- Communication Task Report, 1996
- White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele), 1997
- Cabinet Memorandum no.15, November 1999
- President's State of the Nation Address, May 2004
- Public Finance Management Act, 1999
- Municipal Structures Act, 1998
- Municipal System Act, 2000
- Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003

As noted above the most important functions of Thusong service centres is to promote development communication, which for the past two decades has been coined into a new paradigm, namely, participatory communication. Their function also aims to provide government information and on-site guidance regarding services, community information and awareness programmes. Subsequent to that, it suffices to put the role of this centre in context of this study in relation to promotion of participatory communication through dialogue and the use of ICTs. To find out whether these objectives are met by the Tshidilamolomo centre, the same is expounded in chapter four of this study.

SECTION 5

4.1. Theoretical Framework

This section provides the theoretical perspective (participatory and the diffusion of innovation perspectives) on which the study is based. This research utilised the participatory development communication in conjunction with diffusion of innovation perspectives as theoretical framework to examine the barriers of ICT usage in rural South Africa.

The implementation of ICT projects in rural areas must be guided by the new development communication paradigm of participatory development communication which addresses communities according to their needs. This paradigm was previously not considered by the modernisation theories (Servaes 1991). It is from participatory development communication perspective that the importance of socio-cultural and epistemological access in development is acknowledged.

4.1.2. Participatory Communication

Participatory theorists and practitioners believe that development communication requires sensitivity to cultural diversity and specific context which are issues that the modernisation theorists ignore. Modernisation projects undermined the significance of local knowledge and the consequences of the interface between local cultures and

foreign ideas. In terms of the modernisation theories, people are asked to change old practices in order to adopt foreign form of knowledge that dismissed their local traditions in the name of true knowledge (McKee, 1992 as cited by , 2001). Consequently, the lack of local participation has been viewed as being responsible for the failure of different programmes. Participatory theories considered it necessary to redefine the role of development communication in rural development. Subsequently, development communication journeyed through various paradigms until it reached participatory communication paradigm.

Participatory development communication surfaced in the 1980s. The paradigm projected that it was indispensable that beneficiaries be part of the development programmes that are meant for them *(*Chitnis, 2005*)*. Participatory communication is the process by which people take the leading role in their own development projects. Subsequently this affords them to develop into becoming architectures of their own development endeavours and not passive beneficiary of foreign aid. The essence of participatory communication is the need for an exchange of information by means of dialogue with the intent to ameliorate the quality of life of a specific community (Bessette, 2004; Chintis, 2005).

The process of participatory communication is usually facilitated by the outsiders by engaging community in a dialogue to identify the community's needs and problems. It provides necessary resources, information and skills to overcome the problems. The approach is based on the premise that development programmes would only be relevant and sustainable, provided people are actively involved in the development programmes. Subsequently, this will lead to transference of power and social change strategies to people in order to epitomise the real needs of people (Chintis 2005). Therefore, the unravelling of this process, requires exceptional mutual understanding between the stakeholders. Thus, the study draws from participatory communication through dialogue to explain the developmental role of Tshidilamolomo Thusong ICT telecentre.

This is a position that augers well with the position of the study which denounces the top down model of communication advocated by the modernisation theories. Yoon (2007) also argued that communication efforts should not focus on the dissemination of technical packages towards the end-users who are expected to adopt them. The author noted that donors and governments wanted to push their products to communities and development practitioners in order to receive community commitment to their development initiatives. This is in contrast with the perspective of participatory communication tenets which advocates for shifting attention from informing people with a view to change their behaviours or attitudes to dialogue (Yoon, 2007).

The focus should not be on information to be disseminated by experts to end-users. Rather, it should be on horizontal communication processes that enable local communities to identify their development needs and the specific actions that could help to fulfil those needs, while establishing an ongoing dialogue with the other stakeholders involved. The main objective is to ensure that the end-users gather enough information and knowledge to carry out their own development initiatives evaluate their actions and recognize the resulting benefits. Such a communication process pursues objectives related to increasing the community knowledge base (both indigenous and modern) in building and reinforcing community assets (Yoon, 2007).

The participatory communication approach prefers the use of two-way communication and emphasises dialogue among the different stakeholders with regard to community project. The approach also focused on capacity-building at the local level in terms of participation and decision-making and conflict resolution (ibid). Therefore this approach is salient in implementing and reinforcing the use of the Tshidilamolomo ICT telecentre by local communities. It is worth noting that participatory communication has the capacity to build community members' confidence in their pursuit to address their problems and to seek their own solutions, rather than to wait for external assistance. It will be very myopic to believe that foreign aid can always react instantly to the problems faced by the rural communities. Therefore these communities need to always have a leg to stand on, to respond instantaneously to the problems they are facing.

In his book of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Paulo Freire (1970)* argued that the traditional pedagogy of teaching was colonizing rather than emancipating the learners. His writing was based in his experience in helping the Brazilian adults to read and write. He lambasted the pedagogy and argued that it treated the students as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge, an approach he called "*Banking Education*". Freire rejected the approach, citing that it dehumanised both the teacher and learner. He disputed that the pedagogy stimulated oppressive attitudes and practices in society. Subsequently, he called for the pedagogy that would embrace learners as co-creators of knowledge. Thus he perceived dialogue as an instrument to free the oppressed through the use of cooperation, unity, organization and cultural synthesis (which would aid in alleviating problems in society (ibid).

The notion of dialogue has its roots in Paulo Ferreira's (1970) theory of education for liberation. Freire was the first scholar to promote the idea of students as not being mere receptacles to be filled with knowledge by the teacher. A process, he argued, made education an act of depositing, the teacher is the depositor and the students' depositories. Subsequently, the method inhibits their creativity and innovation. This led to Freire employing a new educational technique where he suggested that the teacher and student learn from each other through a process of dialogue (Freire, 1970). A process embraced by this study.

Freire's notion of dialogue relates to this study in this way: when one looks at how the South African government has sought to roll out telecentres that would provide a silo of ICT services to these communities, one observes that the process has been very paternalistic. The state has been assuming to know which services were needed by the rural communities and thereby neglecting to involve them in the identification of the services needed as well as in the design and the rolling out of these telecentres. Thus Freire's theory on dialogism corresponds well with the context of this study. This study holds that in Tshdilamolomo: dialogue, participation, cooperation, organization and cultural synthesis should have been upheld. If these factors were espoused in the establishment of this telecentre, the study believe that accessibility, usability and

ownership of the centre by the community would have been guaranteed. This study advocate for dialogue between the government and communities they intend to serve so as they will learn from each other.

Freire sees dialogue as the heart of participation, communication and even empowerment (Freire, 1970). He believed that the elimination of the patterns of domination in society can be achieved and legitimised only through dialogue with people. This is a position which is different from the proponents of the modernisation and the dependency perspectives. Moreover, he assumed that people empowerment can be attained through a process of awareness or conscientisation and the most effective tool in this process being dialogue. Through this process, the exploited and oppressed become aware of their circumstances. In addition, the process of dialogue implies a positive and constructive attitude towards solving problems and the possibility of avoiding conflicts. Freire believed that dialogue is the best way not just to acquire knowledge but to empower people. He argued that dialogue is an act of construction of knowledge and it must not function as a cunning gadget for the domination of one person by another (ibid).

In addition Freire (1970) renounced the notion of prescription. He acceded argued that every prescription represented the imposition of one individual's choice upon another, thus transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed into one that conformed with the prescriber's consciousness. He posited that, individuals get empowered through the process of participation and dialogue. While the notion of prescription disempowered and enslaved the one on whom the ideas are being prescribed to, in contrast, dialogue and participation empowers the same as it provides the platform for critical approach and interrogation to issues of concern (ibid).

Freire's assertion on renouncing prescription and imposition is also echoed in the writings of Martin Buber's theory of interpersonal communication. According to Buber the basis of human existence is that people are communicating beings (Burber 1964 as cited by Steinberg 2007). The author distinguishes between the two types of interpersonal relationship which he termed the "I-you and I-it relationships". The "I-You"

relationship in communication is the direct opposite of the I-it. The "I-You" setting is more dialogic in approach and content. Mutual respect is hierachised. In this kind of relationship space opens up between people, and it is here that dialogue unfolds and "you" and "I" become "we" .The dialogic relationship is based on intersubjectivity, that is, participants acknowledge the difference between them while striving to understand each other (Steinberg, 2007).

In the second relationship, "I-It", the communicator sees the recipient as the object to be manipulated for personal gains, the recipient is not seen as equal partner in the communication process, and it is monologic and imposing. It is a prototype of modernisation theories, top-down and instructive, with no feedback expected (ibid).The current study renounce this dehumanising mode of communication, "the I-It" ,and embrace the former, that is, the dialogic and empowering "I-You" participatory communication.

Another proponent of participatory development deals with participation from a different angle. Robert Chambers (1997) believes that involving the poor in their own development efforts and allowing them to take decisions over their own lives will lead to their empowerment. He argued that power can be both an enabling and a disabling factor. Misguided power can be a devastating instrument in development (as many failures of international projects have demonstrated) and power can also be considered a disability, when it imposes consent (Chambers, 1997). For Chambers, empowerment means putting people in control of decisions concerning their own life. He considers participatory approaches to be one of the most valuable tools in empowering people. It is against the above backdrop that the role of Tshidilamolomo telecentre was investigated to validate the participation and the use of the ICT centre for the community's development purposes.

4.1.3. Diffusion of innovation

According to Rogers (2003), diffusion is a process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social

system and adopted by members of a certain community. Participants in the process share information in order to reach mutual understanding. Rogers (2003) continues to define innovation as any new idea, practice or object considered new to an individual or other unit of adoption. The diffusion proponents also assert that the innovation development process must begin by recognising a problem or need (ibid).

According to Rogers (2003: 240) compatibility is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as consistent with the existing values, past experiences and needs of potential adopters. An idea that is more compatible is less uncertain to the potential adopter and fits more closely with the individual's situation. It is worth noting that an innovation can be compatible or incompatible with: 1, socio cultural and values and beliefs and previously introduced idea. The rate of adoption of a new idea is affected by the old idea that it supersedes. It is worth noting that for a cluster of innovations to be adopted quickly, it has to be sequentially done. A service that meets the immediate needs of the adopter will be more ideal to be promoted at the infant stage of the innovation.

4.1.4. Compatibility with Cultural, Values and Beliefs

An innovation's incompatibility with cultural values can block its adoption (Rogers 2003). In other words, if the Tshidilamolomo telecentre has unpleasant content which may "pollute" the culture, value and belief system of the village, the effective use of the centre will be affected. This is the reason many change agents face difficult assignments in promoting innovations that run counter to strongly held cultural values. It is also worth noting that other examples of cultural incompatibility of an innovation sometimes occurs when an idea is designed for use in one culture but then spread to a different culture (ibid). That goes without saying that significant feasibility study should have been conducted prior to the implementation of the Thusong telecentres in order to study how it would permeate the cultural, values and belief system of the Tshidilamolomo village.

Given the above background, it is important that prior to the implementation of Government and Communication and Information System (GCIS), government should have consulted traditional authorities in an interpersonal communication setting (dialogue). As Rogers (2003) asserted, to form and change attitude about an idea or innovation require interpersonal (face to face) channels of communication. These channels are effective in that they provide a face to face exchange of information between two or more individuals, dialogue if you like, which is the essence of participatory development communication. This mode of context of communication is very pivotal in diffusion process in that it encourage people to adopt a new idea (Rodgers, 2003). It allows people to overcome social-psychological barriers of selective exposure, selective perception, subsequently, selective retention.

