

**THE CHURCH'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE AGENCY AND THE ASSETS  
OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS IN RURAL SOUTH AFRICA: A  
CASE STUDY IN MARAPYANE COMMUNITY, SKILPADFONTEIN**

**BY**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relevance of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) as a development strategy with people living with HIV/AIDS. Contemporary development theory suggests that the assets and agency of the poor are crucial in any development process, and these ideas are important in ABCD. Many commentators have noted the relationship between HIV/AIDS and poverty, and that community development is a key response to this. The question therefore is whether ABCD is still appropriate and relevant in a situation in which HIV/AIDS undermines the assets and agency of the poor.

The research takes the form of an in-depth case study in Marapyane village in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. The findings of interviews with a series of key informants helps to gain an overview of the impact of the pandemic in the community, and the study then draws on interviews with nineteen people living with HIV/AIDS. It notes the range of assets that they have access to, and argues that the ABCD approach to community development is still relevant and appropriate.

At the same time, however, it notes a range of important factors that need to be established for the ABCD approach to succeed. The research encouraged PLWH to work towards one goal, the community has to stop discrimination against PLWH, and PLWH have to be included in all processes of community development. The use of skills that are among PLWH need to be encouraged and supported by the community, PLWH are called to connect with other local institutions in order to work together for the benefit of all members of the community. Local institutions are encouraged to contribute resources that will work to empower the capacity of PLWH so that they can be able to fulfill their development dreams. PLWH are to have a clear agenda and well-organized strategy that can eradicate poverty effectively. PLWH are also encouraged to consider the land as their main resources and basic asset that can be utilized in poverty alleviation and avoid unnecessary urban migration as much as they can use. But the Thesis looked the agency of PLWH not those who are already sick who need care, this means that early test will also be considered as another way of contributing in the effectiveness of the ABCD.

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## DEDICATIONS

To:

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Thank you and God bless us all

**DECLARATION**

This is to declare that this dissertation, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is my own original work.

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Rev. Leonidas Sabushimike

Date

As supervisor, I agree to the submission of the thesis



Prof S. De Gruchy

11 Sept 2007

Date

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## Chapter I

### Introduction to the research

#### 1.1. Introduction

This research focuses on the issue of the relationship of the church to the assets and the agency of People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in rural South Africa. The aim and objective of the research was to find out if the Asset Based Community Development approach (ABCD) could be effective in reversing the situation in rural South Africa in this era of HIV/AIDS in rural South Africa. The research was conducted over a period of one year from June 2005 to June 2006 in the community of Marapyane, Skilpadfontein. During this period the researcher was involved in a wide range of community activities through the Marapyane Development Centre and was an HIV/AIDS project coordinator in the same community.

It is estimated that approximately five million South Africans are living with HIV/AIDS and many more are dying because of the virus.<sup>1</sup> HIV/AIDS has an enormous impact on daily life and community development, as Desmond Cohen has noted:

Individuals, families and communities are impoverished by their experience of HIV and AIDS in ways that are typical for long drawn-out and terminal illnesses. It is a feature of HIV infection that affects often both parents who are HIV positive. (Who in time experience morbidity and mortality). There is thus enormous strain on the capacity of families to cope with psycho-social and economic consequences of illness, such that many families experience great stress and often disintegrate as social and economic units.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly, then, one of the ways to fight HIV/AIDS is by fighting poverty because HIV/AIDS and poverty are interrelated in one or way or another.<sup>3</sup> Because of this, the issue of the agency and the assets of people living with HIV in South Africa is a challenge for development action, as people get infected with HIV on a daily basis and many of them are marginalized and living in rural areas. This research explores whether the ABCD approach can still be utilised to influence some of the dynamics of the

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<sup>1</sup> "HIV/AIDS statistics South Africa". [Http://www.avert.org/safricastats.htm](http://www.avert.org/safricastats.htm) 7/28/2005

<sup>2</sup> Desmond Cohen 'Poverty and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa'.

<http://www.undp.org/hiv/publications/issues/english/issue27e.html> 7/28/2005 4

<sup>3</sup> Desmond Cohen. [Http://www.undp.org/hiv/publications/issues/English/issue27e.html](http://www.undp.org/hiv/publications/issues/English/issue27e.html). 7/28/2005 3

epidemic.

The research views the church as an institution that is in a good position to support the idea of ABCD. However, the research challenges the church's position towards the whole issue of HIV/AIDS and development. Addressing poverty should be the foundation of measures to fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS. Supporting the agency and the assets of PLWH may be a partial solution in reducing poverty among PLWH and in delaying deaths of PLWH.

The research suggests that PLWH want the local institutions and associations to work with them in their struggle for development. They are convinced that the ABCD approach can help them if they are able to work together with their neighbours and other communities. Yet the same research raises some challenges for the government and other role players in community development. The issue of the effectiveness of the ABCD approach also raises some challenges for PLWH themselves. The thesis argues that all these challenges can be dealt with if the community is willing to work together with PLWH in order to find some solutions to their daily challenges.

As noted above, the research has been conducted in the village called Marapyane in the North East of Pretoria in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa. The issue of HIV/AIDS and its impact on the Marapyane community has often been discussed in the village. As people continue to die because of HIV/AIDS, local organisations and institutions are trying multiple efforts to control the situation. After attending some funerals and seeing how many resources are used to cater for the funerals, the idea arose that if no-one speaks about HIV/AIDS in the community the resources will be stripped away in few years. In addition, this will impact negatively to the livelihood of people living in the village. In order to stimulate discussion about the issue of HIV/AIDS, the Marapyane Development Centre organised a workshop for the Easter conference at Marapyane Baptist Church from 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> March in 2005. The workshop focussed on the area of Community Development, HIV/AIDS and the role of the church in community development in the times of HIV/AIDS and the outcome of the workshop has motivated this research.

## 1.2. Key research question

People living with HIV/AIDS are treated like disabled people because most of the times they need welfare services to survive. They are sometimes called the 'living dead' because their situation reduces them from being fully human to being just patients. Whenever we attend HIV/AIDS conferences, most speakers call for the church, government, and other NGOs to contribute and support people who are living with the virus. Few people have focussed on what PLWHA can contribute in addressing their own needs and that of their communities, and this is the challenge for development. This lack of focus on the own agency of people contributes to making people more vulnerable because it reduces their self-esteem, which reduces their participation in development.

Welfare service independence is usually been taken to mean people being able to do things for themselves and to live without depending fully on the support. They have been defined as dependent because of their need for support. The so called disabled people argue that independence should be measured not by the physical tasks that disabled people can or can not perform, but rather by the personal and economic decision that they can make. This independency living does not deny people's independence, but it enables us to escape in our imaginations from the closed universe of caregivers and care receivers.<sup>4</sup>

ABCD argues that successful community development grows out of policies and activities based on the capacities, skills, and assets of poor people and their neighbours. It is also important to clarify that poor people need additional resources at the beginning of a project; but it also means that the outside help is based on their strengths rather than weaknesses. The challenge is that the assets of poor communities are absolutely necessary, but usually not sufficient to meet all the challenges of development"<sup>5</sup>. However, looking at the impact of the HIV/AIDS on the development of our communities one is led to ask if *ABCD still work in the midst of all the challenges that the pandemic create in the rural areas*. Poor people by definition have few assets and in addition, HIV/AIDS takes some of these assets away from the poor communities. How then can ABCD be relevant in this era of HIV/AIDS pandemic?

## 1.3. The research methodology

The issue of HIV/AIDS and its impact on the local communities has been discussed in different workshops and seminars internationally and nationally. And Marapyane village

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Beresford el. *Developing Skills for Community Care. A collaborative approach*. (Vermont: Ashgate Publishing company, 1995) 8

<sup>5</sup> Kretzman and Mcknight 8

in Mpumalanga province in South Africa, like other villages in South Africa, is facing the same challenge of dealing with the impact of HIV/AIDS on local community. The researcher chose Marapyane/Skilpdafontein because for three years he has been working in Marapyane as a pastor of Marapyane Christian Fellowship and HIV/AIDS coordinator for Marapyane Development Center. After living and working in Marapyane, the researcher realised that HIV/AIDS was a serious issue in the community that needed attention. This realization suggested three fundamental research methods that shall need to be used for the success of this research.

1. Literature survey. A list of the major texts is included in the selected bibliography below.

2. Participant observation. As a person who lives in the community and works with People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLHA), I will draw on my own observations and insights to provide a context and appreciation of the issues in the community. I am aware that this might not provide objective information, and therefore I will test my thoughts with key informants such as Pastor Modau Bethuel from Marapyane Baptist church, Father Maquabo Ambrose of Saint Martin's Roman Catholic and Pastor Booi the Universal Church, the coordinator of Marapyane Development Center Lorraine Dikote, a nurse from Marapyane Clinic, Sister Suzanne Dumpe, a town counselor of Marapyane, Grace Tsekhe, and two social workers: Eva Sekokotla and Stephinah Malope

3. Open ended interviews with nineteen People living with HIV and AIDS in Marapyane. This is the heart of the research for the thesis, and will seek to provide a qualitative view of the assets and agency of PLWHA. It is from these concerns that the key issue question arises:

#### **1.4. Key research findings**

After visiting different church organizations and some government institutions working in Marapyane I have realized that Marapyane has only one functioning support group for PLWHA called BASTHA (Bafenyi Support Team against HIV/AIDS). This is a support group that works from the Marapyane Development Centre. BASTHA was initiated in November 2005 with the vision of becoming a registered business organisation owned by the participants. Their business consists of catering for people who have functions such as weddings, birthday parties and other kinds of parties. The government has also initiated

MATA (Mpumalanga Aids and TB Association) to help people suffering from tuberculosis, the majority of which also has HIV/AIDS. This organization gives food parcels to patients and advices on how to live positively. The Saint Martin Roman Catholic church has an orphanage that cares for children left behind when their parents die.

The research has identified that people living with HIV/AIDS are part of the community although they are called disabled even before they get sick. They have abilities just like other people. It should be remembered that promoting independence does not mean demanding self-sufficiency. Independence is about the process of developing flexible networks of support or what has been described as collaboration between PLWHA and other community members. This process invites the community to work together in finding the solutions to their own problems using the assets existing inside and outside their community, but depending mostly on their capacities rather than their deficiencies.

PLWHA experiences oppression, discrimination and restrictions on their rights opportunities and choices. Empowerment is defined as reversing this situation they need to empower themselves so that they can be able to be more productive and respond to the challenges that they face in their daily lives. Borrowing from Beresford's ideas on capacity empowerment we can argue that "capacity empowerment gives the ability to poor people to control their lives and influence others in order to transform their community. It gives opportunities for poor people to influence the system that is in place, and have control over their own lives. But most importantly community empowerment does not ignore issues of personal empowerment, but this is framed in the terms of ensuring people the support, skills, and personal resources they need both to organize themselves and to participate to achieve broader social change".<sup>6</sup>

As we will see in the following chapters, contemporary development theory has strongly argued the move away from charity, welfare and relief to models that foreground the participation of the poor in dialogical action. This theory draws attention to the agency of the poor - the importance of their own creative engagement in the process of development; and the assets of the poor- the importance of the skills, resources, networks, and capacity of the poor in the long-term efficacy of development.<sup>7</sup> The church is

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Beresford, *Developing Skills for Community Care. A collaborative approach* 10

<sup>7</sup> Paul Freire. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. (London: Penguin, Rev. Ed. 1993)

beginning to understand this in the broader development field.

However, the AIDS pandemic threatens to undermine this new approach and drive the church back to models of charity, welfare, and relief for the poor, suffering victims of AIDS. There is some reason for this. HIV/AIDS reduces the productivity of the community because it affects the most productive group of people in the society. HIV negatively affects the community and takes away the agency of people especially those affected and infected living in the rural areas. So we ask: is community development still possible in this era of HIV/AIDS?

Although HIV is an asset stripper, some natural resources cannot be taken away in Marapyane even when people suffer because of the disease. Assets such as community membership, land, institutions, and organisations can certainly be affected in the HIV era but they remain in the community to change things from worse to better. The fact that these assets and other assets still exist in Marapyane, shows that there is a possibility of doing something about poverty which plays a role in the spread of HIV/AIDS.

This research will finally focus on the task of the church in enhancing the agency of PLWH in Marapyane. The focus will also refer to the demands of PLWH in the village. Issues that are highlighted in this research will be used as the foundation for our discussion in trying to elaborate the task of the church in this era of HIV/AIDS in rural South Africa. We will also look at what PLWHA require the church to do in order to allow their agency to become more effective in their village.

This study is optimistic in the belief that PLWH have much to contribute towards the transformation of the affected and infected communities. Jacobsen argued, "Livelihood activities help to create and maintain social and economic interdependency within and between communities, and can thereby restore functioning social network, based on mutually beneficial exchange of labour, assets and food"<sup>8</sup>. When PLWH have access to resources, freedom to run their projects, and can work alongside their communities to pursue their goals, they can become less dependent on aid and contribute effectively to their community development.

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<sup>8</sup> Karen Jacobsen. Livelihoods in conflict: the pursuit of livelihoods by refugees and the impact on the human security of host communities. Expert Working Paper prepared for the Center for Development Research study: Migration-development Links: Evidence and policy options. February 2002. 1

the community members are called to be more united under the spirit of umoja<sup>9</sup> - in order to fight division among our communities that is caused by the virus. This will enable PLWH who are discriminated and stigmatised to be part of community and contribute in its development.

The research has shown that PLWH are eager to bring transformation in their community through practical activities. Those interviewed have skills, are able to meet in their organizations, they can access land. They have some qualifications that can help them and their relatives to survive in this era of HIV/AIDS. The majority of them belong to some institutions and organisations that have some assets that can help in building their lives, including churches, society organizations and stokvel organizations. These organizations serve not only PLWH but also all community members and these kinds of institutions need to be encouraged to continue supporting the members of the community. These institutions should have the duty to empower PLWH with knowledge and skills so that they can be more effective in their agencies.

Apart from these community organizations there are business people who own the shops and who can give small loans to individuals who will pay later. The shops owners need to be advised and encouraged to invest their money in the community because this money ends up coming back in their business. This may also help to empower Marapyane community's economy because the money will keep circulating among community members. This can benefit the community, PLWH and the business people of the village. The idea of local contributions could enhance the idea of self-dependency and self-organization and this can be viewed through the ways that Bafenyi Support Team against HIV/AIDS (BASTHA) organises. Thus, for example, BASTHA's idea of contributing in their organization an amount of money monthly can also be applied in order to finance PLWH's farming projects.

## **1.6 An overview of Marapyane community**

The research in this thesis about the assets and agency of PLWH took place in Marapyane community. We now introduce this community.

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<sup>9</sup> Umoja is a Swahili word of unity

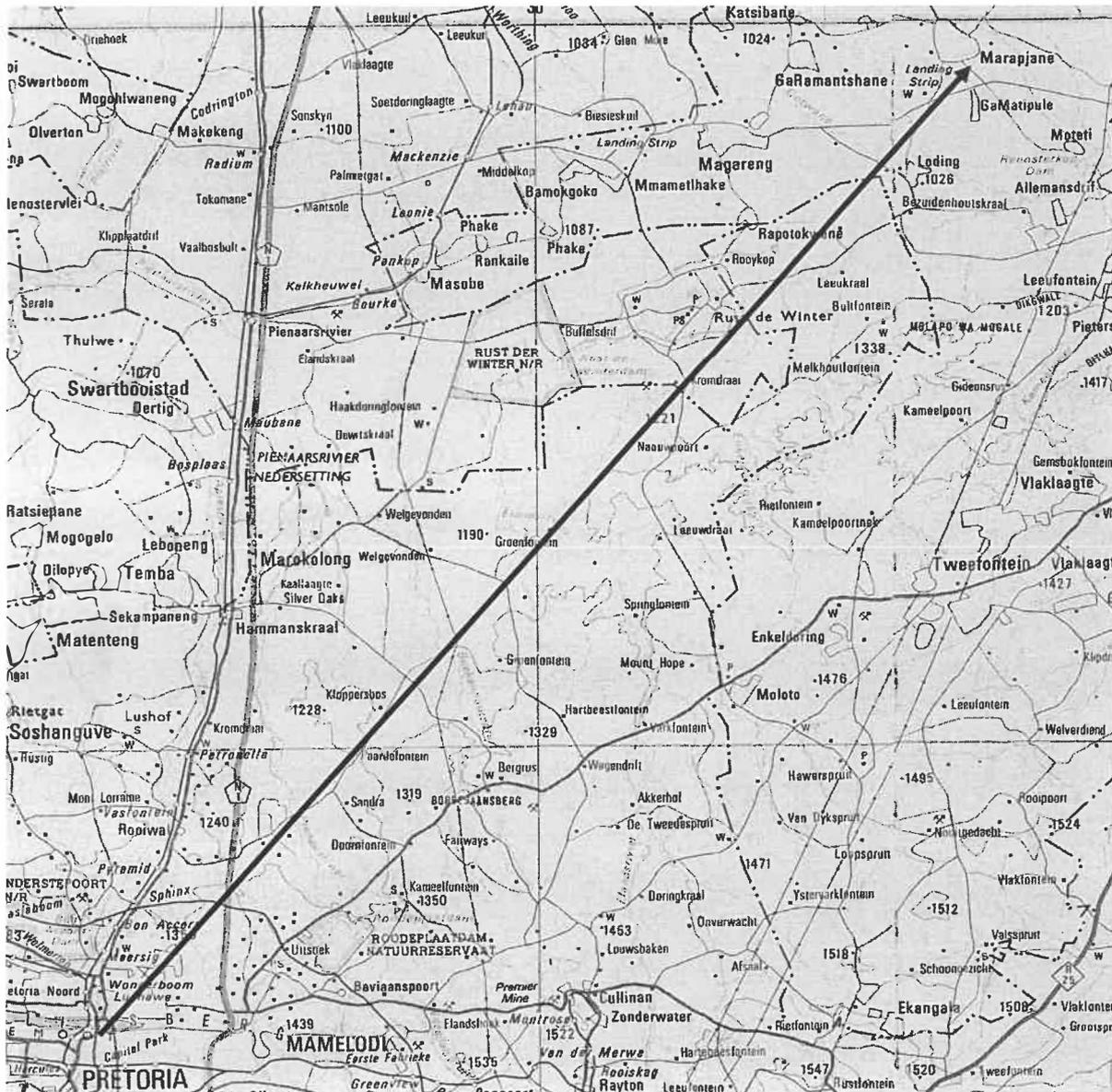
### 1.5. ARV and the spirit of *UBUNTU*

The thesis recognises that while people with HIV and people with full-blown AIDS have many things in common, there is a clear distinction between them in terms of productivity and therefore in terms of development theory and action. People with AIDS, who have reached the last phase of the disease when they are weak, sick and in need of care are by definition ‘patients’, whose agency has been undermined by the virus. People with HIV-and particularly those on ARVs may need to cope with regular infections, but are not ‘patients’. They have not lost the ability to take responsibility for an engagement with development theory around the themes of assets and agency.

To illustrate this: As I write this thesis one of my interviewees is planning to get married although the HI virus is still in her body. She believes that the ARV treatment has changed her life and she looks beautiful again and has been able to attract a young man. This shows how ARV treatment has helped PLWH to live a normal life like other members of the community and have long and productive lives. The ARVs also reduce HIV related diseases that are the main contributors to resource stripping. In other words, there is hope that PLWH can be agents for their development.

If PLWH are to live a long life on ARV’s, the question is how PLWH are going to live this prolonged life with dignity and respect, since PLWH are often viewed as people who bring poverty and shame upon their communities. It is possible that the effectiveness of the agency of PLWH will contribute to proving to the community that PLWH are not only troublemakers who bring the virus into the community, but are people who can also bring hope for the whole community.

The research has shown the importance of recognizing the contribution of other community members in the whole process of development. It encourages mutual support between all members of community in order to reach to development goals. This raises the issue of the African spirit of *ubuntu*, the spirit that recognises humanness in everybody without looking at her/his status. The Barundi like the Batswana use the same words that “*umuntu n’abantu*” or “*motho ke motho ka batho*” which means that people are people because of other people. Due to the existence of HIV/AIDS in the community,



Marapyane or Skilpadfontein village is located in a remote area of Mpumalanga province in South Africa, about one and a half hours driving from the inner city of Pretoria (see map). It is located on approximately 35,000 hectares of traditional land. Most of the area is open land of Bakgatla and to reach the village, one must cross eleven villages Hammanskraal, Marokolong, Pankope, Phake, Bamokgoko, Mmamethake, Magareng, GaMatipule. Marapyane is surrounded by open land with some houses scattered around in the ancestral land. The majority of people living in Marapyane are the Batswana clan who identify themselves with the Monkey they are called Bakgatla.<sup>10</sup>

“The population of Marapyane has grown from approximately 25,000 in 2000, to 27,939

<sup>10</sup> Mokatla is the Monkey, and then Bakatla are people who identify themselves with the Mokatla” monkey” is a name of the Batswana clan.

in 2001, and from 30,129 in 2002 to 32,491 people in 2003. Approximately 6,000 families live in Marapyane with about 5-6 members per household”.<sup>11</sup> “It is very hard to know the prevalence of HIV/AIDS infection because people decide to take a test far from Marapyane and hide their physical address. Nevertheless, the HIV/AIDS prevalence in this area could be between 25 to 27%”.<sup>12</sup>

In most households only one or two members have some work that brings in an income for the family, since unemployment is high in rural South Africa. Some households depend on government grants in order to survive and a few people do small jobs in the village like building houses, making bricks, helping in serving at the shopping centres, working as domestic workers or delivering goods with donkeys.

### **1.6.1. Education**

In Marapyane, 85 people are teachers in local primary and secondary schools. There are 5 primary schools, 3 middle schools and 2 high schools in the area and the majority of children attend schools in the community, although some have been sent to attend schools outside this community in towns where parents think their children can get a better education. In some cases orphans drop out of school because of the death of parents due to HIV/AIDS, but in Marapyane the African tradition of considering orphans as children of the community has reduced the sufferings of these orphans. Relatives who raise them as their own children care for orphans and this has contributed partly in reducing the burden of only grannies of looking after orphans.<sup>13</sup>

### **1.6.2. Health**

Three private clinics and one government clinic are helping people in Marapyane although people find the private clinics very expensive. Generally, health care is a problem in Marapyane due to a lack of good services at the government clinic. The clinic is always full and without enough equipment and supplies, forcing community members who are able to access private clinics to use these facilities.

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<sup>11</sup> Informations provided by Moretele Parliamentary Constituency office by Grace Tsele on 4/07/2005 at 14h 25 in Marapyane at councilor's office.

<sup>12</sup> According to Mmamethlake family care center the survey done in 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Steve Moepi is the deputy principle of the Kamani secondary school interviewed at Baptist church on 23/11/2005 at 11h10 to 12h00

### **1.6.3. Churches**

Marapyane village is a multi denominational community. Various beliefs and different Church organisations are found all around the society from mainstream churches to independent churches. The denominations that are found in Marapyane are Roman Catholic, Baptist, Apostolic Holiness Church, Zion Christian Church, Free Republic Church, African Catholic Church and Universal Church.

### **1.6.4. Agriculture**

Marapyane soil is partly sandy and this makes it hard to grow crops. Agriculture demands a lot of energy because the soil dries out very fast and without frequent rain or watering, crops are easily lost. Because of this, the chief Moepi Thlame often requests people from the village to pray for rain. The Sangomas and the church leaders are always requested to pray that the rain may fall at the right time in Marapyane and the last meeting for prayer was on 17 December 2005 at the tribal office. Winters are dry and cold, and one cannot grow anything unless if you are able to keep irrigating the field.