It is also important to highlight that it would have been important for GCIS to employ all the necessary knowledge awareness (conscientisation) strategies to the people of Tshidilamolomo. These include the three types of knowledge, namely, awareness-knowledge, how-to knowledge and principles knowledge (Rodgers, 2003). The awareness knowledge would have made the community aware that the centre exist, subsequently leading to the "how-to knowledge", which should packaged the information on how to use the telecentre properly and correctly. The principles knowledge should have consisted of information dealing with the functioning principles of how the Tshidilamolomo telecentre work.

It would have been appropriate if GCIS would have obtained and disseminated adequate information on "how to knowledge". Subsequently, this would have made the rate of adoption of the telecentre without obstacles. As Rodgers (2003) noted, if "how to knowledge" is not obtained prior to trial and adoption of an innovation, rejection and discontinuance are likely to result.

It is against the given background that both diffusion of innovation and participatory communication perspectives will be employed to examine how ICT centre was diffused through the community at Tshidilamolomo village. In a nutshell, the study used the tenets of the participatory communication and diffusion of innovation theories to analyse

how the idea of ICTs use was diffused through the community in the far-off areas of South Africa with specific reference to Tshidilamolomo village. Rogers (2003) noted that it is at the point of diffusion that the norms and values of the community are crucial because they affect the rate of adoption of innovation. Norms and values of community are very significant in accepting or rejecting an innovation. Therefore, before innovation can permeate the village it must be compatible with its community. On the same breadth, Freire's participatory theory of dialogue will be used to conduct this study.

The participatory dimension of the study interrogates how the participatory development processes were observed towards the formation centre, how people participated and whether they are currently benefiting from it. The diffusion perspective addresses the question of compatibility with norms and values, the role of traditional leaders (as interpersonal networks) as well as how the role of the three types of knowledge in diffusion, namely, the awareness, the how-to and principle knowledge were observed. The results to the same will be expounded in chapter five of this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives a broad definition of qualitative research methodology and the data collection methods used by the study. It describes the population and the sample of the study. It also confirms issues of reliability and validity as well as ethical issues.

The study embraced the qualitative research methodology. This methodology was effective in obtaining specific information about the values, opinions, behaviour, and social context of Tshidilamolomo people. Through its methods of data collection, qualitative research offered the study an opportunity to get most out of the phenomenon under investigation (Mack *et al.*, 2005:1).

Furthermore, other advantages of qualitative research is the use of open-ended questions and probing which gives the participants the opportunity to respond in their own words, rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses, as quantitative methods do.

Another advantage of qualitative research methods is that they permit the researcher to flexibly probe the participant's responses. According to Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990), data collection and data analysis take place simultaneously. From the outset of the first interview or observation, the qualitative researcher is reflecting on the meaning of what has been heard and seen. This process of data analysis is inductive as it proceeds from data to hypotheses to theory. The authors further state that it involves working with data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what to tell others (ibid).

3.1. Research design

Research design is an anticipated plan of how the empirical investigation of the study will be carried out. It is a flexible plan that enables us to obtain an understanding of an unknown area of research. It describes methods and techniques used to collect, analyse and interpret data (Du Plooy 2009: 51). This study used a cross-sectional in approach. According to Babie (2011) and Du Plooy (2009) the cross sectional studies collect data at a single point in time or within a short period of time.

3.2. Population

The population in this study were residents of the Tshidilamolomo village within Ratlou local municipality with the population of 98 102 (StatsSA: 2007). The population included both adults and the youth of this village.

3. 3. Sampling

According to du Plooy (2009), sampling involves following a rigorous procedure when selecting units of analysis from a target or accessible population. Mack *et al.* (2005) University of South Africa (2006) assert that in qualitative research only a sample (that is, a subset) of a population is selected for any given study. Sample sizes for qualitative research vary by technique but are generally small (Cooper & Schindler 2006: 203).

Purposive samples are the type of non-probability samples which corresponded well with this study. According to Du Plooy (2009) this method samples the population in such a way that they have shared common experience so that the interview focuses on the experience from the participant's perspective. These sampling methods provide both the researcher and the participants with a free atmosphere of interaction. The participants are free to express themselves in the language of their choice. Purposive sampling encourages the collection of data rich in detail about the substantive research problem (ibid). For the purpose of this study the purposive sampling method was used.

This sampling method was selected for the following reasons:

- ✓ Firstly, the area (Tshidilamolomo) is rural in nature with widely scattered population.
- ✓ Secondly, the population consists mainly of the previously disadvantaged communities who are not aware of the benefits of seemingly sophisticated modern ICT tools. Therefore for the purpose of this study, the primary stakeholders interviewed included the following, the Ratlou local municipality the, NGOs, the teachers, and the GCIS.

3.4. Data collection methods

The study applied the focus group, and unstructured interview in conducting this research. Focus group is a type of data collection method which provides data which are rich in ideas and provide opinions and attitude from the subjects' point of view (du

Plooy 2009: 199). In other words, focus group interview gave this study the room to manoeuvre and to probe for more from the participants during interview, which included the NGOs, the teachers, the GCIS development communication officers and the municipality. Focus groups are effective in obtaining data on the cultural norms of a group and in generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or subgroups represented (Mack *et al.*, 2005).

The unstructured interview was used when we interviewed the teachers within the vicinity. According to Baxter and Babie (2004), this method also give freedom to probe for more answers during the interview, thus making the method to score well with qualitative standards in terms of adapting to informant/research subject's perspective. These methods also gave the project team the aptitude to create an atmosphere of trust and also encouraged the participants to talk more broadly and freely about their conditions and the socio-economic conditions of the students. We managed to get freedom to create questions during the interview that touch on those talking points in a manner appropriate to the interview at that moment. The study used the regular combination of note taking and audio tape recording techniques for collecting data.

3.5. Reliability and Validity

A pilot study was conducted before to increase the validity of the data. Questionnaires were circulated and subsequently we noticed the lethargic response owing to the community's inability to read and write. As a result, the study chose the interactive, cost effective, rich and probing focus group and unstructured interview as methods of data collection.

3.6. Limitation of the study

Tshidilamolomo village is one of the far-flung areas in the North West of South Africa with villages dotted around and the roads not easily drivable. The bad state of roads in this village and the unavailability of accommodation were aspects which made this research to be conducted on cross sectional basis.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality: The researcher guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality of all the participants' feedback.

Information: Participants were informed in a language they can understand of the aims and implications of the research project, they were not forced, and their consent was being sought. Those who did not want to participate were not forced.

Intimidation/Force: No pressure or physical discomfort was used against the participants.

Deception: The study did not use any means of trying to deceive the participants.

Harm: The participants were guaranteed protection against any harm, be it physical, psychological or social or any suffering during and after the research has been conducted.

Authenticity: Results were not falsified.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter presents the main findings and interpretations of the study, as well as the implication (connotative/inferential meanings) of the research.

In this chapter the collected data is analysed and interpreted in order to put together findings that correlate with the research questions. This study utilised the thematic analysis perspective which focused on describing the main ideas in the messages (Du

Plooy, 2009).The themes (main ideas) were evaluated in relation to the research question and research sub-questions.

SECTION 1

4.2.Tshidilamolomo Context

It will be worthwhile to put the context of this study in Tshidilamolomo into perspective. The village has three structures of governance, namely, the traditional leaders under the auspices of the chief and his council with the offices based in Tshdilamolomo. The second structure of governance is the Ratlou local municipality with its official domicile situated in Setlagole, a distance of between 150 and 200 km from the telecentre. The third structure is the Government Communication and Information System which function within the North West Provincial government.

It is worth noting that there are four different ways of participation that can be observed in most development projects claiming to be participatory in nature (Uphoff: 1985). They are:

- ✓ Participation in implementation: This is where people are actively encouraged and rallied to take part in the actualization of projects. They are given certain responsibilities and set certain tasks or required to contribute specified resources.
- ✓ Participation in evaluation: Upon completion of a project, people are invited to critique the success or failure of it.
- ✓ Participation in benefit: People take part in enjoying the fruits of a project, for example a village meetings in the new community hall. (The case of Tshidilamolomo).
- ✓ Participation in decision-making: This is where people initiate, discuss, conceptualise and plan activities they will all do as a community (Ibid).

It is from the tenets of participatory communication, where people initiate dialogue conceptualises and plan activities that they will do as the community. Participation in decision-making is the most important form to promote dialogue. It gives people control of their lives and environment. At the same time the people acquire problem solving skills and acquire full ownership of projects, two important elements which would contribute towards securing the sustained use of Tshidilamolomo ICT centre. The other three forms of participation mentioned above have been criticised as being false participation by those who believe that participation in decision-making is fundamental and indispensable to the approach. They argue that people are being manipulated through these three forms of pseudo-participation to accept plans made by other more powerful people (Uphoff, 1985).

The following analysis attempts to explicate participatory communication for development from Tshidilamolomo Thusong ICT centre perspective. Subsequently, the study will inform us through the findings as to how to overcome the barriers of use that impede the process ICT use in rural communities. Firstly, the study provides an overview of socio-economic conditions of Tshidailamolomo from the empirical investigation of the study perspective. The study argues that these appalling conditions had contributed to the non-utilisation of the Tshidilamolomo ICT centre.

4. 2.1. The Role of Ratlou Local Municipality at the telecentre

4.2.2. The Centre manager

The Thusong telecentre in Tshidilamolomo is operated by the manager who resides there for managerial purposes. She ensures that the centre is opened and closed in-between the civil service working hours, that is, 8am to 16h30. The manager is deployed there by the Ratlou local municipality, who according to the information we have, has just been recently inducted as the manager of the centre. As a result of that, it is thus the prerogative of those who visit the centre as users to have end-user computing skills. Despite the assertion made by the GCIS that they provide end user computing training, this is not so at this centre. If the telecentre was operating it would be used by those who posses computer skills. This endows the manager with the role

of being a sheer overseer than helping in end-user computing and training. The Tshdidilamolomo Thusong telecentre is supposed to serve a number of villages around it. The distance travelling in between the villages and the telecentre is the maximum of 150 km. The nearest village Masamane is 7 kilometres away from the centre.

4.2.3. The "committed" Local counciller

Beside the manager, there is Ratlou municipality's local ward councillor who purports to be representing the communities at the municipal council. When we started to conduct the interview, she requested not to be part of the focus group meeting as she had to "represent" the Mayor in another "important" meeting. Subsequent to her "commitment', we had to engage the manager of the telecentre residing in Tshidilamolomo. In our visit to the centre, the manager alluded to us that only student residing in Tshidilamolomo are able to use the library to borrow books. It cannot be said that the telecentre is used since the manager confirmed that internet is not available and students prefer the library section than that of the ICT telecentre section. It does not come as a shock for the students to like to use the library section and overlook the ICT section, since the building is also branded likewise in the village .(Refer to Appendix C Library Building). Over the weekend the centre is closed. The centre manager did not want to answer any further questions after answering only two questions. She then referred us to the Deputy Director of telecentres in Ratlou local municipality situated in Setlagole, a maximum distance of 195 kilometres. This we deduce was owing to the fact that she was recently appointed and did not have a comprehensive knowledge about the logistics of the centre.

Succinctly put, the Tshidilamolomo Thusong telecentre is the prerogative of the Ratlou local Municipality, the traditional leaders' maximal involvement was only when the government through GCIS was looking for a place to set up Thusong centre. After allocating the land, the chief then left the logistics and the administrative functions to Ratlou municipality and the GCIS.