### **1.6.5. Utilities**

The village is rich with underground water although few people are using this water for gardening. Borehole tanks are seen all over Marapyane. Although this system is very expensive, people in Marapyane prefer using a borehole to using water from the river and dams. Marapyane village has electricity but this electricity keeps going off and this make life very difficult especially to the business people who keep their goods in the refrigerators. To prevent loss, businessmen and women in Marapyane have had to provide their own generators that take over when the electricity goes off. This process further increases the cost of the basic commodities like food that is already expensive because it comes from far in Pretoria and Johannesburg.

### **1.6.6. Commerce**

Most people living in Marapyane are subsisting from their small activities that they run on their daily basis. There are four community shopping centres with shops selling

clothes, food, and other useful tools brought by some private cars, buses, and taxis from town (Pretoria and Johannesburg). The shops that are found in Marapyane are Rams, Molai shopping centre, Marapyane complex and Maseding store. Hawkers sell regularly on the main road and in front of these shopping centres, but others come to the village from neighbouring villages once a month when patients and children grants are distributed at the payouts stations.

A business sector that is growing very fast in Marapyane is funeral services associations that help in burying the dead. There are five funeral services associations and all of them are open every day and run by local people.

In Marapyane bar lounges are the major entertainment. Six bar lounges where you find unemployed youth and old people spend time drinking and chatting. In the evening these bar lounges are very busy and noisy people drink until late.

#### **1.6.7. Communication**

Another challenge that Marapyane community faces on a daily basis is the lack of communication technology. The cell-phone network is sometimes interrupted when it is raining. The accessibility to the Internet is a challenge to the residents, as they have to travel miles away from the village for such access. It is therefore sometimes difficult to get help in emergencies. Even when there is crime, people may not be able to contact the police because of the same problems.

#### **1.6.8. Local government and other services**

In order to access services like those from the Department of Home Affairs, the police, or to access job opportunities the community has to travel to neighbouring villages. The community is managed by the traditional structures. Chief Moepi Thlame and a committee of the house leaders serving in the traditional court are working together with the mobile police station to promote security in the village. There is a small correctional service in the village to lock up offenders.

#### **1.6.9. Funerals, culture, and local organisations**

As a village, Marapyane is dominated by the Batswana culture and tradition. The

Batswana ways of organising funerals are not economically or environmentally friendly. Many people in the village are poor and unable to access electricity. They therefore use firewood to prepare food. When there are funerals cattle is killed to feed those who attend the funeral and this has to be followed by some more food that has to be eaten with the meat. I found this very expensive considering the poverty of people in the village.

The community organizations to which the diseased belonged sometimes covers the costs of funerals. People in Marapyane have organised themselves in what they call burial societies and community associations (or *stokvels*). In these organisations they contribute money that can be used to organise weddings, funerals and other community events. These organizations are very useful and people are very faithful in giving their monthly contributions. This means that if anyone who belongs to any community association loses a member of his/her family the money that is used to cater for the burial is paid through this organisation. The availability of ready money and the principle that it should be the same for all members of the society makes funerals and weddings very expensive.

People eat meat from the first day the death is announced until the day of the funeral and this cooking involves firewood. Clearly, with increasing deaths in the community more money and wood is needed. The environment is affected by not only graves that are found around the community but also the firewood collected to cook and keep the guests warm when they attend the funerals. The firewood collected to provide for the funeral of one member of the family is equal to the firewood collected to run the household for more than four weeks according to Basetsana<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, the bottles thrown all around in Marapyane and around the bar lounges contribute in soil degradation. Clearly this will have long-term consequences for the community.

#### **1.6.10. Skills**

Some people are using their skills in the areas of building, selling, small farming activities while some work in towns like Johannesburg and Pretoria. Most of skills that are used in the area are the skills that people learn from each other or learn from the company they worked for in town. Most builders, plumbers, electricians did not have formal training but they had some experience from their former companies they worked

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<sup>14</sup> Basetsana Mphumi (not her real name) is a student in Hammanskraal who has a sister who is living with HIV/AIDS

for somewhere in town.

Marapyane village as presented above is a village with a lot of assets but also with some deficiencies. And one of those deficiencies that are troubling Marapyane is the issue of HIV/AIDS that keeps affecting community members. Everything is affected by the pandemic and this impact on the fight against poverty. PLWH in Marapyane are surviving just like any member of this community who is not known to be carrying the HI Virus.

### **1.7. Overview of the thesis.**

The thesis is composed of seven chapters with each chapter focusing on one theme, but each also building on each other to advance the discourse. Chapter one introduces the thesis and the Marapyane community where the research was done and also looks at some key issues that are highlighted in the thesis. Chapter two focuses on two key issues that are emerging in development, the 'assets' and 'agency' of the poor, from the writings of different scholars. This chapter also provides the theoretical and theological basis for Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). Chapter three focuses on the interviews with leaders of Marapyane community to increase understanding of the context, and then chapter four describes the interviews of People Living with HIV/AIDS. Chapter five examines the relevance of the ABCD in time of HIV/AIDS in rural South Africa, in the light of the information in the previous chapters. Chapter six looks at the challenges that the church is facing in this era of HIV/AIDS and what needs to be done to enhance the organizations initiated by People Living with HIV/AIDS. Chapter seven concludes the research with keys issues that were highlighted in the thesis that are important for the effectiveness of the use of the assets and the agency of PLWH.

### **1.6. Conclusion**

This chapter introduced the thesis looking at the key research question and providing an overview of the research and the dissertation. It also introduced Marapyane community.

## **Chapter II**

### **A theoretical and theological appreciation of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)**

The last chapter ended up by suggesting that people living with HIV are still living, and their contribution to development is needed. This leads us to ask: how can the church assist them? This in turn leads us to think about development, and this chapter now examines some development strategies. The chapter will focus on two key issues that are emerging in contemporary development, namely 'agency' and 'assets'. The issues about the agency and assets of the poor are highlighted in this chapter from different perspectives and from different experienced scholars. This chapter will show how these two issues have emerged, and how they are integrated into asset based community development. Finally, the chapter looks at how ABCD can be approved and supported theologically as an approach that the church can use to assist in the transformation of poor communities and in supporting the idea of the assets and agency of the poor communities. This will then enable us to explore the relevance of this approach for people living with HIV in the following chapters.

#### **2.1. The issue of agency in development**

Whenever we think about issues that are impacting negatively upon the community, poverty comes as problem number one. Whenever poverty is discussed around the community most community members believe that the only solution to poverty has to be development. From this perspective the issue of development is thought to be a remedy to the problem of poverty among poor communities. But the next question is how can this development be achieved in a community that is overwhelmed by other issues like diseases? There are many ways that are thought to be the best ways of eradicating poverty among poor communities through development activities and what we are going to discuss in this section is the agency of poor people in development, as this is one of the key issues emerging in contemporary theory.

##### **2.1.1. Participatory approaches**

Our first scholar is Tsitso Monaheng, who raises the issue of people participating in their

own development.<sup>15</sup> Although development is such a complicated issue, he tries to view its meaning through historical events around the transformations that have taken place around the world. He argues, “From time immemorial, the community have been engaged in activities designed to improve the wellbeing of their members, and have been taking the initiative and responsibility for such activities. The nature of the activities and forms of co-operation may have changed (early forms of human societies are sustained mainly on hunting and gathering while modern societies are sustained mainly by agricultural and industrial activities) but the basic principle of community involvement and collaboration in life-sustaining activities remains the same”<sup>16</sup>. He continues arguing, “The community members have always worked together, in one way or the other to promote their common welfare. In this sense, community development is as old as human societies themselves”.<sup>17</sup> The idea of people participating in their own development is not new according to Monaheng because from hunting and gathering to where the world is today people have been working together to make a living. And this has contributed to making the world how it is today.

With time the issue of looking at development as involving people’s agency has been changing and development is now often viewed as government duty in which the government decides on behalf of the community. This is human rights abuse because it looks at people as if they are useless and without a word to say about the running of their development. In contrast, it is people themselves who should define their needs and not the government or any other development agency. This means that a government or a non-governmental organization that wants to be effective in its development effort must engage in dialogue with the intended beneficiaries to determine their needs.<sup>18</sup> It is the duty of the poor communities to define development and participate in finding the solutions of their problems.

Community development seeks to address the felt needs of the people and according to Monaheng:

Dealing with felt needs it is people themselves who must define their needs and not the government or any other development agency. The theory does not ignore the input of the government and the outsiders but their input has to come in order

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<sup>15</sup> Tsitso Monaheng. “Community development and empowerment”, in De Beer, F and Swanepoel H. *introduction to development studies*, (Oxford: OUP, 2000). 124

<sup>16</sup> Monaheng “Community development and empowerment” 125-126

<sup>17</sup> Monaheng. “Community development and empowerment” 125-126

<sup>18</sup> Monaheng “Community development and empowerment” 127

to complement the work that poor people are already involved in. So, the work of the outsiders and the government should be of guiding the poor in making decisions that leads them to development.<sup>19</sup>

Monaheng highlights the necessity of development workers to help people to clarify their needs and to prioritise them. In this process of trying to deal with needs felt among the community he advises development workers to avoid the manipulation of the people that make them see needs that are imposed from outside as their own needs. And he advises development workers again that inducement can only mean that local communities are served with information that will enable them to see the broad picture.<sup>20</sup> This is to avoid manipulation and misdirecting people towards government's or any other NGO's agenda. This participation needs to be democratic and fair from all sides, including the development workers, people in the community and other institutions that are involved in community development.

According to Monaheng community participation can lead to community development and he argues "It is by participating actively in community development activities that people can reap the fruits of their development. So, community development is based on community projects. Residents must participate in defining the content of these projects (i.e. they must determine their own needs)".<sup>21</sup> In this way participation works as a way that leads to the agency of people because the community are the ones to decide on anything that can contribute to improving their lives.

Participation is not only about planning and decision-making but also activities that lead to development. He looks at this participation in the form of community organizations. Community based organizations (CBOs) are the vehicle through which community participation takes place. These CBOs can take different forms, such as farmers' unions, women's associations, church groups, youth clubs, development committees and project committees, for example. Members define their needs through these organizations and also use these structures to achieve their common goals. People's participation must be voluntary and democratic, and not be manipulated to serve the interests of unscrupulous persons or groups.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Monaheng, "Community development and empowerment" 127

<sup>20</sup> Monaheng, "Community development and empowerment" 128

<sup>21</sup> Monaheng, "Community development and empowerment" 128

<sup>22</sup> Monaheng, "Community development and empowerment" 128

People-participation makes them feel ownership for their development. Participatory development can lead to development in the community because it invites local people to be the main actors in the development of their communities. Because people are directly attached to their community problems, they must be in the forefront of shaping and determining the direction of their own agenda in solving their problems. And for this reason “community participation is more important than the participation of other actors”.<sup>23</sup> The more control people have of the project, the more they think of it as their own, accountability to the community remains important throughout all the phases of program development.

By becoming the main actors, the poor then own the development process through co-operation and help from outsiders. There would be a need to establish relationships and partnerships that are mutually beneficial but basically defined by the local poor to avoid superiority and the dependency syndrome.

### **2.1.2. Subjects rather than Objects**

At the heart of what Monaheng is talking about is concern for people being the subjects and not the objects of community development. This leads us to reflect on the work of Paulo Freire and his book the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.<sup>24</sup> In the introductory chapters he gives the background to the ‘oppressor-oppressed’ relationship and offers a critique of the traditional ‘banking’ education approach. Anti-dialogical action employs the ‘banking’ method of education. People’s capability to think for themselves is undermined. It promotes indoctrination by the oppressors. As a result the products of this kind of education are made to depend and not to be independent. It is a kind of action that reduces humans to animals or things. The distinction between humans and animals is of great significance to avoid making mistakes. As opposed to animal activity, “human activity consists of action and reflection: it is a praxis; it is transformation of the world”<sup>25</sup>

Banking education is defined as anti dialogical action. This kind of education emerges as a powerful instrument to dehumanize people of ‘lower classes’. Much of his emphasis is on the activity of the poor to attain their self-esteem and to express themselves freely. The second half of the book focuses on dialogical action. Dialogical action is the process

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<sup>23</sup> Monaheng, “Community development and empowerment” 130

<sup>24</sup> Paulo, Freire. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, (Penguin Books: England, 1996)

<sup>25</sup> Freire. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, (Penguin Books: England, 1996) 106

of communication between leaders and people that enhances participation in decision-making with the objective of liberation. This dialogue happens between two parties, not for others or else it turns into domination. The dialogue is based on profound love for the world, for life and for people. It is based on the understanding that everyone has the right to speak a word that can bring transformation. It is also guided by humility and faith in human kind. In other words, it disputes the idea of looking down on other people.<sup>26</sup>

Important for us is Freire's clear conviction that this implies that "the oppressed have to be active agents of their own struggle for freedom. They cannot be passengers on the journey, but find their own sense of freedom via their agency in the struggle for freedom. It is crucial that the insight, perspectives, rituals and symbols of the poor contribute to the very vision of the future that is being sought".<sup>27</sup> He is against any kind of oppressor manipulation that does not lead to revolutionary transformation. In his words, "Manipulation, sloganising, "depositing," regimentation and prescription cannot be components of revolutionary praxis, precisely because they are components of the praxis of domination"<sup>28</sup>

The implication of dialogical action for the oppressor is either the giving away or the sharing of the power to dominate. The oppressed would then participate as subjects and not objects of the transformation against domination. It is the working together of both the people and their leaders in solidarity to create an opportunity for learning both dialogue and the use of power. This means to allow the poor and those under privileged to be part of their liberation by allowing them decision-making that can influence their liberation. It is through dialogical action that the agency of the poor works as a tool for justice and equity of rights.

People living in poverty are marginalized because they are needy and their well being depends upon their neighbors who are rich. They are viewed as consumers of government and other NGOs service providers who are dependent on welfare, and are not producers of their own solutions. This ignores the agency of poor people and is not human according to Freire. These acts of dehumanization are practically seen through our governments and other NGOs that help poor people in the community. Some of them

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<sup>26</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* 69-71

<sup>27</sup> Steve De Gruchy. "Why Agency? Why Assets? Why Appreciation. In the African Religious Health Assets Programme, Assets and Agency", Papers and Proceedings. 32

<sup>28</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* 107

don't consider poor people as humans who can provide solution to their own problems. This outlook has made them dependent, and in turn weakens their agency, which could lead to helplessness, despair, and violation of freedom.

When we consider some people in our communities as objects we tend to ignore who they are and what they have and focus on what we presume they are. Whenever we lose the identity of our community members we end up giving them our own identities according to our own worldview. Poor people are not objects, they are men and women whose voices and ideas need to be heard and considered. The only way therefore that this superior attitude will be condemned is by encouraging welfare recipients, government and other development organizations to connect with citizen associations of all kinds in order to plan how their community could be a more effective, safe and pleasant place for the people who live within it. This leads us to the way that these ideas have been captured by the people-centred development approach.

### **2.1.3. People centred development**

Our next theorist is David Korten of the People Centered Development Forum who shares his vision on the theme of People Centered Development in his book *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*<sup>29</sup>. In his book Korten defines development as “a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations”.<sup>30</sup> One of the important elements that Korten brings out of his development theory is that of citizen's voluntary action. According to him “if transformation is to come, it must come as a consequence of voluntary action, an act of human commitment to collective survival driven by a vision that transcends the behaviors conditioned by existing institutions and culture. We must look to people's movement as key to transformational change in the current era”.<sup>31</sup> If development has to take place in a community, people are to be the agents of development through voluntary actions. People's agency should be considered as the basis of transformation in the community.

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<sup>29</sup> David Korten. *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*. (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1990)

<sup>30</sup> Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* 67

<sup>31</sup> Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* 105

Korten does not use the word “agency” but if you look at his people-centered theory of development there is a lot about voluntary and citizen action which is similar to the idea of agency through people’s movement. For him there is no transformation if people are not at the center of the struggle of transformation.<sup>32</sup>

The people-centred approach looks to justice, sustainability and inclusiveness as the defining principles of authentic development. “Development is a people’s movement more than a foreign-funded government project. A people centred development looks to government to enable the people to develop themselves”.<sup>33</sup> This development principle is inclusive and takes people from being consumers of development to agents of development. It gives people access to a full sense of humanity, self respect (which is the result of being productive) and good contributors to the communities’ development.

Korten traces the importance of this idea through his well-known typology of the four generations of development action. In the first generation, “relief and welfare”, the approach of handouts and donor control over the poor is challenged and in the case of emergency where aid relief is needed it has to be for a set of time. Relief is meant to address an immediate need for a set period. If chosen to be the permanent strategy for any development agency, then it becomes a crippling tool that disables rather than empowers people. People need to be active participants and owners of their development and not just passive recipients of the donor’s assistance.

The second generation is focused on community development at the level of the neighborhood or village, based on the cooperation of the community and the NGO and it also encourages self-help<sup>34</sup>. In this approach to development, the community is encouraged to take up the challenge of their own development through their agency rather than focus on their weaknesses. Evidently, the poor are interested primarily in poverty alleviation programs rather than political policies that work against the success of their development program. The poor focus on development more than waiting for handouts.

The third generation strategies focus beyond the individual community or neighborhood. They seek to bring changes in the specific policies and institutions at local, national and

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<sup>32</sup> Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* 115

<sup>33</sup> Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* 5

<sup>34</sup> Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* 118

global levels. Justice, inclusiveness and sustainability are at the core of this generation of strategies.<sup>35</sup> The public also needs to be informed and mobilized in order to take action against legislation that is not in favor of their development. This is where the idea of agency of the poor comes in as a watchdog to challenge all development strategies that are not in step with the demands of the poor. Participation in this category may lead to controversies with governments.

Korten argues that the third generation strategies do not have answers to the problem of the “unequal distribution of power and wealth at national and international levels [which] carries major responsibility for the multiple crises gripping Southern countries”.<sup>36</sup> As a result the fourth generation had to emerge, a call for consideration of people’s movements in development. A people-centered development vision can be carried out on a global scale through the participation of these social movements. These people’s movements are based on their agency and their resources at their disposal to address issues of their concern. The concept of voluntarism is promoted over against economic benefits. Communities participate in the shift from traditional relief activities to playing a catalyst role to facilitate institutional and policy changes.<sup>37</sup>

All the types of development action represented in Korten’s four generations are aimed at alleviating poverty and injustice among poor communities but the main focus has to be on the real demands of the poor communities. Korten’s view is that development emerging from people’s movements can be more successful in meeting the needs of the poor than a foreign project that will disappear before development has taken place. From Korten’s four generations we can further our discussion by looking at our next section of capacity building. We will study through the work of Frik De Beer in his article ‘participation and community capacity building’.<sup>38</sup>

#### **2.1.4. Capacity building**

Drawing on a range of scholars, De Beer has defined “community development as a

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<sup>35</sup> Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* 121

<sup>36</sup> Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* 123

<sup>37</sup> Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* 123-124

<sup>38</sup> Frik De Beer “Participation and Community Capacity Building” in S. Lieneburg and P. Stewart (eds) *Participatory Development Management and RDP*. ( Cape Town: JUTA, 1997)

process stemming from community initiative and the educational process in which people change themselves and their behaviour, and acquire new skills and confidence through working in cooperation.”<sup>39</sup> Capacity building is based on participatory and learning approaches; it also represents a further development of the basic needs approach.<sup>40</sup>

According to De Beer “a number of themes are central to the debate on capacity building: the role of communities as autonomous decision-makers in control of their own development; the need for development institutions to become adaptive administrations that promote partnership action; the importance of the enabling role of these institutions so that they become true agents of capacity building”.<sup>41</sup> Diane Warburton supports this argument saying that “any programmes incorporating capacity building should recognise that what is needed is not a redressing of the inequalities of the abilities, but rather a redressing of the inequalities of resources and opportunities to practice and develop those abilities in ways which others in society take for granted”.<sup>42</sup>

If we are to help in the fight against injustice and achieve a comfortable life for all people in our rural areas, then sustainability must be rooted in capacity building of every member of the community of the rural area. The agency of the poor can be sustained in the community through active participation from all corners of the villages, with individuals and institutions playing their role of participation in development.

People’s role in the process of capacity building is very important. De Beer quotes Korten: “this theory is a process in which the members of the society increase their potential and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations.”<sup>43</sup> In this theory participation is not a means but an end in itself. What is required from the bureaucracy, for instance, is a change in its role from ‘giver of good things’ to that of capacity building by being an enabler; in other words, the bureaucracy’s role changes from benefactor to enabler, a role that relates to the promises of adaptive administration.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> De Beer, “Participation and Community Capacity Building”. 26

<sup>40</sup> DeBeer, “Participation and Community Capacity Building”. 29

<sup>41</sup> De Beer, “Participation and Community Capacity Building”. 32

<sup>42</sup> Diane Warburton. *Community and sustainable development: Participation in the future*. (London: Earth Publication, 1998) 27

<sup>43</sup> De Beer, “Participation and Community Capacity Building” 32

<sup>44</sup> De Beer, “Participation and Community Capacity Building” 30

Even though people have to be at the center of a development program as agents, if their capacity is not built then their participation becomes weakened. Therefore participation requires capacity empowerment of poor communities as another way for community development. "By building the capacity of neighbourhoods, villages and communities, a development milieu is created in which the human being becomes the subject of his/her own development, rather than the object of other people's worlds and we can add, other people's priorities and whims".<sup>45</sup> Capacity building has been suggested in this regard as one of the essential strategies for increasing the potential for a community driven approach to sustainable development. It encourages people to grow their capacity to implement and sustain their development initiatives. That means people should think for themselves, plan for themselves and develop for themselves.

Community development seeks to promote human development and empower communities and strengthening their capacity for the self-sustaining development. "When we speak of capacity building, we speak of the capacity of the people – those who used to be the objects and recipients of development - to become the masters of their own development".<sup>46</sup> According to the theory the emphasis is much on the assistance to build the capacity, not on building the capacity because this assistance should be part of the learning process for both community builder and the community. "None is the teacher in this situation except the circumstances".<sup>47</sup> De Beer suggests that all those involved in community development have the obligation towards capacity building; facilitating the learning process towards capacity building and being part of the learning process.

There will be no other ways that can lead to any change unless poor people are leading their own change process. "Capacity building rests on the premises that if people can lead their own change process, they can be the actors and not merely the object of change".<sup>48</sup> In other words it is the agency of poor people that should lead in the process of change that the community struggles for. But this has to be through re-empowering the community with skills that are needed in order to enhance their ability that may lead to the change needed. Capacity building allows full participation and is the way to humanization of the marginalized and it leads to maturity of poor societies. People

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<sup>45</sup> De Beer, "Participation and Community Capacity Building" 21

<sup>46</sup> De Beer, "Participation and Community Capacity Building" 22

<sup>47</sup> De Beer, "Participation and Community Capacity Building" 22

<sup>48</sup> De Beer, "Participation and Community Capacity Building" 21

participation can lead to an independent society, and a society that has the ability to utilize its agency for survival.

#### **2.1.5. Agency in development: Summary**

The development strategies that have been discussed above look at development from different angles but all these strategies have one common idea and that is of community transformation through people themselves, i.e. through their 'agency'. We have seen that poor people should grow their capacity to implement and sustain their development initiatives. That means people should think for themselves, plan for themselves and develop for themselves. For development to take place people have to do something, they have to be involved in activities that allows the transformation to take place. This led us to thinking of the importance of the agency of poor people themselves. Poor people are the ones suffering and they are the ones to take a leading role in the fight against anything that reduces them to 'things or objects'. This needs to be done through their organizations and this is what makes their agency more effective in community development.