4.2.4. The evasive Deputy Director

The GCIS official confirmed that the Tshidilamolomo telecentres is managed by Ratlou Local Municipality, whose employee on the days of conducting this research has just been recently appointed and she also confirmed to us that the telecentre lacked internet connection. Despite the confirmation by GCIS, the Ratlou local municipality's Deputy director of Communication and Telecentres was evasive in admitting that the current telecentre manager was a deployed by Ratlou municipality. Instead of accepting the proposed interview which we proposed from him, he wanted the project team to furnish him with the template of the project proposal, despite the letter stipulating the aim of the study and confirming that the project will be used for academic purpose only. David Randall (2003:50) argues that "showing a source the article before publication is soliciting censorship". In an interview with Motsweding Fm (10 June 2012) which is in our records, the same deputy director declined to answer questions regarding the centre and distanced himself from the activities at the centre. Randall (2003) argues that being authorised does not necessarily mean that you are always informed.

According to the youth who reside in Tshidilamolomo, Mabule, and Logageng, the centre manager did not attend the interviews and lacked the necessary skills to operate the centre (SABC 2012). Therefore her capacity to run the ICT section of the telecentre has been very questionable and surrounded by controversy.

SECTION 2

4.3.1. The teachers' version

4.3.2. Tshidilamolomo socio-economic conditions

- **Poverty**

This information was brought forth in an interview held with the teachers around Tshidilamolomo. We believed that it was necessary to give this socio-economic background because it had a significant influence on utilisation of the telecentre as this

will be noted later in this study. These teachers provided the details from a narrative analysis perspective.

Tshidilamolomo and the villages which are supposed to be served by the ICT telecentre are to a certain extent neglected in terms of the delivery of services. The youth in Tshidilamololmo seem to be lagging behind in terms of awareness of the potential which ICTs can bring to their socio-economic development. There is lack of recreation facilities which subsequently invalidate them from participating in any extra mural activities.

- **Unemployment and Exploitation**

The unemployment rate is standing at a high rate at Tshidilamolomo, hence many of the young people fall prey to exploitation or teenage pregnancy. There is a banana farm in Tshidilamolomo which is not far away from the centre and the villages around called Kakamas. Because of the high rate of unemployment, many male youth are hired at this farm on rotational basis. They are paid R60 per week and given a box of banana as a token of incentive when they leave the farm.

- **Teenage Pregnancy**

Most of the youth are taken care of by their grandparents. The middle schools include learners between the ages of 12 to 25. Note that under normal circumstances the student at the latter age (that is, 25) has completed his first and second degrees. Many fall pregnant at a shocking rate and are subsequently becoming students and parents simultaneously. One teacher who was part of the panel brought forth that at the school where he is teaching, a twelve year old had to leave the school to give birth. It transpired that these students fell pregnant deliberately, so as they can access the social grants from the government to cope with their insalubrious socio-economic conditions.

- **Lack of Basic services**

The teachers also brought forth that electricity cuts off frequently in these villages. For instance, in one of the schools there has not been electricity for the past six months.

This has subsequently affected the other crucial areas of the delivery of service, such as water. Boreholes are there at different schools premises and the local clinic but the unreliability of the electricity rendered these boreholes dysfunctional. Consequently, people around those villages are selling 20 litres water for R2. The communities are still grappling to meet the basic needs on daily basis. Thus grappling and attention for these basic needs (that is need for survival) end up taking the centre stage ahead of ICTs services harboured at the telecentre.

It is against the backdrop of this socio economic background that to a certain extent the study argues that the communities have been frustrated in using the Thusong ICT centre. The exodus of the youth from the village to the local farm (Kakamas) and the high level of school dropouts owing to teen pregnancy are some of the socio-economic conditions which hindered the use of the centre since both factors have rendered many young people illiterates. It is appropriate that these brief socio-economic conditions of this village be understood before we analyse the usage of the centre by the communities.

4.4. SECTION 3

4.4.1. The use of the centre by teachers and students

With regard to student use of the ICT services at the telecentre, teachers brought forth that it is futile to expect students to travel to Tshidilamolomo to use the telecentre for their assignment since there is no internet and many if not all are computer illiterate. Transport is so scarce in the villages; people survive through the use of donkey carts, asking lifts and or bicycles. Consequently, the problem of transport, the lack of end user computing skills, the closure of the centre over the weekend, the unavailability of the internet, and the cutting off of electricity made, it is fruitless for students in and outside Tshidilamolomo to take efforts to search for information at the telecentre. As a result of these the teachers use their own experience; they give projects, assignments and activities along with the resources within the scope of their respective school premises. The reason being that teachers are conscious of the transport problem, the socio-economic conditions of the students, the lack of end user computing skills and

internet deficiency at the centre. Therefore, presently the centre is not productive since it is not utilised. These are some of the barriers that surfaced as hindrance to the use of the ICT the services at telecentre.

4.4.2. NGO version

The Tshidilamolomo based NGOs expounded that information about the launching of the centre was well disseminated around the village. However, these NGO's delved much on the launching of the centre but they drifted away from shedding light on the consultative processes towards the launching of the telecentre. As noted in the theoretical framework in chapter 2, traditional leaders are very essential in the rural villages. The NGOs asserted that their Chief is highly treasured by the community and all development projects endorsed by the chief and his council will be accepted by the community. They alleged that the normal procedure of allocating land or a place of stay in the rural communities was observed. Thus according to this group, they optimistically believed that the setting up of Tshidilamolomo telecentre went through due processes of consultation hence the same was accepted by their chief and his council. Consequently, that renders the centre appropriate for the community, regardless of whether they participated in its establishment or not.

From the above scenario, we noted the elements which Rogers (2003) brought forth with regard to diffusion of innovation. Rogers noted that for an innovation (idea) to permeate the structures of a particular social network, interpersonal communication channels are very significant. In Tshidilamolomo we observed that, the government exploited these channels (traditional leaders) through constitutional legalities and invaded the village. The powers of land allocation vested on the traditional leaders were well seized by the powers that be, the state, in accessing the land for setting up the Tshidilamolomo Thusong telecentre. Neither participatory communication processes were followed nor the government's Batho Pele principles.

The issue of lack of community participation and consultation was confirmed by the villages around Tshidilamolomo. The NGOs from the neighbouring villages had a total different view. They alleged that the communities from Tshidilamolmo enjoyed the lion's share of access to the telecenter than communities from the villages around. A point confirmed by the NGOs from Tshidilamolomo that they have access to the centre and use it frequently as they wish. However when we probed into what they used the telecenter for, we found that they used it for community meetings. Teachers also affirmed that the Department of Education use the centre for meetings. During our visit we found the church service held at the library section.

NGOs from local villages brought to light that they only saw the Thusong centre in operation. From our observation, the NGOs outside Tshidilamolomo brought to the surface the realities of Thusong centre in the area. Freire (1997) argued that this mode of service delivery is tantamount to what he dubbed prescription. He argued that every prescription represented the imposition of one individual's choice upon another, thus transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed into one that conformed with the prescriber's consciousness (ibid). Freire's assertion, concur with one of Julius Nyerere's famous quotes when he noted that: "People cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves" (Nyerere, 1973).

Freire argued that it is the process of participation that empowered the people for development and not prescription. He posited that, individuals get empowered through the process of participation and dialogue as opposed to prescription. While the notion of prescription disempowered and enslaved the one on whom the ideas are being prescribed to, in contrast, dialogue and participation empowers the same as it provides the platform for critical approach and interrogation to issues of concern. In our empirical investigation, dialogue and participatory communication lacked in establishing Tshidilamolomo Thusong telecentre.

The socio-economic and education status of these communities clearly explicate that they could not contest the monologic and imposing views of the government with regard to the establishment of the Thusong telecentres, whether used for its purpose

(ICTs) by the communities or not. This is also aggravated by the fact that many times the traditional leaders in these areas serve the interest of the government since they are paid by the state as noted in chapter 2. Subsequently, they remain tight-lipped when it comes to challenging these monologic views of the government.

4. 4. 3. Partial use by NGOs

With regard to this issue it was noted that usage of ICT services at this centre has been surrounded by biasness and partiality. The NGOs confirmed that they were not computer literate, and did not own a computer and had never used the internet before.

As highlighted above, the trend of using the Thusong ICTs centre for other community events as opposed to the actual purpose of telecentres has grown immensely. This has been evidence during our brief preview of these telecentres. The teachers confirmed that in the interview, our observation on the day of visit confirmed that, and the NGOs also affirmed that. Even though the GCIS development communication view is different from the pragmatic expiriences. Refe to GCIS website to get the scenario of what the centres are used for beside information circulation for development and dialogue, for example when we visited the Tshidilamolomo centre we found a "religious gathering" held on the library section which also harbours the telecentre.

From the interviews held with the NGOs, two divergent views surfaced, firstly those who resided in Tshidilamolomo believed that the telecentre was serving its expected function and purpose of information circulation by providing services needed to the communities. On the same breadth, the communities from local villages have a different view; they were not using the services of the telecentre except those harboured at Thusong service centre at Sassa, Social development, justice and police services. The second view sounds to be justifiable, because the telecentre manager, teachers and our observation connoted that the centre was not used because of lack of internet, transport, absence of end user computing skills and closure of the centre over the weekend.

It has been evidenced during the interview that the NGOs in the villages are less interested in the use of ICTs except for faxing, typing and phoning. The NGOs confirmed to us that these services are not available at the centre but rather they are sometimes helped by one of the departments harboured at the Thusong centre as mentioned above. Nevertheless, the provision of these services is also not without challenges. The NGOs highlighted to us that they are frequently forced to travel to Mahikeng for such services because of the broken fax and photo copy machines. At the moment they conclude the centre is not profitable to them at all, the same sentiment was echoed by the teachers.

When we observe the Tshidilamolomo scenario from Freieran notion of dialogue and Buber's theory of dyadic communication, we could say that the communicator of service (the government) perceived the recipient of service (beneficiaries/communities), as the objects to be manipulated and deserving prescription, the communities were not seen as equal partners in the establishment of Tshidilamolomo Thusong telecentre, a position which contradicts Freire's notion of dialogue and participatory communication which are at the centre of this study. It must be noted that the current study renounce this dehumanising mode of communication, "the I-It", and embrace the dialogic and empowering mode of "I-You", participatory communication. (Refer to theoretical framework, Chapter 2 for more on these two concepts).

Thus the consultation of the traditional authorities by the government was done on the basis of allocating land for setting up Thusong telecntres but not necessarily on hearing the views of the communities with regard to their primary needs. The land was allocated under the Communal Land Right Act of 2004. And this Act was criticised by many for giving traditional leaders immense administrative power in allocating land in communal areas. Ntsebeza (2006) argued that the Act made traditional councils supreme structures when it comes to land allocation. Hence the Act received much criticism from a variety of sources, including civil society organizations, gender and land rights activists.

Ntsebeza (2006) argued that traditional authorities are vested with substantial and unprecedented powers that create the opportunity for abuse of power and mismanagement. Therefore, consultation in Tshidilamolomo was subsequently done through council to legitimize what was already decided upon by the government. Thus the setting up of Thusong telecentre can be perceived as judicially valid but in contrary with participatory communication tenets and Freiran notion of dialogue. Hence participation still remains elusive to rural communities and a sheer lip and paper service.

Conclusion

This study therefore argues that, there is no way that Tshidilamolomo communities can maximise the potential of ICTs in their telecentre whilst the following bottlenecks and barriers still exist and are overlooked by the powers that be:

- ✓ the supposedly tutors at the telecentre lack the basic skills and proper training to use ICTs,
- ✓ the wide distance between the centre and the supposedly beneficiaries,
- ✓ the lack of advocacy of the ICT services at the centre and
- ✓ Lack of community consultation and participation in development projects

This action by the government to impose projects by manipulating certain power structures with the pretext to develop is the very negation of development and empowerment. Uphoff (1985) dupped it pseudo- participation. Nyerere (1973) asserted that, people cannot be developed but they can only develop themselves. Rogers (2003) noted that lack of, awareness, "how-to" and principle knowledge have the potential to delay the rate of adoption of any innovation (ICT use in the case of this study), when the significance of the same is ignored. (Refer to Chapter 2, theoretical framework). The lack thereof of this knowledge can deter and delay the community to continue with the quest to know more about the centre since they are essential for the diffusion and sustainability of any innovation.

In Tshidilamomlomo, the local government overseers the daily administration of the telecentre, though the deployed employees do not have the "how-to" knowledge. Peires (2000) noted that often the lines of communication between local traditional leadership and local government proved to be problematic, and this has had an impact on the potential of chiefs to initiate developmental projects. In Tshidilamolomo we noted the minimal involvement of the traditional authorities at the telecentre. Perires (2000) argued that the only possible recourse for dissatisfied traditional leaders, who obsessively want to reinstate their diluted power, will be to withdraw their support from such projects in order to allow these to fail. From the context of this study we cannot confirm nor deny Peires's assertion, but we can confirm the minimal involvement of the traditional authorities at Tshidilamolomo Thusong ICT centre.

From the interviews conducted, the study can safely conclude that the telecentre section of the Tshidilamolomo is not utilised for its intended ICT purpose. The reasons put forth by the supposedly beneficiaries, include lack of proper transport system, lack of advocacy of the centre and the unavailability of skills, among others. The study also noted through observation, that the telecentre is wrongly positioned. To say the least it looked like a fish in the land, and if not rescued, soon it will die there.

In addition, the study observed, that the communities are not that much aware of what the services of ICTs can bring for their own development. The problem of lack of awareness of the existence of ICT services in the telecentre was also evidenced at Gaseleka telecentre in in Limpopo as highlighted in literature review. The study brought forth that this is caused by how the "pioneers" of ICTs demean the use of these tools by employing unskilled and untrained people at these centres. And this is the contradiction of the notion of people participation through dialogue because they would be beneficiaries are excluded.

Moreover, we observed that the position of the Chief and his council with regard to the administration and usage of the centre is minimal if not nonexistent since the telecentre has been "legally" ceded to Ratlou local municipality.

Furthermore, the building on which the computers are kept for telecentres services is known as the library in the village. There is no visibility of the telecentre, only boards which direct to the Thusong service centre. We struggled a little bit in finding the telecentre because people preferred to call it library. In other words if a person visit Tshdilamolomo, s/he may have a problem in locating it, since it known as the library and the main services as issuing of books. Furthermore, the building is branded Department of Justice outside though it does not despatch such services.

Refer to appendix C1 and C2 for how the Tshidilamolomo ICT centre look like outside, and how the telecentre should look like outside.

It is thus against this backdrop that in answering the research question as mentioned in chapter 1, that is, what are the barriers that hinder the use of ICTs in Tshidilamolomo: the following were diagnosed as main barriers in the use of the ICT telecentre services:

- ✓ Transport: there is wide distance between the centre and the supposedly would be beneficiaries.
- ✓ Skill: there is lack of appropriate end user computing skills by the personnel employed at the telecentre and the local communities, and still there are no efforts to train competent managers.
- ✓ Lack of advocacy of the available ICT services at the centre (Conscietisation), the centre is not known.
- ✓ Internet deficiency (there is no internet).
- ✓ Socio economic conditions, high level of illiteracy among the community, as noted in the introduction of this study with regard to the type of population.

SECTION 4

4.5.1 Participation and Consultation (Critical analysis)

Towards the establishment of the ICT telecentre the study observed that the Tshidilamolomo community was considered at the last phase of the project. They conformed to participation by benefit approach, that is, by taking part in 'enjoying" the supposedly fruits of the centre. On the same breadth they showed during the interview that they do not have" how to knowledge". The type of knowledge which is noted by Rogers (2003) as one of the prerequisite needed by the community to adopt a new innovation.

The views of the communities regarding the use of the telecentre were compounded on the perception of traditional leaders. This concurred well with the assertions made by Pieres (2000) in which he noted that traditional leaders allow the operation of particular projects if they were first to be consulted. The same process was followed in establishing Thusong ICT section of Tshidilamolomo telecentre. According to Peires' argument, if the communities could have been consulted first; the possibilities are that traditional council of Tshidilamolomo could have been sceptical to allow the centre to be put up in this village. Hence, it would seem that the centre has been incongruent with the needs of the communities.

Dagron (2003 :2) warned of deploying the ICTs haphazardly in rural communities, he noted that ": only one out of every one hundred telecentres are really useful for the local community where they have been set-up, in terms of supporting development and social change. This may shock many of those who see ICTs as the ultimate magic solution for poverty. Thousands of telecentres have been planted during the past five years and millions of dollars have been invested in buying computers and ensuring Internet connectivity; however, every time we are to mention the successful experiences, the same five or six places come to mind. In other words: something smells very bad in cyberland".

It must be noted that according to Remuneration of Traditional Leaders Act (1 of 1995); traditional leaders are remunerated by the state. It is therefore very unlikely that the chief and his council may oppose any state driven projects in their respective jurisdiction. The rolling out of structures such as Tshidilamolomo Thusong ICT telecentre is a prototype of the many rural based government driven projects. Hence the same was rolled out with the consent of the chief and his council, not with the intention of identifying the people's needs but by using the chief and his council to authorise the top-down government's views.

4.5.2. GCIS Version

In the interview held with the Senior Development Communication officer, the following transpired:

GCIS only coordinate and monitor telecentres that are within Thusong service centres, formerly known as MPCC. Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa (USAASA) is the agency /partner involved in setting up telecentres which provide ICT services, especially in rural areas, on a cost recovery basis. Note that the telecentres are used on cost recovery basis. In other words users have to pay for the services offered at these centres. This is a view which contradicts the position of a Tshidilamolomo based NGO which eluded those services are for free. The official also highlighted that other ICT ports are established in rural schools (cyber labs) which they are not accountable for but USAASA is. Having said that, the GCIS alluded that the setting up of technology in rural areas is a challenge because it is costly. Though other entities such as USAASA are accountable for setting telecentres, the issue of maintenance and security of these centres is cause for concern and this has not yet been addressed by GCIS.

The GCIS also alluded that they have programmes in place which empower the rural communities not only to have physical access to these ICTs but also to have the skill to use them. And this includes: basic computer literacy. University of South Africa is said to be in negotiations to use this centres for their students who reside in rural areas.

Although we cannot demur the assertions made by GCIS, we have not seen either of them at Tshidilamolomo telecentre.

Furthermore, challenges incurred by GCIS include the youth who are not much interested in accessing information that will develop them, rather they use the centres to open pornographic sites and use free computer sms that pose security threat because they cannot be traced (For more on this Refer to Chapter 5 for recommendations).

With regard to the relevancy of information at the centres, the GCIS confirmed that they were convinced that the information dispatched at the centre was relevant. This was attested by the fact that previously communities had to travel long distances to access services such as Internet service, photocopying, and among others faxing, but now they can access those services in a convenient way because of telecentres in their locations. The basic training in computer literacy which the GCIS "offered" helped most of the community to acquire skills that opened doors for employment. These realities and answers as provided by the GCIS development communicators seem to be in contrast with the pragmatic situation at Tshidilamolomo telecentre. The NGOs complained of having to travel to as far as Mahikeng to get the very services which were lacking at the centre. One wonders whether this can be because the telecentre in Tshidilamolomo is administered by the municipality and not the GCIS (which claim to be having the package of appropriate services enshrined above).

Furthermore, GCIS confirmed that rural communities are situated at a disadvantaged position to use ICTs and to enjoy their benefit thereof. This has been caused by the fact that there is a wide digital gap between the rural destitute and the urban affluent in South Africa. The gap will take some time to close owing to lack of ICT infrastructure and other issues mentioned above.

Lastly, with regard to the ICT roll out strategy in rural South Africa, the GCIS official noted that by 2014 each municipality in South Africa is expected to have one Thusong service centre where communities will be able to access government services at their nearest location.

The GCIS made a very valid and relevant point which is the core of this study in recommendations that ICT should form part of the curriculum for primary school learners in rural areas, and USAASA should advance installation of ICT ports in rural schools, that is, cyber labs.

It is against this background that the study posits that the rolling of ICT infrastructure in rural South Africa still have many barriers to overcome. ICTs should be relevantly placed within the context of rural communities. It should be noted that since ICTs are new information circulation tools for the 21 first century, the audience that should be targeted is the youth in rural schools. The Six block model of GCIS Thusong service can as well be reduced to 5 Block model with the ICT ports (telelecentre) relocating to rural schools. See chapter 5 for more details on Positioning.

The rolling out of ICT infrastructure in rural areas should be informed by both the genuine participatory communication framework which includes dialogue. However, though the study recommend this approach (participatory communication through dialogue), it also recommends that donors should conduct an extensive research on the socio-economic conditions of the rural communities prior to setting up any ICT infrastructure. If the potential of ICTs are to be unlocked in rural South Africa, relevancy should be preceding deployment and employment.

Dagron (2009) argues that many of the promethean ICT "enlighteners" (such as the state in the case of this study) found on their way to the poor communities that these had no electricity, let alone telephone. Nonetheless, they continued to roll out these technologies without strategically identifying the people's needs. The author asserts that other things even more important and easy to identify were not recognized by the avant-garde of ICT marketers. In the context of this study we perceived that the socio - economic conditions of Tshidilamolomo communities were overlooked by the government. People in Tshidilamolomo were struggling with accessing the basic needs such as water, food, attending schools, and lacked basic computer skills, among others. Political representation in the local government is lacking. If "access" to ICTs was to be

promoted, these items could not be left aside; they are core to the problem of poverty and underdevelopment. Hence people participation was unavoidable, which the study argues could have led to appropriate positioning of ICTs in rural communities. Subsequently the centre's usage and productivity.

Therefore, we firstly argue that there has to be an ICT practitioner championing the rural ICT projects and not just the manager managing the centre and counting the number of people coming in and out of the centre.

Secondly, to curb the barriers of lack of usage, ICT should not be placed haphazardly but rather they should be placed in the context of rural communities. The success and empirical support of the benefits of ICT should be envisaged by both appropriate technologies and human resources. Technologies are gadgets which need to be used by skilled human beings who also should have the right attitude towards these tools. ICTs in Thusong telecentres have the potential to develop the Tshidilamolomo communities. However, the government did not make a proper feasibility study with regard to positioning the ICT centre. The state opted for technophiles, utopian and uni-directional top down views.

Freire (1970) argued that people should not think and act according to the prescriptions they receive from hierarchies rather they should think in response to their dialectical relationship with the environment and their needs. He noted that "people should enter historical process of correcting the imbalances of the past as responsible subjects, (that is people who know and act upon), rather objects (which are known and acted upon)" (ibid). It cannot be accurate that telecentres will be rolled out all over rural South Africa by donors and the government without consulting and conscientising the would be beneficiaries of development projects. USAASA has been mentioned from the interview with the GCIS senior development communicator as responsible for telecentres maintenance. Subsequent to her assertion, the study put into a brief scrutiny the role of USAASA in setting up telecentres both in villages and rural schools.