After reviewing all these theories about community development we have seen that the agency of people is very important in any program that seeks development among the communities. The advice is to consider seriously the input of poor communities in their struggle against poverty. Although this agency of people is ignored in different development programmes, these theories have shown the importance of the agency of the poor and this need to be considered whenever we think of how our poor communities need to reach to any form of transformation. This also applies to people living with HIV/AIDS.

#### **2.2. Assets in development**

In the next section we will focus on the importance of "assets" in building poor communities and in fighting poverty. We will continue to rely on different scholars and see how they have understood the idea of assets in our contemporary development era and what the poor can do to reach their dreams of better lives. In looking at this issue we will look at first the work of Julius Nyerere with his approach of "Ujamaa na Kujitegemeya vijijini" or self-reliance.

### 2.2.1. Self reliance

The issue of the assets of poor and marginalised communities has been the focus of many academics, development workers and some politicians. Former Tanzanian president Mwalimu Julius Nyerere in his document titled. *Socialism and Rural Development*, 1967, defined the Ujamaa Approach to community development. According to the document “the rural communities would be organized into Ujamaa villages’ collectives in which the members would practice democracy face to face. Moreover, this would be done by electing their own village government, planning their own development, and working together for the benefit of all”.<sup>49</sup> Community self reliance was to be a dominant feature in the approach, and would be the mechanism that would enforce the disciplined acceptance of jointly taken decisions at the village level.<sup>50</sup> This was a development for the community by the community; and self-dependence was the main idea behind everything. This ideological position contradicted sharply with the capitalist and acquisitive orientation of rural development programmes.<sup>51</sup>

His approach encouraged rural villagers to be self-reliant and build on what they have rather than on waiting for a donor who will come from far away. It looked at outside resources as an additional strength, adding to those that are already in their villages. It encouraged the unity of community members in solving their own problems. The approach sees development as women and men of the area becoming reliant on their skills, resources, and ideas to bring about positive changes in their lives and community.

This philosophy of Nyerere and his developmental approach of Ujamaa wanted to build a society that was united and co-operative in finding solutions to its own problems. “Self-reliance is a most effective way of helping poor people and self-reliance always meant self-confidence, reliance primarily on ones’ own resources. It also involves the capacity for autonomous goal setting and decision-making”.<sup>52</sup> This is also what Ujamaa encourages, that people should be self-dependent and use their own resources to meet their own needs and the needs of others but also to be able to build self confidence.

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<sup>49</sup> Donald Dore, ed. *Community Development: comparative case studies in India, the Republic of Korea, Mexico and Tanzania*. ( London: Croom Helm, 1981) 166

<sup>50</sup>Dore, *Community Development: comparative case studies in India, the Republic of Korea, Mexico and Tanzania*.166

<sup>51</sup>Dore, *Community Development: comparative case studies in India, the Republic of Korea, Mexico and Tanzania*. 164

<sup>52</sup>Ul Haq Mahbub. *The Poverty Curtain. Choices for the Third World*. (New York: Colombia University Press, 1976), 72.

Self-reliance means autonomy, or auto-centered development. Self-reliance in Gandhi's thought is the system that seeks to improve everyone's living condition and it is built upon a form of non- exploitative moral economics. This system encourages the move away from dependence and it also encourages own cultural values. In this system everyone works for the common good without seeking to accumulate any more than they need. Self reliance starts with a small unity which means that each family, village, country and region is supposed to obtain what it needs in a self supporting manner.<sup>53</sup>

Poor people in the rural areas are to use the local resources to improve their lives without always looking for international experts or aid alone. Self-reliance involves the use of local assets in trying to develop local people. "Self reliance is thus self confidence which requires a psycho-political change in the way people relate to the economy, so it is necessary to rely on people and their work rather than relying on money".<sup>54</sup> This will prevent people from seeing life through money or become money minded, or depending on loans rather than their resources. In this way dominant modernization will not have much impact on the people. This development approach is focussing on the capacity of people to rely on what they have as 'assets' in order to transform their communities.

### **2.2.2. Sustainable livelihood framework**

We have discussed above self reliance through the local assets but in order for self reliance to be successful our assets need to be protected. This view leads us to continue our discussion by looking at the work of Robert Chambers<sup>55</sup> and his approach called the Sustainable Livelihood Framework. In this section we will rely much on his ideas about development but also the experience of United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in applying this framework in their field of development. This framework continues our discussion by focussing on the theme of the importance of the assets existing in the community and how sustaining these assets and protecting them from shocks and stresses can achieve development.

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<sup>53</sup>Rist Gilbert. *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith*. (London: Zed Books, 1997) 127

<sup>54</sup>Gilbert, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith* 130

<sup>55</sup>Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway. *Sustainable rural livelihoods: Practical Concepts for the 21st century*. Institute for Development Studies Discussion (University of Sussex, Brighton: IDS Publications, 1992)

The sustainable livelihoods framework is a contemporary development approach that is holistic and encourages social and environmental sustainability. It emphasizes the fact that people's use of local assets influences the outcomes of livelihood achievements. There are five kinds of assets in the 'asset portfolio' available to all households. These are human, social, natural, physical and financial capital. The UNDP has defined Livelihoods as the assets, activities and entitlements, which people utilize in order to make a living. Assets in this particular context are defined as not only natural/biological, but also social, political, human, physical and economic. The sustainability of livelihoods becomes a function of how men and women utilize asset portfolios on both a short and long-term basis.<sup>56</sup>

Sustainable livelihoods are those that are able to resist stress and shocks. According to Robert Chambers' experience sustainable livelihoods does not ignore the need to guard against the 'stresses, shocks and seasonality' that may threaten people's livelihoods but rather ensures the ability to prevent or even to recover from them. People are encouraged to have a basic knowledge and understanding of the impact of negative factors affecting the stability of their livelihoods and try to minimize them.<sup>57</sup>

Poverty is an issue that affects not only the social economy of the country but the community as well. Among the shocks that our communities are facing in our days as argued by Alan Whiteside are "Illness, death of productive people and the consequent fall in productivity and diversion of resources from servings to care. The degree to which these factors impact on national growth depends on the people who are infected in terms of their importance to national production, and to what extent money is diverted from serving to care".<sup>58</sup> Illnesses are the major development issue facing South Africa and their impact will increasingly devastate people's lives, particularly in the poorer villages of the country. The assets are stripped away by many factors and there is a need to teach the community on how they have to endure the losses of the assets that they are depending on.

Promoting sustainable livelihoods according to the UNDP involves understanding what

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<sup>56</sup>United Nations Development "Programme on sustainable livelihoods: overview"

[Http://www.undp.org/sl/overview/an-overview,htm-03/02/10](http://www.undp.org/sl/overview/an-overview.htm-03/02/10)

<sup>57</sup> Chambers el, *Sustainable rural livelihoods: Practical Concepts for the 21st century*. 16

<sup>58</sup> Alan Whiteside el. *AIDS the challenge for South Africa*. (Cape Town: South African Institute of Race Relations, 2000) 86

poor men and women already know. How do people adapt over time? What kinds of changes have taken place within their livelihood system to enable them to adapt to new environments? Moreover, most importantly, how can they make these livelihoods more sustainable? Support for existing livelihoods that ensures sustainability and seeks to increase productivity is the essence of the SL approach.<sup>59</sup>

Caroline Ashley argues “the Sustainable livelihood approaches are a way of thinking about the objectives, scope and priorities for development in order to enhance progress in poverty elimination. Sustainable livelihoods approaches rest on core principles that stress people centered, responsive and multi-level approaches to development”.<sup>60</sup> It builds on the assets of the household and the community as a whole. SL focuses on people and their strengths rather than what outsiders brings in. It encourages the union of the existing institutions and the use of the local resources to enhance the positive outcome. Anything that can destroy our assets, including environment degradation will need to be avoided by all means. Our development will be achieved in rural South Africa by using the skills and assets that exist in the communities but also by creating the atmosphere that allows these skills and resources to be used effectively. When the environment is destroyed, the resources are also destroyed, and when the resources are destroyed the skills are affected.

### **2.2.3. Assets in development: Summary**

If we consider all the theories of development that we have discussed above we can see that there is a strong argument that development among poor people must take seriously their agency and assets. From self-reliant approaches we have seen that self-reliance is an effective way of helping poor people that results in self-confidence, reliance primarily on ones’ own resources. It also involves the capacity for autonomous goal setting and decision-making. The sustainable livelihoods approach focuses on the assets, activities and entitlements, which people utilize in order to make a living. Assets in this particular context are defined as not only natural/biological, but also social, political, human, physical and economic. The sustainability of livelihoods becomes a function of how men

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<sup>59</sup> United Nations Development “Programme on sustainable livelihoods: overview”

[Http://www.undp.org/sl/overview/an-overview, htm-03/02/10](http://www.undp.org/sl/overview/an-overview.htm-03/02/10)

<sup>60</sup>“Sustainable Livelihoods. Lessons From Early Experience in 1999”

<http://wwwserver.law.wits.ac.za/listserv/archives/saimmi@old/msg00448.html>

and women utilize their asset portfolios on both a short and long-term basis, and a livelihood is sustained only when it is able to resist stress and shocks.

From these approaches the ideas of the assets that exist among poor communities have been recognised and their contribution in development has been acknowledged. Different theorists have argued about the assets and how these assets need to be considered in promoting better lives among people. The assets of poor people need to be seriously acknowledged and utilised in order to achieve the development needed in their communities. The poor have the assets although these assets are small, not enough, and sometimes attacked and stripped away in various ways but these people are still living and continue to contribute in their surviving strategies. Assets are very important for development.

### **2.3. Asset Based Community Development**

#### **2.3.1. Introduction**

Our previous sections have shown how two themes of agency and assets are so important for development of our communities. From people centred development to sustainable livelihoods, theorists have shared their views concerning these themes. The importance of these themes in community development have been highlighted and discussed and our next section brings both views and approaches concerning assets and agency together in one single approach called Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). In my opinion John Kretzmann and John McKnight have helped in pulling these fundamental themes of agency and assets together in a coherent way.

#### **2.3.2. Asset Based Community Development**

Asset-Based Community Development is an approach to development suggested by John Kretzman and John McKnight in their book *Building a community from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community's asset*.<sup>61</sup> The approach changes the focus from a needs-driven method to capacity building within a particular community. It criticises the idea of outside-in and top-down methods and suggests the inside-out and

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<sup>61</sup>John Kretzmann and John McKnight. *Building a community from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community's asset* (Chicago: ACTA Publications, 1993)

participatory methods. The approach begins with a clear commitment to discovering a community's capacities and assets. The utilisation of already known skills, gifts, capacities and potentials in the community and the discovering of those that are unknown is encouraged.

The approach emphasizes "the organization becomes productive when local communities are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort. The strategy starts with what is available in the community and it is internally focused."<sup>62</sup> It does not build on what does not exist in the community but encourages people to build on what is available. This approach recognises that everyone is born with some gifts that can be useful in helping somebody else. This has made this approach very inclusive, without any form of discrimination against other community members.

ABCD ensures that "people who are marginalized are prioritized, to ensure that participation is genuine and equitable, rather than passive, co-opted or restricted to the relatively powerful"<sup>63</sup>. It considers communities as agents rather than patients of development; it shifts people from being clients to citizens. Megan Foster argued, "The basic tenet of ABCD is that, although there are both capacities and deficiencies in every community, a capacities focused approach is more likely to empower the community. Moreover, it can mobilize citizens to create positive and meaningful change from within".<sup>64</sup>

The asset-based development strategy concentrates upon the agenda of building and problem solving capacities of local residents, institutions and associations. It encourages co-operation among community members and builds towards the development of policies and activities based on the capacities, skills and assets of lower income people and their neighbours.<sup>65</sup> It gives power to the citizens to promote what is in their hands for their own interest and local people become the primary beneficiaries. Nevertheless, this approach does not exclude the input or the contribution of the local organisations and associations already existing in the community and outside. The following steps guide

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<sup>62</sup>Kretzmann and McKnight, *Building a community from the inside out* 9

<sup>63</sup> Alison Mathie. "From clients to citizens: Asset Based Community Development as a strategy for community-driven development", January 2002 Occasional paper.