4. 5. 3. Universal Access Agency of South Africa (USAASA)

The Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa (USAASA) is a State Owned Entity of government established through the Electronic Communications Act, No 36 of 2005. According to USAASA website, the objective of this body is to ensure that "every man, woman and child whether living in the remote areas of the Kalahari or in urban areas of Gauteng can be able to connect, speak, explore and study using ICTs (USAASA, 2012).

Rapid Deployment Project

The main objectives of this organisation tailored to speed up the process of delivery of ICTs in rural areas are as following:

1. to rapidly deploy public access technologies in under-serviced areas;

2. to work in collaboration with the ICT sector to ensure long term sustainability of public access technologies in under-serviced areas;

3. to ensure the deployment of innovative technologies in under-serviced areas; and

4. to stimulate entrepreneurship in under-serviced areas (ibid)

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the research, conclusions as well as implications for future research are covered in this chapter.

Introduction

Without doubt, ICTs have huge potential to play in their role for social and economic development of rural population as it has been evidenced in the Literature review. These technologies, as highlighted in Chapter 1, can be prodigious tools in poverty alleviation through information circulation and bridging urban rural divide as better

communication facilities. They can create a more democratic environment which is a prerequisite for social development and poverty alleviation for rural communities.

The rolling out of ICTs in rural Tshidilamolomo rural communities in a haphazard manner cannot be appropriate at this point in juncture particularly where there is scarcity of expertise in ICT usage in these communities.

5.2. FEASIBLE STRATEGIES

5.2.1. Strategies for policy makers and implementers

- ❖ Appropriate Approach: Dialogue with stakeholders

The study argues that the rolling out of ICTs in rural communities is a complex process that needs to be fully conceptualised and defined from the beginning. However, this has not been the case in Tshidilamomolo Thusong telecentre. It seemed the government has embraced the ICT integration process in development without clear plans to guide the way. The government policies should define and clarify the role players in rolling out ICT infrastructure in rural areas in paper and pragmatically. And whoever is not playing his or her role should be brought to book. At the moment despite the confirmation by GCIS that the centre is administered by the municipality, it is not clear as to who should be doing what, when and how at the centre, especially on issues of training. The GCIS confirmed that they were doing training and monitoring, but pragmatically there was no supporting evidence to that effect. At one point the GCIS said training was a prerogative of USAASA. The telecentre manager and the deputy director were very evasive when requested to account why the ICT section is not used by the community.

Therefore, the study put forth that the government's ICT policy and strategic plan should be defined to provide a framework for the development and implementation of ICT projects. The technophiles, utopian and imposing anti-dialogic position of the government cannot help in either way. The study argues that the government should not be in denial that telecentres are not effective and efficient at the moment. The

government should live by the Batho Pele Principles which concurs with the theoretical framework of this study and participatory communication through dialogue. The government's denial creates a problem which it will difficult to address.

In addition, the diversity and conflicting interests of different stakeholders in the rolling out of ICT services in rural areas should be recognized when developing ICT policy and a strategic plan. The study therefore believes that an integrated holistic approach should be considered rolling ICT infrastructure in rural communities. The study recommends that the following should be considered prior to erect telecentres:

- ✓ the systems of governance in Tshidilamolomo area (to address power structures grapples);
- ✓ the socio-economic conditions of the would be beneficiaries;
- ✓ ICT infrastructure already in place;
- ✓ ICT skill levels in the community;
- ✓ end user training programmes (curriculum development thereof);
- ✓ cost-effectiveness analysis(consultation with internet service providers/ ISPs);
- ✓ Develop staff in new technologies, and employing qualified and properly trained people; and
- ✓ the choice of proper technologies for the needs of the rural communities.

5.3. FIRST STRATEGY

5.3.1. How to improve the use of ICTs in Tshidilamolomo

- ❖ Dislocate telecentres and relocate to Cyber laboratory schools

The study proposes that the rolling out of telecentres in rural communities should be done with the understanding of the dynamics of each community. In Tshidilamolmomo we believe that all efforts to roll out ICTs in that village should be focused on cyber labs. ICT tools should be positioned in schools labs. The Thusong telecentres initiatives should be ceded to the Department of Education and inculcated in school curriculum. IT tutors to be employed by the Department of Education on full time basis. The curriculum

development and assessment methods should have formative and summative content and must include teacher student interaction.

- ❖ Teachers' support mechanism

Dwyer *et al.,* (1997) emphasised that for the integration of ICTs to be effective and sustainable, administrators themselves must be competent in the use of the technology, and they must have a broad understanding of the technical, pedagogical, administrative, financial, and social dimensions of ICTs in education. Serious challenges in the South African context exist regarding this issue. Despite the government effort to provide teachers with laptops, many teachers still adhere to the traditional pedagogies and are not familiar with the usage of some of these ICT tools. The telecommunications network providers, namely, Telkom, Cell C, MTN and Vodacom have through their corporate social responsibility initiatives provided computer programme for teachers and educators (Fourie & Mcnamara, 2008). This study recommends that ICT for development should be included as a curriculum at schools. New IT Tutors should be employed by the Department of Education schools from primary throughout to tutor all the ICT related subjects. The teachers should be capacitated to give out the projects; assignments can be marked by the computer to ensure their participation as well.

5.3 .2 Projected Benefits of the First Strategy

The study project that if ICT are placed appropriately in the context of rural communities, namely youth, promotion and awareness of these technologies can be popularised by the same young people as it is the case in other areas. If learning on ICT is inculcated in school curriculum, the rewards will be measurable formatively and summatively, unlike rolling out ICT services haphazardly as it is the case now and find that the centres are not used. There will be a benchmark to measure ICT usage and progress particularly in rural schools. It has been brought forth by GCIS that most centres have been on the receiving-end of theft and vandalism. If they are taken to schools safety and security would be enhanced around the centres.

5.4. SECOND STRATEGY

- ❖ Renaming and Rebranding telecentres

According to Rogers (2003), the name given to an innovation often affects its perceived compatibility, and therefore its rate of adoption thereof. The author asserts that the perception of an innovation is decorated by word symbols used for it. Therefore, this study propose that telecentres be replaced by the DDs in Tshidilamolomo and be renamed and rebranded with local vernacular.

The Digital Doorway as defined is a robust digital kiosk with 4 screens, and keyboards with touch pads, built to withstand the rigours of the African climate, enthusiastic use, as well as physical or technical vandalism. Its prime intended audience has been young people in poor and particularly remote South African townships, who have not had computer or internet access (Stillman, 2008). The Digital Doorway project allows communities to teach themselves functional computer skills through free, 24-hour access to computers with motivating content (BuaNews 2005). From the literature provided in Chapter 2, it is evident that these types of technologies will be appropriate for many rural communities, and seems as if diffusion of DDs is quickly absorbed by the communities.

The idea DDs as highlighted in Chapter 2, the idea is to provide people in rural and disadvantaged areas with computer equipment, and allow them to experiment and learn without any formal training but through their own intuition and exploration. It has been evidenced that the DDs are greatly used by the rural communities. For more on this point refer to Chapter 2.

- ❖ Positioning

It is important to position the services of ICTs (DDs) appropriately in the minds of the rural communities Positioning refers to how the product should be positioned in the minds of the identified target audience (Skinner, 2007). Failing this task will result in what transpired in Tshidilamolomo, the lack of usage of ICT services because of

inappropriate positioning. The positioning strategy means an individual will behave toward a new idea in a similar manner to the way the individual behave toward other ideas that are perceived as similar to the new idea (Rogers, 2003).

Therefore the study proposes that the DDS with their new name be erected at the traditional authority's premises such as tribal halls as well as at the nearby shopping stations.

5.4.1. Projected benefits of the Second Strategy

Since the traditional systems are highly valued by rural communities, the study believes that erecting the DDs within the structures built by traditional leaders will bring forth the following advantages:

- ❖ cultivation the sense of ownership

A sense of ownership among the communities will be cultivated, thus ensuring project sustainability and long life span. The study proposes that the DDs be operated by staff from traditional council. It is important to note that clear ownership of the planned infrastructure by an accountable legal entity, in this case, the traditional authorities, is essential for sustainability.

- ❖ provide continuity and stability.

Keuldre (1998) argued that in an era of great change, traditional leaders are very salient in providing this commodity which is not that common in the delivery of service, that is, continuity and stability.

- ❖ transport and distance problem

It will address transport problem and distance challenge, many tribal halls are strategically established within reach of many rural communities, and

- ❖ branding and advocacy ,

The DDs logo should be intertwined with the corporate logo of the traditional council in the areas they serve to ensure visibility of these centres so as the communities will identify with these centres. Rogers and Freire's notion of awareness knowledge and conscietisation respectively.

Full involvement of all stakeholders in the implementation process is a key to addressing awareness and attitude problem. Formally organised awareness programmes, visits to telecentres where success has occurred, and short trainings can contribute to raise the awareness and change the attitude of stakeholders towards ICT facilities and their services. It is important for all stakeholders in the community to know the existing ICT facilities and services and their importance in relation to their specific development tasks. The same will give idea to the donors to know ought to be done in order to formulate well versed promotional and awareness strategies. For instance, a sample teaching students through video conferencing and or an agricultural lesson to farmers in a hall shown through an overhead projector from laptop will suffice to inculcate in these communities the importance of these centres.

However, in Tshididilamolomo there is a vague knowledge and lack of awareness about ICTs, some perceive them as simply advanced technologies that require a lot of money and very advanced skills. They are not appreciated as a means of creating efficiency and cost effectiveness.

5.4. 2. Participation: Dilemma in rural communities

In conclusion, we noted a number of factors which made people participation to be uncoordinated in rural Tshidilamolomo.

Herein is the conundrum in the rural communities of South Africa, the challenge which makes participation to be ever-elusive for these communities. The communities put a lot of trust on their chiefs and council to an extent that they even misrepresent their views,

the same cannot be challenged by the community. On the same breadth the government driven ICT projects are failing dismally because of government's monologic, and prescriptive view of service delivery. This is what Paulo Freire (1997) has dubbed anti-dialogical tendency aiming at in in animating the views of the communities.

The rural communities are scared of challenging decisions made on their behalf by the traditional council, owing to the respect they have towards this structure. On the same breadth the traditional council are kept mum to challenge prescriptive views of the government projects in their jurisdiction, owing to the laws passed which govern the relationship between the two entities in South Africa. The one that is mentioned in Chapter 2 which governs the participation of traditional leaders in local government, and the Traditional Remuneration Act of 2005 is an example. Through these two Acts, the government managed to marginalise the once revered power and influence of the traditional authorities. It is however, unfortunate that despite the manipulation and domination of the traditional systems by the government, the rural communities are not aware and their loyalty still remains. They still believe that their chiefs and council negotiate efficiently on their behalf, thus their needs will be addressed.

On the same breadth the role of local government in the form of local municipality vested with the responsibility of seeing to it that service delivery projects are carried out still leaves much to be desired. The elected councillors who are supposed to represent these communities at the Municipal council rarely hold ward meetings post their election into office. In a study conducted by Seadira (2009), it surfaced that councillors are only visible towards and during the elections, post the election they disappear to be seen again during the next election campaign. As a result of this the rural communities' needs and inputs into the Municipality's Integrated Development Plan are left out. In many instances the local government the municipal council end up guesstimating and rolling out projects such as rural ICT infrastructure misguided by fallacious municipal instincts. Hence non utilisation and vandalism of these structures.

Based on the provision made by the two Acts, we argue that the traditional leaders' representation of their respective communities has been regulated and marginalized. Their role in the implementation of the Tshidilamolomo Thusong telecentre has undoubtedly been overridden by the government and insignificant to say the least. Despite the influence that the traditional leaders have over their respective communities, that has not been helpful in assisting the functionality of the Tshidilamolomo Thusong ICT telecentre.

From the objects of the two Acts expounded in Chapter 2, one can unequivocally so, perceive how the role and the power of traditional leaders have been constitutionally so detached from service delivery issues. It should not come as a surprise when traditional leaders are not participating in areas they once held enormous power in resources. The land control and their participation in their respective areas have been sloppy in the face of some people because of the reasons highlighted above. Moreover, mainly because the ICT rural based developmental projects are deemed to be government initiatives, whether they succeed or fail, it counts for nothing on the side of traditional leaders.

5. 5. Discussion based on Cultip's 5cs of effective communication strategy

Firstly, it must be noteworthy that a telecenter must convince the community that it is important to their lives. Without this awareness of the telecenter's value to the community, the telecenter will have a difficult time surviving. It will not be sustainable. A telecenter needs a communication strategy to do this awareness-raising systematically, effectively, and efficiently. It is unfortunate that the promotion of the telecenters in the faculties of donors and the government in South Africa is often not a high priority.

It thus suffices to argue the irrelevant placement of ICT centre in Tshdilamolomo in the context of Cutlip 1994 as cited by Skinner et al (2007). Cutlip (1994) noted in what is termed the seven Cs of communication of which the study will use only five, that for communication process to be effective and efficient the following should have preceded the erection of Tshidilamolomo telecentre:

5.5.1. Credibility:

Cutlip believe Communication starts with a climate of belief. This climate should be built by performance on the part of the institution reflecting earnest desire to serve the receiver, the government in this instance. The receiver must have confidence in the sender and high regard for the source competence on the subject. The same cannot be said of the Tshidilamolomo telecentre manager on whose operation as highlighted in the problem statement that lacked of managerial capacity and the desire to use the ICT centre. The incompetence of the centre manager cannot at all create a climate of belief. Subsequently, this invalidates the credibility of the server (the state) on the side of the recipient (the communities). As a result this there is lack of enthusiasm from the communities' and students to visit the centre.

5.5.2. Context and Capability of the audience.

Cutlip (1994) also noted that for communication to be effective and efficient, it must be placed within the capable audience. This study concurs with Cutlip's views on positioning ICTs within an audience which has the capacity to use these technologies. Rural schools were diagnosed as the audience that have the capacity to use ICTs. Moreover, for services to be appropriate, they should square with the realities of the communities'. The Tshidilamolomo ICT centre does not square well with realities of the communities. In contrast, there is direct opposite of what the centre stands for and what is happening there on daily basis. As highlighted above, during our visitation at the centre we found a "church service" held at library section. Gatherings at the centre have nothing to do with the use of the ICT services harboured there. Thus presently, we cannot say the centre is serving its primary purpose of information circulation, dialogue and development communication. It is rather used used for community meetings and other issues. This has been attested to by one of NGO members who confirmed that they use the centre for various reasons including community gatherings.

Usage is determined by need. In Tshidilamolomo telecentre, it transpired that the aged are not compatible with the ICT services. This has been evident when the study

juxtaposed the different types of services offered at Thusong service centre and those offered by the Thusong telecentre. The word itself telecentre/ ICTs services caused semantic noise to them; hence they call it the library rather than the telecentre.

For the aged in rural villages the Thusong centre is about social grants, police services, Sassa, Social development, health and other departments which are harboured at Thusong. That is in contrary to what these centres are about, which is to:

- promote access to opportunities as a basis for improved livelihoods;
- create a platform for greater dialogue between citizens and government; and
- bring government information and services closer to promote cost-effective, integrated, efficient and sustainable service provision to better serve the needs of citizens.

In conclusion, this study observed that ICTs in rural South Africa cannot be left in the hands of the few which most of the times demean the importance of the use of ICTs by the ruralites. The entire notion of ICTs for rural development cannot be left only for municipalities, who had been performing bad in recently in service delivery. The study argues that some municipal managers belong to the old school of thought who regard information circulation as luxury. They rather prefer to circulate information through hardcopies and this demeans the importance of ICTs in development. ICTs are the new innovative tools of information circulation for development and the generation which can maximise their usage thereof is the youth. Neither the municipal governance nor the traditional leaders may necessarily hierarchize or champion the use of these ICT centres. It against this background that the study recommends that usage of ICTs is enshrined in the Education curriculum from primary stages so as this can be inculcated in the systems and thus becoming part of their culture.

5.5.3. Content (Compatibility)

Cutlip (1994) continues to note that for the message to be relevant, its content should be relevant to the receiver, and be compatible with his or her value system. People

select those items of information that promise them greatest rewards. The content determines the audience. In the case of Tshidilamolomo, it is apparent that where the centre is placed presently consumption is lacking, in other words, usage. Hence, we cannot argue the point of content relevancy since usage is lacking.

5.5.4. Clarity

Cutlip highlights that messages be put in simple terms. Words must mean the same to the receiver as to the sender. This study noted that the term telecentres is used only by the GCIS. When we used it in Tshidilamolomo, it was semantic noise to many villagers including the traditional council. The centre is rather known as the library.

5.5.5. Continuity and consistency

We believe that after school hours the students will carry on using the ICT services which would be erected in their traditional tribal halls and their shopping stations.

5.6 RECCOMMENDATIONS

Although the Department of Communications, Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa (USAASA) and municipalities have made determined efforts to set up and operate Thusong Service Centres (Telecentres), almost none of them have proved to be sustainable. Each one must be owned by an entity that takes responsibility and is rewarded for its successful operation.

The telecommunications (telephony and Internet) related services offered in the Thusong Service Centres are relatively expensive due to the exorbitant telecommunications fees charged by the telecommunications companies. Therefore the telecentres should be beneficiaries of the mushrooming broadband projects in the local and provincial governments, but it has not been the case owing to the barriers and bottlenecks given in Chapter 4.

The study argues that telecentres should be manned by permanent staff instead of volunteers as it has been proved in other telecentres such the one in Kgetleng local municipality in Bojanala district. Thus far it is apparent that the municipalities do not know or see the potential that ICTs can bring to rural communities. This has been attested by the fact that most of the telecentres which are supposed to be managed by Municipalities are mainly operated by the volunteers. Municipalities' contribution to the centres should include the provision of permanent and relevant staff members. This will assist in the retention of staff and continutiy.

Most of the telecentres in rural areas have been on the receiving-end of theft and vandalism. Safety and security should be enhanced around the centres. The GCIs confirmed that and the government has not yet overcame the challenge. It must be noted that the financial telecentres model relied on the generation of income by the centres to cover operational costs according to GCIS. This has proved to be problematic. A funding model that enhances sustainability should be established. The study thus proposes that all rural ICT endeavours in South Africa should collaborate with the private sector to ensure that current software and equipment are used maximally.

From the empirical study conducted, it is very apparent that there is a dearth of information about the existing Thusong centres ICT section and it is strongly recommended that a detailed survey of them be carried out to establish their current status, potential future, short and medium term needs. Hence this study has recommended that telecentres be ceded into the Department of Education and the Digital Doorway (DDs) replace them as the Community Digital Hubs. This because the robust build-up of the DDs allow them to stand the rigours of rural climate.

Dagada (2012) argues that the Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) should start to work with the traditional authorities in terms of infrastructure development. Some traditional authorities have assets that would enable any financier to lend them money without reservation. This study put forth that all efforts to roll out ICTs including whatever influence the traditional leaders have should be focused on Cyber labs in rural

schools. The DDs can be placed nearby traditional halls and busy shopping places in these villages to be accessed by people 24 hours. Owing to how the DDs are built, that is, their ability to face rigours of sometimes unfavourable rural climate. The traditional authorities are core and being the custodians of rural development are gateway to such a rural development and innovation projects.

However, in many instances, as noted in Chapter 2, the tense relationship between the traditional leaders and the local government has been a drawback of many projects. It has been noted that in instances where traditional authorities built their own infrastructure in the past, there has been some friction with the local government, arising from differences of opinion about whose mandate applies. This has led unfortunately to the death of many project meant for development, vandalism of the same because the local population never deemed or took the project as theirs in the first place. Dagada (2012) asserts that this kind of disagreement can be eliminated by integrating municipalities' IDP into the traditional authorities' developmental plans, and not otherwise. The study also argues that it is critical that all stakeholders contribute to and own the policy and the plan. The South Africa government's wide consultations are necessary in the identification of challenges, and in proposing areas for ICT application. Denying that the telecentres are not effective currently is denying the rural communities' their basic right of access to information. Stakeholders must agree on the projects to be implemented, including their role therein.

In addition, one other way to sustain rural ICT initiatives would be for Development Financial Institutions (donors) to have their own pool of project managers and business analysts who can be deployed to municipalities and traditional authorities to ensure sustainability of these telecentres Cyber labs and Digital Doorway. Dagada (2012) notes that there is a lack of enthusiasm for broadband related projects in municipalities in the North West, Free State and Limpopo Provinces and this he attributed, among other things, to the failure of administrators to develop business plan for such projects. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that ICT is perceived as a support function rather than a core function, he asserted. It should be borne in mind that ICT projects compete

for financial resources and political attention with more visible physical projects such as water provision and construction of roads, houses, clinics and schools as it has been evidenced in Tshidilamolomo.

The study has noted in Tshidilamolomo, what Tehranian (1990) called a technophilia syndrome. The technophiliic view sees technology optimistically and naively overlooks the issue of concern. This empirical investigation that the government disregarded issues of importance when they rolled out ICT infrastructure in Tshidilamolomo, the same are diagnosed as barriers in Chapter 4. These are socio-economic conditions, the distance between the centre and the communities, lack of advocacy of the centre as well as poor management.

Evusa (2005:27) warns that, "Neither a naive celebration of ICT potential nor a condemnation can adequately capture the potential and future impact of communication technologies in rural communities, instead it calls for the need to address how they can be harnessed to tackle locally relevant problems". From the context of this study, relevancy can only be achieved through the application of Freire's (1970)notion of dialogue, consciousness of Rogers's (2003) three types of knowledge and lastly taking heed to Nyerere's (1973) quote that: "people cannot be developed but they can only develop themselves". The crux of the matter is that the availability of computers and connectivity is no panacea for rural development and transformation, but the contextual positioning of these technologies and observation of the strategies and recommendations mentioned above can invigorate interest in usage of these tools. Subsequently, unlocking the potential of Information Communication Technology in rural areas. The study concludes!