[http://www.stfx.ca/institutees/coady/text/about\\_publications\\_accasional\\_citizens.html](http://www.stfx.ca/institutees/coady/text/about_publications_accasional_citizens.html) 16

<sup>64</sup> Megan Foster. "Situating ABCD in the international development context" at

<http://www.livelihoods.org/statistic/mfoster>NN157.html>> 2

<sup>65</sup> Kretzmann and McKnight. *Building a community from the inside out* 8

success for the Asset Based Community Development Approach.

- Step 1: Make a thorough “capacity inventory” outlining all the various skills and assets for each of the local youth, seniors, and disabled etc.
- Step 2: “Compile the inventory” of the essential assets and resources of the community as represented by local individuals, associations, organizations and institutions.
- Step 3: Use the information received from the inventory to build strong, concrete, mutually beneficial partnerships between locals and other individuals, organizations and associations that exist within the community.
- Step 4: On the basis of the partnerships and the active participation of local people in the community building process, go on to build new relationships with resources that exist outside the immediate community.<sup>66</sup>

“ABCD is relationship driven and one of the central challenges for asset-based community developers is to constantly build and rebuild the relationships between and among local residents, local associations and local institutions”.<sup>67</sup> Local organisations are the most important assets that can help in building a strong community and avoiding the idea of foreign dependency. In order for any community to reach their development goals there is a need for strong networking among the existing institutions and the promotion of unity with its neighbouring communities. “The approach requires thinking about communities in an entirely new light. Communities can no longer be thought of as complex masses of needs and problems, but rather as diverse and potent webs of gifts and assets. Each community has a unique set of skills and capacities that needs to be channelled for community development. Moreover, many communities are unable to pull themselves up by their bootstraps without the good will of their governments and local authorities”.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Kretzmann and McKnight *Building a community from the inside out* 14-16

<sup>67</sup> Kretzman and Macknight, *Building a community from the inside out* 9.

<sup>68</sup> Anna Kajamulo Tibajuka. Agents rather than patients-Realizing the potential for Asset-Based Community Development. at [WWW.unhabitat.org/director/documents/100903.pdf](http://WWW.unhabitat.org/director/documents/100903.pdf) accessed on 6/10/2005

The Bangkok workshop on ABCD has recognised ABCD as a process of mobilising and organising for change. The project not only helps to uncover assets that people have not recognised before, but it also strengthens people's pride in their achievements. This celebration of achievement and realisation of what they have to contribute builds confidence in their abilities to be producers, not recipients of development.<sup>69</sup> ABCD aims at helping people to reach a community development by focussing on the assets that exist in the community. However, in order to achieve the community development the assets need to be combined in different ways. This requires that people accept uniting their effort through the use of local assets and this can influence the outcomes of livelihoods achievements.

ABCD can be successful if people unite their efforts in the fight against poverty. This means also that the skills existing in the community will unite for the benefit of every member of this particular community. Development is to be able to organize people so that they can move together from point A to point B. As in a soccer game, teamwork is very important because none scores by him/herself. Team members have to have a good combination of skills and mutual support in order to score. Since the first assets in this approach are people themselves; if they do not meet for planning, and those with financial possibility do not start contributing, then there will be no way forward.

Our next section is going to look at asset based community development and see if the church could support a development theory like this. We will refer mostly to the work of Steve De Gruchy in his paper entitled "Of agency, assets and appreciation: seeking some commonalities between theology and development."<sup>70</sup> In this paper De Gruchy raises some key development issues that need to be considered when the church gets involved in development around its community. He highlights the issues of 'faith' and 'works'. The whole argument is whether poor people also have faith and how their faith can be applied in solving their daily challenges in their daily living.

#### **2.4. ABCD and the church**

Kretzmann and McKnight have found three kinds of assets in a village or neighbourhood,

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<sup>69</sup> [http://www.synergos.org/events/ABCD\\_2002/](http://www.synergos.org/events/ABCD_2002/)

<sup>70</sup> Steve De Gruchy, "Of agency, Assets and appreciation: seeking some commonalities between theology and development". *In the journal of Theology for Southern Africa*. 117 (November 2000)

and these are individuals, associations and institutions<sup>71</sup>. The task of the community builder is to map these assets, and then to seek ways to build relationships among and between them<sup>72</sup>, so as to strengthen the community's own capacity to enhance its well being. Among these institutions are the church and its members. So should the Church support ABCD?

If we look at the ministry of the church through ABCD we are able to see that the approach is based on the idea of transforming the lives of the poor communities. This is in line with the ministry of the church and the church should support the approach although the church does not initiate the approach itself. ABCD is not promoted as a Christian approach but its basic focus is in harmony with the Christian faith because the approach seems to speak basically of a faith perspective.<sup>73</sup>

The approach values the role of the church as an institution that can contribute in community development. ABCD has similarities with Christian principles and ministry because they both recognise that all people are created in the image of God, and that all people have important value, whether poor, rich, young, old, men or women. Promoting the issue of the agency of poor in reality means the recognition of God's creative wisdom that contributes in making the world a better place for all creation.

In Genesis 2:15 the bible says "the LORD God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." God created humanity in order to work and this working order was given to both men and women. In another words they were given the responsibility of keeping the creation in order. Secondly, God created humanity in his own image (Genesis 2:26). The image of God that exists in humanity gives men and women the ability of continuing the creative work of God in the world.

But before God created humanity he first created the earth and other living creatures, which may be called assets. It is clear from Genesis that in God's wisdom assets were created first before Adam and Eve to make ABCD possible. The story shows that the assets that exist in the community are God's provision for the creation. The creation story is people-centred and God created the universe for Himself and for humanity to live on in harmony. ABCD and the Christian perspective both turn their focus to people's vocation

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<sup>71</sup> Kretzmann and McKnight, *Building a community from the inside out* 9

<sup>72</sup> Kretzmann and McKnight, *Building a community from the inside out* 14-16

<sup>73</sup> class discussion with Steve De Gruchy in 2005

recognising that all people have vocation no matter what they are or where they are. This vision gives them the ability to focus on their development as agents (not clients) of their own development by working hard. The issue of faith and works as noted by Steve De Gruchy, after quoting from James 2: 26, raises some challenges for the church concerning the vocation and faith of the poor. The approach of handouts that was used by the church has ignored the vocation of the poor and their works of faith are minimised.

De Gruchy writes: “It is very important to recognize that in both creation accounts in Genesis, from which the affirmation of identity is traditionally drawn, the truth of being made in the image of God (1:27) or being filled with God’s own breath of life (2:7) is immediately coupled with the theme of vocation, the calling to be responsible actors in this world newly created by God (1:28; 2:15)”.<sup>74</sup> This vocation builds people's attitudes of being masters of their own development in the world. It also encourages people to be more creative in their world and influence others to be better builders of the beauty of our universe by combining the variety of skills and vocations that exist among our community. God created us with different skills, talents and vocations for the continuity of creation.

The ABCD approach and the church both recognise that all people have gifts that can be used to the glory of God both in the church and in the community. Our gifts are tools for our works; “Even so faith without works is dead (James 2:26).” De Gruchy reminds us that “Christian faith is not just about intellectual assent, but about a life lived in compassionate service to others, especially the vulnerable”, and that this “sums up much of the biblical witness from Moses and the jubilee laws through to Jesus and the message of the kingdom of God”.<sup>75</sup> Christian faith is alive only when it is able to produce mercy and kindness to the sufferers in our communities. “Any vision of Christian involvement in social development cannot have as its assumption, as so much of it unfortunately does, the faith and works of Christians and the church over and against those who are poor and needy; but has to affirm, enhance and appreciate the faith works of the poor themselves.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> De Gruchy, “Of agency, Assets and appreciation: seeking some commonalities between theology and development”. *In the journal of Theology for Southern Africa*. 117 (November 2000) 24

<sup>75</sup> De Gruchy “Of agency, Assets and appreciation: seeking some commonalities between theology and development”. 20

<sup>76</sup> De Gruchy “Of agency, Assets and appreciation: seeking some commonalities between theology and development”. 24

This challenges the church's handout approach to community development by missionaries and pastors. It has minimized the faith works of poor people and as a result it increased the sufferings of the poor more than the problem it thought of solving. The agency of the poor will force the church to think and make a clear separation between relief aid and development. Relief is meant to address an immediate need for a set of period. If chosen to be the permanent strategy for any development agency, then it becomes a crippling tool that disables rather than empowering people<sup>77</sup>.

The effectiveness of the church ministry in community development is reflected where its members are getting fully involved in projects, and other activities that reflect love of neighbor, and mercy to the needy and marginalized around it. Practically, De Gruchy emphasizes that "to be a Christian means to participate in the *missio Dei*, God's work in the world. This means to bear witness to the work of God in partnership with others (both within and outside the church) to make our communities a place that is closer to God's vision of shalom".<sup>78</sup> This means that the agency and assets of people of faith are invited to come out of church buildings and start contributing to God's work of creation. In Cynthia Holder-Rich's words: "The church needs to move from passivity, apathy and powerlessness to constructive impatience in order to take its rightful role as a movement that lifts up freedom, and through its gifts needs to offer development".<sup>79</sup>

God has allowed a continuous creativity towards the completion of his creation. In other words, God is engaged in on-going development of the cosmos through his church around the world. In order for ABCD to be effective, this creativity should not be designed alone for people living in towns with all the facilities around them, but also the poor and sick people living in rural areas. If the church has to be involved with God in transforming and developing the world around us, then Christians have a huge responsibility of creating an atmosphere that will enhance agency of poor people in all communities around South Africa.

In order to enhance the agency and the assets of the poor the church is called to provide additional skills, and resources to the skills and resources that are already in action in the

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<sup>77</sup> Korten *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* 118

<sup>78</sup> Steve De Gruchy. "A Christian engagement with the Sustainable Livelihoods frame work". In *missionalia*. 33:1 (April 2005) 56

<sup>79</sup> Cynthia Holder-Rich. "Development as freedom and freedom and development"? In *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (July 2001), 96

community. The resources of the poor are not enough to meet development requirements. There is a need for the church to work in partnership with poor people in order to reach their development goals. The church may consider this approach in dealing with some development issues that are challenging the use of the poor assets and other resources, but without pushing them back to dependency.

## **2.5. ABCD in time of HIV and AIDS**

We have seen that development is about what people can do for themselves without waiting for the professionals and the government to do for them. The ABCD approach sets a challenge to the traditional ways of development that are needs driven rather than capacity focused. The traditional way of development has resulted in creating a dependency syndrome in the community and creates more problems than it solves.<sup>80</sup> ABCD looks at development differently in that it is people centred and builds on the capacity of local people in solving their own problems. The strength of ABCD lies in the fact that it is people centred and it allows for people to participate and become self-reliant. It teaches the community to understand that they are the agents of their own development rather than being patients of development.<sup>81</sup>

From the agency and the assets of the poor people point of view we can see that agency and assets are the foundation for ABCD. We cannot discuss ABCD without these two themes because they are very crucial to the approach. Development must start with what people have, rather than what they do not have.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, we have seen that the church can support this because the approach is in the line with the ministry of the church. But looking at the shocks caused by HIV/AIDS that poor people are encountering in their villages, this agency and assets are sometimes destroyed and reduced. HIV and AIDS is not a health issue only any more but a social and developmental issue. Its impact on the local community is huge and people are affected and infected in different ways and their assets are destroyed.

HIV/AIDS creates poverty because it impacts on the social and political development of the communities. This has forced Defilippi to react saying that “reflecting on the magnitude of human suffering, social disruption, and the exacerbation of poverty that the

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<sup>80</sup> Kretzmann and McKnight, *Building communities from inside out*, 5

<sup>81</sup> Kretzmann and McKnight *Building a community from the inside out* 4

<sup>82</sup> Kretzmann and Mckignight, *Building a community from the inside out* 6

HIV/AIDS pandemic leaves in its wake, it is tempting to link it to the saying that it is an ill wind that blows no good”.<sup>83</sup> People who used to wake up in the morning going to work are now waking up early in the morning and taking their sons and daughters to the clinics for medical help.

“The virus that causes AIDS is transmitted between husbands and wives and sometimes from mothers to their babies. Death tends to be clustered in families. Many families go deeply into debt to provide what they see as suitable funerals for their dead”<sup>84</sup>. The money that was used to care for the family is now spent to see the doctor on a daily basis and organizing funerals. People who used to farm in our villages are now lying at home waiting to die and young children have now become the mothers and fathers of the families because the parents have died of HIV/AIDS. People who use to work in towns like Johannesburg and Pretoria are not going anymore because they have no strength to work.<sup>85</sup>

Poor families have a reduced capacity to deal with the effects of morbidity and mortality than do richer ones for very obvious reasons. These include the absence of savings and other assets, which can cushion the impact of illness and death. The poor are already on the margins of survival and thus are also unable to deal with the consequent health and other costs. These include the costs of drugs when available to treat opportunistic infections, transport cost to health centers, reduced productivity through illness and diversion of labor to caring roles, loss of employment through illness and job discrimination, funeral and related costs, and so on. In the longer term such poor households never recover even their initial level of living as their capacity is reduced through the losses of productive family members through death and through migration, and through the sales of any productive assets they once possessed.<sup>86</sup>

HIV/AIDS is an issue that affects not only the social economy of the country but the whole process of development is affected. “Illness, death of productive people and the consequent fall in productivity and diversion of resources from savings to care. The degree to which these factors will impact on national growth will depend on the people who are infected in terms of their importance to national production, and to what extent money is diverted from serving to care”.<sup>87</sup> HIV/AIDS is the major development issue facing South Africa and its impact will increasingly devastate people’s lives, particularly

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<sup>83</sup> Kath Defilippi. “Dealing with poverty”. In Leana Uys and Sue Cameron. *Home Based HIV/AIDS care*. (Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa, 2003) 171

<sup>84</sup> Thomas Carnell. “Funerals and AIDS, resilience and decline in KwaZulu-Natal”. *In the Journal of theology for Southern Africa*. (July 2006 number 125), 24

<sup>85</sup> My own experience from my community

<sup>86</sup> Desmond Cohen. ‘Poverty and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa’.

<http://www.undp.org/hiv/publications/issues/english/issue27e.html> 7/28/2005

<sup>87</sup> Alan Whiteside el “AIDS the challenge for South Africa”<sup>86</sup>

in the poorer villages of the country.

Individuals, families and communities are impoverished by their experience of HIV and AIDS in ways that are typical for long drawn-out and terminal illnesses. It is a feature of HIV infection that it clusters with often both parents HIV positive. There is thus enormous strain on capacity of families to cope with psycho-social and economic consequences of illness, such that many families experience great distress and often disintegrate as social and economic units.<sup>88</sup>

Studies have shown up to six-fold increases in workers mortality, and there are consistent data of significantly increased AIDS-attributable death rate between 7.5 and 9.4/1000 workers for several southern African countries in the course of the nineties. The same report has shown that there are factors that reduce workers' productivity through failing physical and emotional health. HIV/AIDS related absenteeism leads to limited performance of new workers covering for, or replacing, sick or deceased employees. The increases of labor costs are due to the absenteeism of the workers, either because they are caring for sick family, neighbours, or because of own sickness. Further factors include the increased cost of employees' burials, of funeral attendance, of increased employees health care and benefits, as well as the costs caused by labor turnover, recruitment and training of replacement staff.<sup>89</sup>

Here lies the problem of how to achieve sustainable development under conditions where the epidemic is destructive of the capacities essential for poverty alleviation. Can we continue to believe that ABCD can still work when people continue to die and assets are being spent caring for the sick family members? This means that HIV/AIDS threatens sustainable development, not just in the towns but also in the rural areas where people are very poor and marginalized. Let us remind ourselves of what Kretzmann and McKnight have argued:

Successful community development grows out of policies and activities based on the capacities, skills, and assets of poor people and their neighbors. It is also important to clarify that at the start poor people need additional resources; it means that the outside help is based on their strengths rather than weaknesses. The challenge here is that the assets of poor communities are absolutely necessary, but usually not sufficient to meet all the challenges of development<sup>90</sup>.

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<sup>88</sup> Desmond Cohen, <http://www.undp.org/hiv/publications/issues/english/issue27e.html> 7/28/2005

<sup>89</sup> Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development fact sheet. HIV/AIDS and Private Sector Promotion February 2005. [http://www.sarpn.org.za.documents/d0001160/factsheet\\_aids-priv.sec.pdf](http://www.sarpn.org.za.documents/d0001160/factsheet_aids-priv.sec.pdf). 8/04/05

<sup>90</sup> Kretzman and McKnight *Building a community from the inside out* 8

HIV/AIDS reduces the productivity of the community because it affects the most productive group of people in the society. Youth are dying with their skills, older people are dying with their wisdom, mothers and children are dying and the future of this generation is in danger. Furthermore, poverty is strongly associated with a lack of assets, or the inability to put assets to productive use. Assets in this context include human capital, physical, social, natural capital. Cash resources obtained from different activities may be used to invest in, or improve the quality of any or all of these classes of assets<sup>91</sup>. All these capitals are challenged in this era of HIV/AIDS because the pandemic affects all aspects of the lives of the poor communities.

Analyzing the whole situation we have discussed above we may conclude that HIV/AIDS challenges the agency and the assets of people; especially those affected and infected living in the rural areas. Now how could ABCD be effective when people's capability has been destroyed by this pandemic? Looking at the impact of the HIV and AIDS on the development of our communities one is led to ask: *can ABCD still work in the midst of all the challenges that the HIV/AIDS pandemic creates in the rural areas?* Poor people by definition have few assets and in addition HIV/AIDS takes some of these assets away from the poor communities. How then can ABCD be relevant in this era of HIV/AIDS pandemic? Or how can the church enhance the agency of the poor while losing the assets of the community and its members due to HIV/AIDS?

## 2.6. Conclusion

We have highlighted some development approaches in this chapter and we have linked them to the view of the importance of the assets, and agency of poor communities. We have also discussed the approach called Asset Based Community Development where all the themes of development were kept tightly and coherently around the agency and the asset of poor communities. And we have also discussed the theological aspect of the approach and we highlighted the view asking if the church could support the idea of the ABCD. Finally we have looked at the impact of HIV/AIDS on the agency, and the assets of poor people and we have asked ourselves if the ABCD can still work in this era of

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<sup>91</sup> Diana Carney. "Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: What contribution can we make?" A paper presented at the department for international development's natural resources advisers conference, July 1998. 59.

HIV/AIDS in rural South Africa.

The next two chapters will be looking at the research findings to this question in the village called Marapyane. In chapter three we will reflect on interviews with key informants in the village, and then in chapter four we will reflect on the interviews with People Living with HIV/AIDS. These interviews will be used to answer the question asked if the ABCD approach can still work in the era of HIV/AIDS in rural South Africa.

## Chapter III

### HIV/AIDS in Marapyane Village

#### 3.1. Introduction

We have identified the overall research question in the previous chapter, namely: can the ABCD approach still work in the midst of the trouble that HIV/AIDS leaves in our community? The next two chapters seek to answer this question by undertaking a case study in Marapyane village. In this chapter we provide an overview of HIV/AIDS in South Africa and then in Marapyane village through a series of interviews with key informants to provide the background to the interviews with People living with HIV/AIDS in chapter four.

#### 3.2. A Brief review of HIV/AIDS in South Africa

The impact of HIV/AIDS on the local communities in South Africa is a real challenge that none can ignore for HIV/AIDS is known as a disease that creates a lot of social problems. "South Africa is currently experiencing one of the most severe HIV epidemics in the world. By the end of 2005, there were five and a half million people living with HIV in South Africa, and almost 1000 AIDS deaths occurring every day, according to UNAIDS estimates. A survey in 2004 found that "South Africans spent more time at funerals than they did having their hair cut, shopping or having barbecues. It also found that more than twice as many people had been to a funeral in the past month that had been to a wedding".<sup>92</sup> It is clear that HIV is killing people and some measures need to be taken to fight against the virus.

The most important assets of the country are people and the report has shown that AIDS killed around 336,000 South Africans between mid-2005 and mid 2006.<sup>93</sup> This has shown that HIV/AIDS is the major development crisis that South Africa is facing in our time, because the virus affects the most productive group of population.

The latest data show a continuing, rising trend nationally in HIV infection levels among pregnant women attending public antenatal clinics: from 22.4% in 1999 to 30.2% in 2005(a 35% increase). However, HIV prevalence among young people

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<sup>92</sup> International AIDS charity: <http://www.avert.org/aidssouthafrica.htm> 24/02/07

<sup>93</sup> South Africa AIDS statistics. <http://www.avert.org/statistics.htm> 20/02/2007

may be stabilizing. Antenatal surveillance suggests that HIV prevalence among 15-24 year-old pregnant women has remained relatively stable since 2000 at 14%-16% among 15-19-year olds and 28%-31% among 20-25 year-olds (Department of Health South Africa, 2006).<sup>94</sup>

Barnett argues, "It is evident that HIV will alter the history of many of the world's poorest societies. When people are dying development is also affected because development is always about the hope for the future and changing social and economic trajectories for the better. This can not be achieved if the effort in the fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS is not increased".<sup>95</sup>

HIV/AIDS does not affect only the economy and social relations of the community alone, but also affects the environment on which the whole nation depends for survival. Environmentalists warn that "South Africa, where one fifth of adults are HIV-positive, is facing a cemetery crisis and environmental disaster because more than 3 million bodies must be buried over the next ten years. The country town and regional planning commission said that with 1600 people dying each day countrywide, the equivalent of 3,240 football fields will be needed to accommodate the dead in Kwa Zulu Natal province alone".<sup>96</sup> This will worsen the agricultural sector that is losing many workers due to the pandemic and the whole society will be affected. According to the African Centre for HIV/AIDS management "the future and how we handle the HIV/AIDS pandemic is in our hands. About 2 000 people in South Africa daily contract the HI-virus, and it is our responsibility to take the death sentence out of AIDS."<sup>97</sup> It is our duty as citizens of this continent to do something about this pandemic as suggested by the second South African AIDS conference in Durban on 10 June 2005. The conference has confirmed that,

Every person who lives in South Africa is affected by the HIV epidemic either directly or indirectly. An epidemic that has such a wide-ranging impact requires a united response. Although we may come from different classes, races and religions, different jobs or sectors, we must be united in HIV prevention, treatment, and support. United in accepting responsibility to deal with this epidemic, united in our desires to preserve and improve the quality of life and to beat this threat to our country.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> UNAIDS/WHO AIDS epidemic update: December 2006. <http://www.unaids.org/en/HIVdate/epi2006/default.asp> 22/02/07

<sup>95</sup> Tony Barnett and Alan Whiteside *Aids in the Twenty-First Century*. Disease and Globalization. (Palgrave: New York, 2002), 21

<sup>96</sup> Susan Hunter. *Who cares? Aids in Africa*. (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2003) 22

<sup>97</sup> African Center for HIV/AIDS management. <http://www.aidscentre.sun.ac.za/diploma.html> 11/06/05

<sup>98</sup> 2nd South African AIDS Conference, 7 - 10 June 2005 <http://www.sa->

In fact HIV/AIDS and poverty are related in different ways because one causes the other. HIV/AIDS causes poverty and poverty can lead to activities that can cause infections. The statistics of HIV show that poor communities are more infected more than the rich. Cohen argues that “there is some correlation between extreme poverty and high risk of HIV prevalence, although the virus is prevalent across all sectors of society”<sup>99</sup>. He noted that poor households typically have few if any financial or other assets, which can result in the behavior that, allows the transmission of the disease. He also raises the issue of untreated STD’s and an aspect of the poor health of the poor that exists among many communities which is now recognized as a very significant co-factor in the transmission of HIV<sup>100</sup>.