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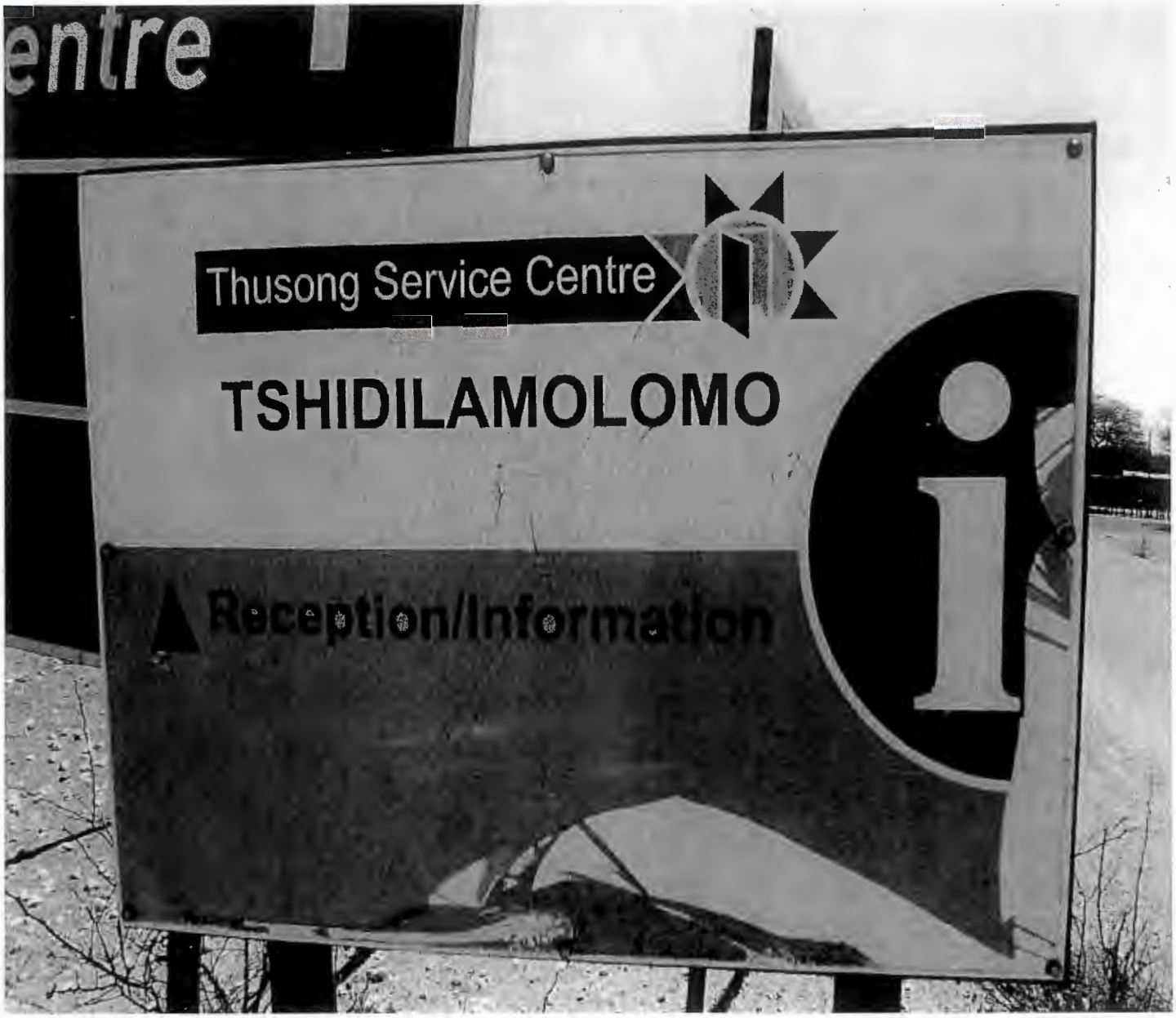
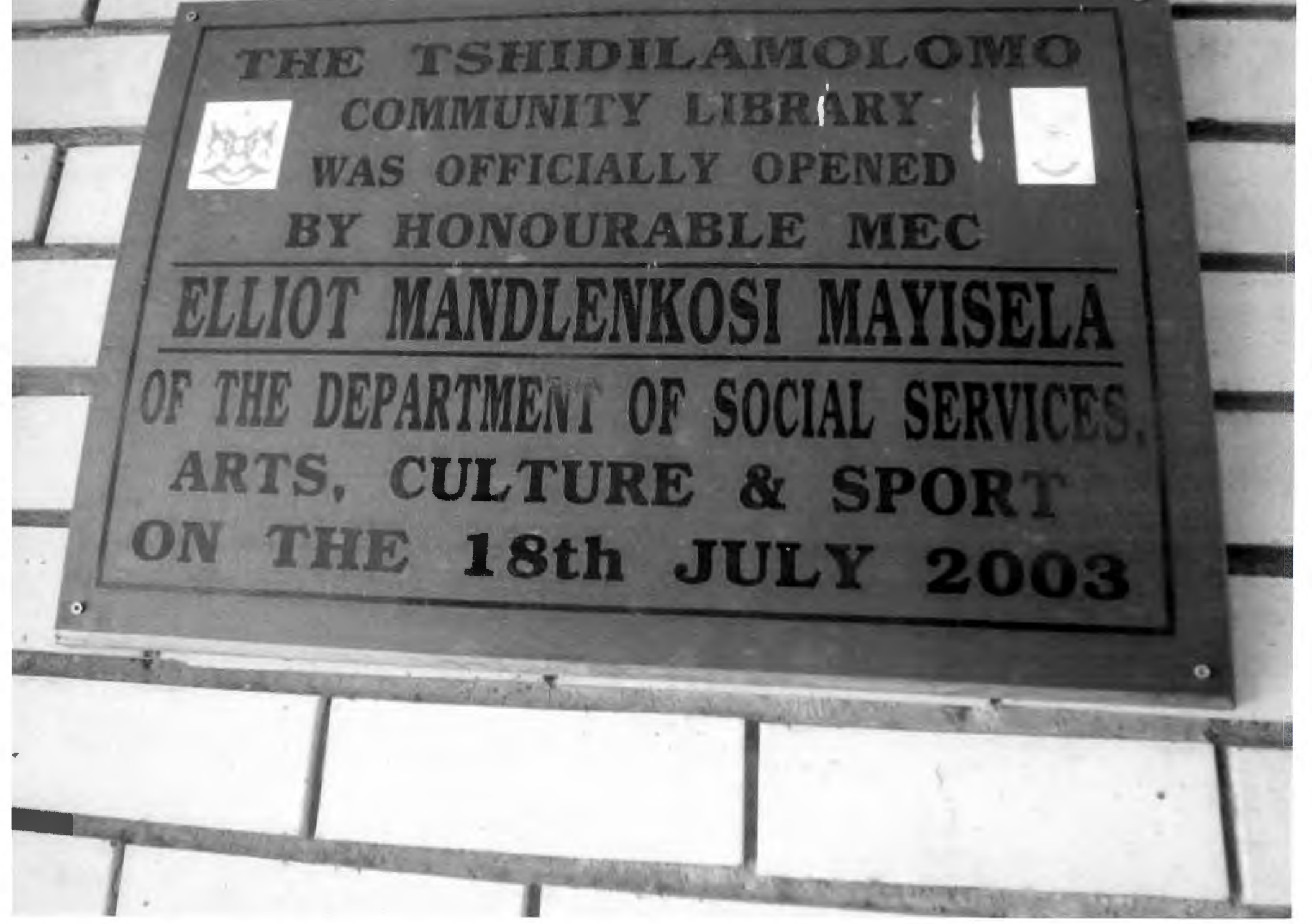
APPENDIX C A1 : 1st DIRECTIONAL BOARD POINTING TO THUSONG SERVICE CENTRE WITHOUT TELECENTRE.

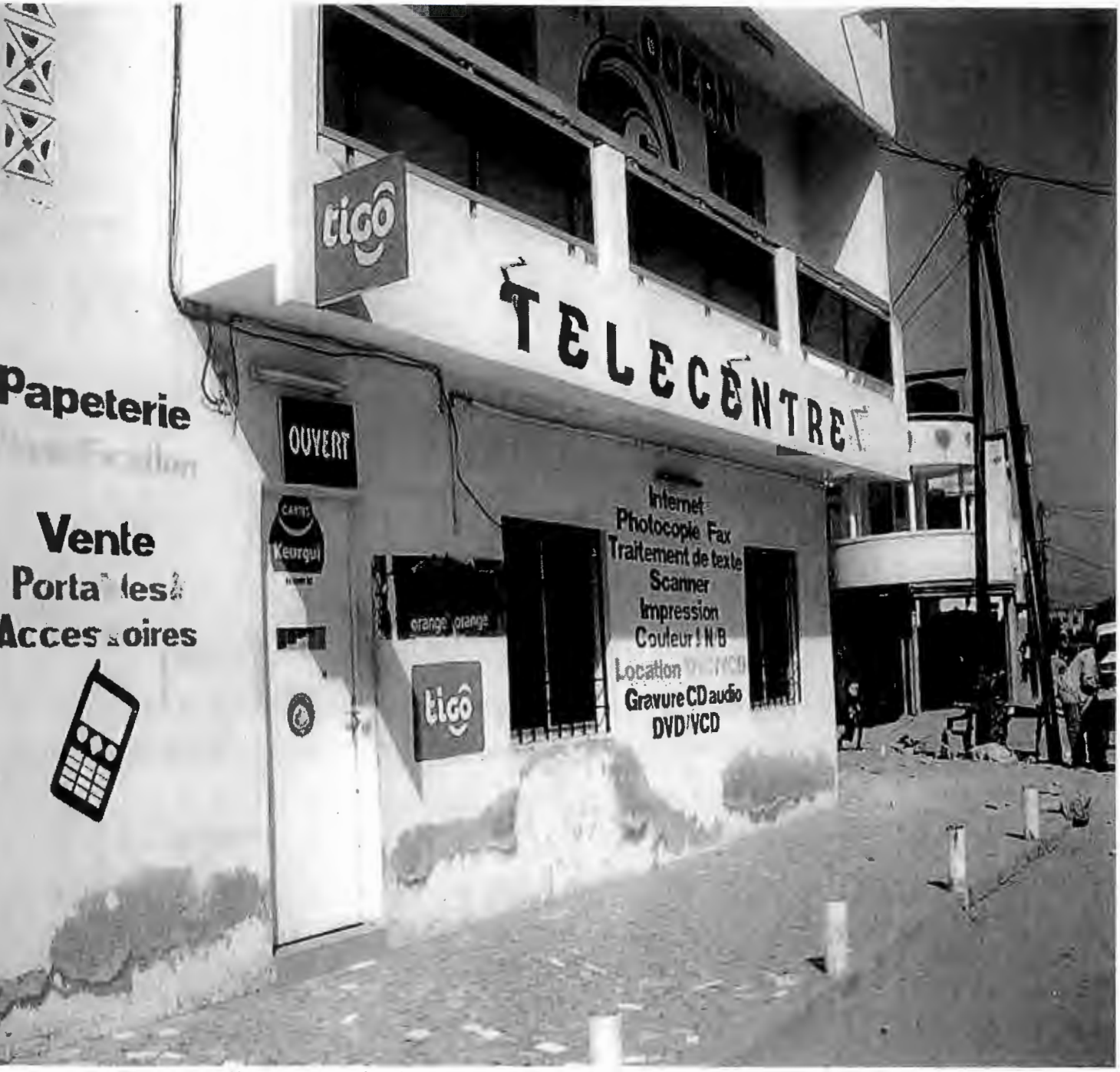
APPENDIX A 2: THE SECOND DIRECTIONAL BOARD POINTING TO THUSONG SERVICE CENTRE WITHOUT ANY MENTION OF THE TELCENTRE.

APPENDIX A 3: THE THIRD AND LAST DIRECTIONAL BOARD POINTING TO THUSONG SERVICE CENTRE WITHOUT TELECENTRE.



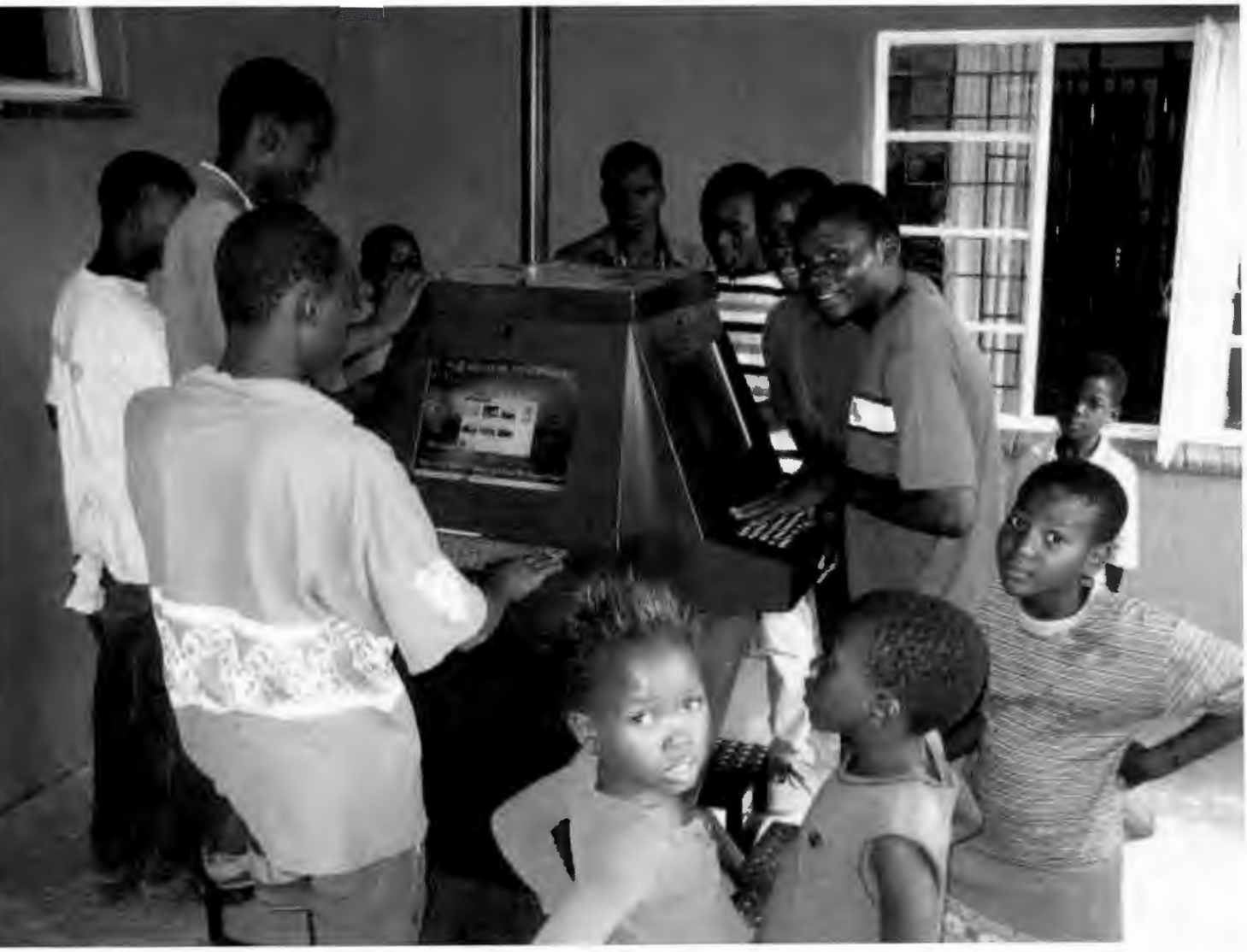

THE TSHIDILAMOLOMO
COMMUNITY LIBRARY
WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED
BY HONOURABLE MEC
ELLIOT MANDLENKOSI MAYISELA
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES,
ARTS, CULTURE & SPORT
ON THE 18th JULY 2003

APPENDIX B 2 : VISIBLE TELECENTRE IN DAKAR



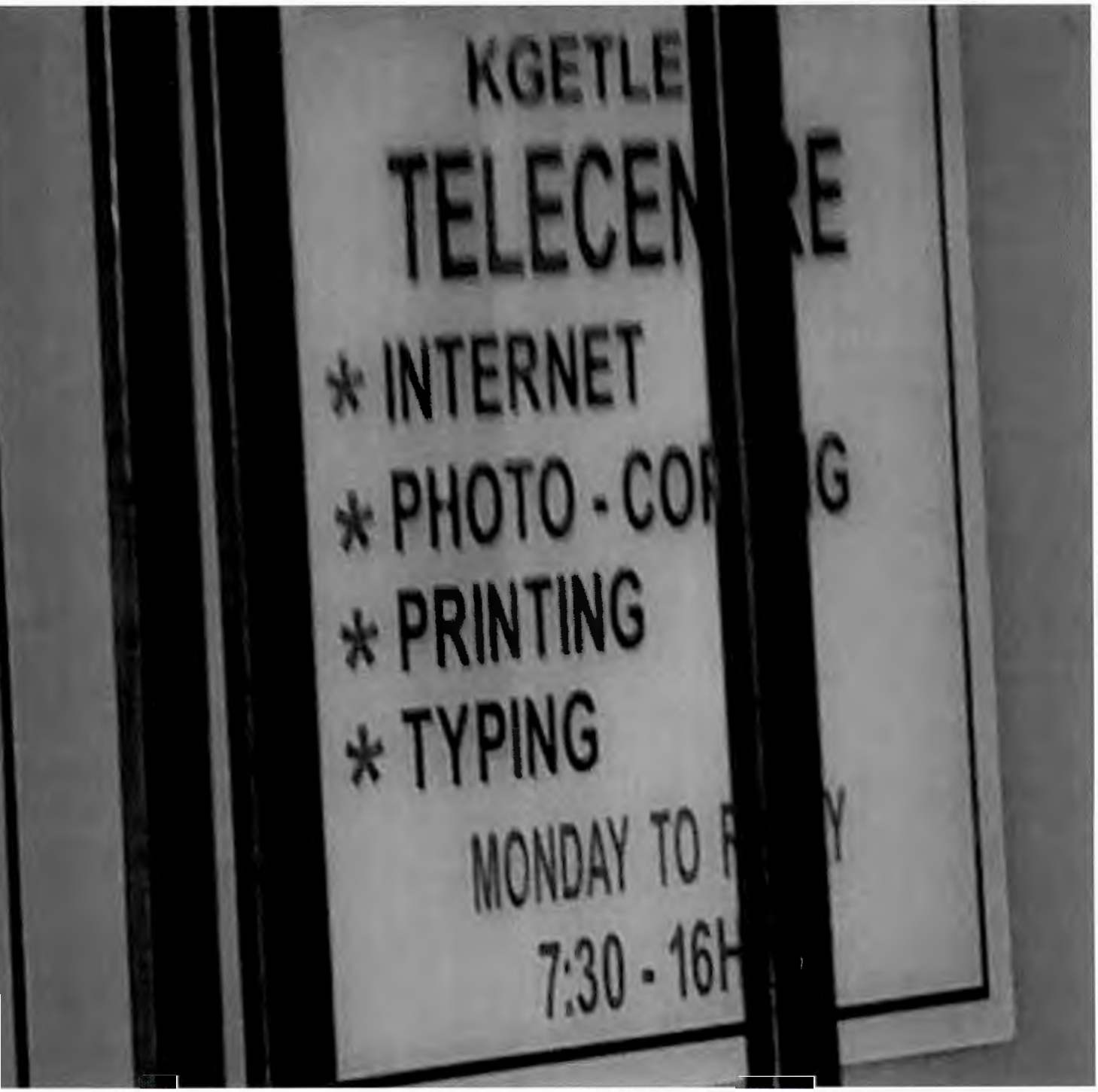
(Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telecentre)

APPENDIX C: THE DIGITAL DOORWAY TERMINAL USE. RECCOMMENDED BY THIS STUDY FOR YOUNG KIDS IN RURAL VILLAGES AS AN ASSIMILIATION PROCESS.



(available at http://www.digitaldoorway.org.za/index_main.php?do=multi).

APPENDIX D: A PROTOTYPE OF THE STATE OF TELECNTRES IN RURAL SOUTH AFRICA. BURGLER PROOFED AND CLOSED KGETLENT TELECENTRE IN KGETLENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, BOJANALA DISTRICT.



TO:CUSTODIANS OF ICTs IN SOUTH AFRICA: GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM DEPARTMENT (GCIS)

Definition of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)

ICTs are those technologies that can be used to connect information technology devices with communication technologies such as telephones and their telecommunication networks (Chapman & Slaymaker, 2002:1). These technologies are seen as very important for rural development as they help in facilitating a set of activities in rural development (Rao, 2004:261). This author continues to define the functions of ICTs as those devices which have information capturing, storage, processing and displaying capacity by electronic means. The same definition is also harnessed by other authors such Chapman and Slaymaker (2002) when they assert that ICTs can be used to collect, store and share information between people (Chapman & Slaymaker 2002:1).

1. How many ICT ports has the GCIS established in the North West Province? Can you please name them?

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2. What were your challenges when you were setting up these centres?

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.....
.....

3. Did the GCIS managed to overcome the said challenges?

Yes	
No	

4. Does the GCIS have programmes in place which empower the rural communities not only to have physical access to these ICTs but also to have the skill to use them?

Yes	

No	

If yes, can you please name them?

.....
.....
.....

5. What are the challenges you encountered in department's attempts to achieve the initiative(s) on question 4?

.....
.....
.....

6. Are you convinced that the information accessed by these communities is relevant to their needs?

Yes	
No	

7. If yes, Can you please explain your answer?

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.....
.....
.....

8. What do you think put the rural communities at a disadvantage to use ICTs to their benefit?

.....
.....
.....

9. What is it that you think should be done in your opinion to make rural communities aware of the benefits of ICTs?

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.....

10. Explain more on the roll out strategy of the GCIS in disseminating relevant developmental information to rural based communities of the South Africa.

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Thank you for your time and participation in this project.

E1

GCIS QUESTIONS (PART 2)

1. What is the role of GCIS in the daily operation of Thusong telecentres?

2. When you distribute ICTs tools at Thusong telecentres, specifically which category (unit) of rural population are you targeting?

3. Beside the beneficiaries mentioned above, which other stakeholders regularly use the ICT services deployed at these telecentres?

4. USAASA established Thusong telecentres on cost recovery basis, does that mean rural communities are expected to pay for internet and other services rendered at these centres?

4. The rural communities seem to be struggling to access ICTs in Thusong telecentres, and the following were diagnosed as the core barriers:

a). lack of end user computing skills within the communities and the managers of these centres,
b). Long Distance between the centres and the community they are supposed to serve, and

c). Lack of promotion of these centres:

- how suitable are the managers of these centres ?
- what is their credentials in relation to ICTs?
- what is the GCIs is doing in terms of providing computer skills to the communities, and
- lastly how does GCIS help in promoting ICT services at these centres?

5. When you set up Thusong telecentres in the outskirts of the country (rural areas), what role did the traditional leaders play?

6. Despite the challenges mentioned in question four , which other barriers do you think prevent the rural communities to use ICTs in the telecntres?

Is there a solution for the question above?

7. According to your observation are these telecentres serving their intended purpose of disseminating information?

8. If you were to recommend, where do you think the massive roll-out of ICTs infrastructure should focus?

- How many telecentres are established thus far?
- Any notable Success?
- Any Failures and Challenges?

Can the findings above be applied on the Tshidilamolomo Thusong telcentres? If not, provide us with an overview of the centre (that is Tshidilamolomo)in relation to aspects mentioned above, namely,successes,failures and challenges at this centre.

Thank you for your time and participation in this research project. If it augers well with you , I would like to acknowledge the outstanding contribution the department has made in this project.

government
communications

Department:
Government Communication & Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

To Whom it may concern

This communiqué serves to confirm that the person who participated in the ICT research is an official GCIS employee and her details are as follows:

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Senior Communication Officer

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