His argument is extended to the view that “poor people are often politically and socially marginalized.” And that “these conditions of social exclusion increase the problems of reaching these populations through the programs aimed at changing sexual and other behavior”<sup>101</sup>. This is the example of rural areas in South Africa where people have no access to information about HIV and are not even included in the process of fighting against HIV.

Some poor women without any choice find themselves involved in sex work necessarily because they have no other choice for they have children or other family members to look after. The study done in Thailand and South Africa indicates that “poverty, lack of education and limited income earning opportunity often force women into commercial sex work, exposing them to a high risk of HIV infection and other STI’s”<sup>102</sup>. Socially and economically women are the greatest sufferers because of the responsibilities surrounding them of looking after the family and raising children. This shows how most poor women can be forced to adopt behavior which exposes them to HIV infection without any choice - more so than men.

Barnett argues that “the general economic insecurity of women leads many to seek patronage and support from one or more men. Urban trading centers or roadside locations with the likelihood of an increased number of social partners resulting from economic

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[aidsconference.com/home.aspx](http://aidsconference.com/home.aspx) accessed on 14/06/05

<sup>99</sup> Desmond Cohen. Poverty and HIV in Sub-Saharan. accessed at <http://www.undp.org/publications/issues/english/issue27e.htm> on 7/28/2005

<sup>100</sup> Desmond Cohen. Poverty and HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa.3

<sup>101</sup> Desmond Cohen. Poverty and HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa

<sup>102</sup> Desmond Cohen. Poverty and HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa

insecurity clearly increase the risk of infection if a woman is not already infected”<sup>103</sup>. Truck stations and taxi ranks are the places where women try to increase their income generation mostly for surviving and this increases the spread of HIV. Some parents are also pushing their daughters into a sex business in order to raise money for food for the whole family. This is a matter of life and death for the family therefore if the men are HIV infected it does not matter. What matters is the money that is needed to buy food. These girls will fear to ask for the use of the condom in case they lose the customers in the process and some will be infected and infect others<sup>104</sup>. So the fight against HIV/AIDS has to include the idea of more job opportunities for women living in the rural areas. One of the ways that will be used in the fight against HIV/AIDS is by supporting PLWH so that they also can be part of the solution. As we continue discussing this pandemic we will focus on one rural village in South Africa called Marapyane or Skilpadfontein in Afrikaans.

### **3.3. Research findings: interviews with leaders in the community**

In order to understand more about the impact of HIV/AIDS in the Marapyane community and to provide the context for the research about ABCD in a time of HIV/AIDS, the researcher visited some local leaders to ask them how they deal with the pandemic in Marapyane. This involved a series of key informant interviews in the village including pastors, social workers and councillor of Marapyane. Participants were interviewed at different times and in different places in the village and all interviews were done verbally in English and Setswana.

Grace Tseke (the ANC councillor in the village) provided some insights concerning the spread of the virus in the community. She said that,

The issue of HIV/AIDS in Marapyane is a very serious one. People don't accept to go for a test or to listen to the counsel of the doctors and nurses although they are dying and some people don't even believe that it is HIV that is killing people; they say that their neighbours bewitched them. The community knows about the disease but they choose to ignore it and try to identify it with other myths. This will continue to have a negative impact on their lives because people will continue to die and poverty will be sustained as the result of these deaths. Marapyane should learn from other countries that have succeeded in fighting poverty and HIV/AIDS in their communities by taking fast steps towards HIV/AIDS eradication.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Tony, Barnet. and Piers, B. 1992. AIDS in Africa. (London: Belhaver press, 1992) 113

<sup>104</sup> 2005 Class discussion with Dr Beverly Haddad in church and AIDS course at UKZN

<sup>105</sup> Grace Tseke, interviewed by Sabushimike Leonidas on 4/07/2005 at Moretele Parliamentary office

The earlier the community acknowledges that HIV/AIDS is a threat to their well being, the faster the recovery will be. If the majority of people in Marapyane could accept that the pandemic exists in their community then the second phase would be how to eradicate it and its impact. In the interview with the counsellor, Tseke argued that,

There is nothing that could stop people from suffering from HIV until people understand the problems that the pandemic causes in this community. The government cannot do it alone but if we can start from schools, hospitals, house-to-house campaigns and other strategies that can involve the whole community. None can ever stop the spread of HIV. Shops, Butcheries, Bar Lounges and other businessmen and women can contribute money for supporting the projects that are fighting HIV/AIDS in the community.<sup>106</sup>

This councillor knows very well that HIV is spreading like wildfire in the village and she has no hope that anything else could stop it from spreading except that the people who live in this community and their assets are utilised in this fight. Another issue that contributes to the spread of the disease is that prostitution is on the increase. The issue of prostitution has been said to be increasing in the village as result of poverty. Marapyane village has a lot of bar lounges where one finds a lot of young boys and girls drinking beer together. When they are drunk they sleep around without condoms. Three anonymous men (who were between 18 and 25 years of age) were asked if they use condoms when they have sex. All three answered "I use them sometimes but when I'm drunk I forget". One of them stated "I remember a condom only when I wake up in the morning and find that my condom's still in my pocket unused. Then I will know that I did not use it".<sup>107</sup>

After having interviews with the political leader in the village the researcher tried to find out the impact of HIV/AIDS on local communities by organizing some interviews with pastors, nurses and social workers. The interview with Pastor Motau Betuel from Marapyane Baptist Church revealed that the danger of the HIV/AIDS is resulting from urban migration.

Here in Marapyane some cases have shown that parents go to work in the city-leaving children at home alone. This has given more privacy to the children to do whatever they want in the absence of their parents. When parents are not at home for a long time children in Marapyane use the opportunity for sexual relationships

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in Marapyane

<sup>106</sup> Grace Tseke

<sup>107</sup> Anonymous I, interviewed by Sabushimike Leonidas on 18/09/2005 at Marapyane complex.

with their neighbours.<sup>108</sup>

This was confirmed by one anonymous girl who is HIV positive and who said that, "If my mother did not leave us alone at home to go and find a job in Johannesburg, I might not have got this virus".<sup>109</sup>

In this situation it seems that children are given the responsibility of looking after themselves while still young and end up making wrong choices about their lives. This merges with Denis' arguments that "the instability, if not the breakdown of family structures and the subsequent increase in casual sex which follows, accelerates the rate of infection. The combined effects of migrant labour, urbanisation, apartheid and civil war increase the possibility of exposure to the virus."<sup>110</sup> Poor economic conditions of people living in the village push them towards towns and in return, they come home only to die. The migration to the city does not affect parents alone but also children who are left home alone without anyone to guide them in life.

The interview with Father Ambrose Maqobo of the Roman Catholic Church revealed that HIV/AIDS was a problem for the development of the community.

We have some orphans in my church, and we all try our best to help them but people in this village don't want to help because they think it is the work of the church to help PLWHA and their families. The church is using its resources but it is not enough looking at the number of children in need. We have tried to create some gardening project to help children but later we failed because people in the village stopped attending to do this work. It became again my duty on top of other duties that I have here so we had to stop it.<sup>111</sup>

Maqobo added that,

The one way to help PLWHA is to mobilise the church leaders with their resources so that we can work together and see if we could change the mindset of people of this village. People are skilled but they spend time under trees drinking and smoking and they don't want to work. However, mobilising church leaders is also going to be difficult because many local church leaders are not educated. They don't understand things concerning development and they always suspect somebody who is educated because they fear that somebody may take their

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<sup>108</sup> Motau Bethuel, interview conducted by Sabushimike L on 17/10/2005 at Marapyane Baptist church.

<sup>109</sup> Anonymous ii, interview conducted by Sabushimike L. on 17/10/2005 at Marapyane Baptist church

<sup>110</sup> Philip Denis. Sexuality and Aids in South Africa. In the *Journal of theology in South Africa*. ( March 2003), 69

<sup>111</sup> Father Maqobo Ambrose, interview conducted by Sabushimike L. on 24/11/2005 at Roman Catholic Missions in Marapyane.

congregants or take a chance and use their ignorance to enrich him/herself. Therefore if they suspect that we want to make a profit in what we are doing, they will all disappear. Skills can be here but for anyone to give a service without being paid is a challenge.<sup>112</sup>

Eva Sekokotla, a social worker at Empilweni payout station, discussed HIV/AIDS and how community should use their assets in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Sekokotla said that,

The impact of HIV/AIDS on the local community is too serious. Poverty and unemployment are very high and the disease worsens the situation. The most dangerous thing about this disease is that it keeps spreading in this village and killing people who should work and develop Marapyane. Actually I know somebody that has contaminated ten women who have died and because this man has money, he keeps himself strong by getting treatment.<sup>113</sup>

She added that,

HIV/AIDS affect this community in all aspect of life. We don't have community events anymore like we use to have before; these days we just attend funerals. We used to have some days where we had to work in each other's fields. One family would organise traditional beer and food and the members of the community would come and work for another family's field. This is not happening anymore. This was our tradition of working together as community in fighting poverty. It will have to start again because some people are sick and cannot help themselves, so I think that this can help us to support each other.<sup>114</sup>

She worries that,

There is no job creation that can take place here any more because people are getting sick and dying. Schools are affected because teachers are dying, even in business there is a problem because you can sell things but no one can buy because the money goes to buy other things that any HIV person needs. People that are dying are mostly youth who were supposed to develop our village. Look we have a big land here but none can use it because people are lazy and confused. I don't know if it is because of deaths that we are experiencing and others are just sitting down at home doing nothing. In addition, if people continue to die this land will remain alone without any body to use it.<sup>115</sup>

Sikokotla suggested that,

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<sup>112</sup> Father Mqhebo Ambrose

<sup>113</sup> Eva Sekokotla, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 12/08/2005 at Mpelweni grant payout station in Marapyane.

<sup>114</sup> Eva Sekokotla

<sup>115</sup> Eva Sekokotla

We should have more government institutions, NGO's that help people to understand HIV/AIDS and help those who are already infected and affected. People who are living with the virus need some government project in the village that will help them to be productive and benefit the whole community. Our chief and other traditional leaders need to encourage more NGO's and churches to provide some money for loans for people who are HIV positive to start some small businesses. Most of them are very skilled but because they have no money to start their own businesses they go nowhere. The government was supposed to help PLWH to create their own projects of farming in this village.<sup>116</sup>

Stephina Malope who works as social worker in Marapyane argued that

HIV/AIDS is a serious disease that contributes a lot to sustaining poverty in the village. I have also seen however many HIV/AIDS people who have different skills that can be utilised in making Marapyane a better place. PLWHA should have some organisations and find some skilled personnel who could help them to write business proposal so that the government could support them. The church should empower them with skills in administration and business management so that they can be able to access not only grant but also the full financial support from government and other donors. This can help them to create their organisations and fight poverty together with the members of the village.<sup>117</sup>

Sister Suzanne a nurse at Saint Martin Roman Catholic Mission in Marapynae said that,

I have received here at the clinic many HIV patients who have many skills but who are just sitting at home doing nothing. They don't want to do something because they still believe that only the white people or government could provide them with permanent jobs. People don't want to do business that can make a small income for themselves because they are lazy. But also it is not PLWH alone who are lazy, even ourselves who are not HIV positive don't enjoy working in the gardens or doing small business. I have a big land, water and the seed in my house but I have failed to grow vegetables in my yard and I feel happy to buy vegetables from town. I think that apartheid has spoiled our fathers and we are also spoiled because even myself when I was still growing I saw my mother working in town while my father was taking care of us at home. In this village, many men have skills but all wait to be employed in towns and this weakens our fight against poverty in this village.<sup>118</sup>

She has some advice to PLWH in Marapyane:

PLWHA need good and nutritious food. Look, our land is unused and no one can say why people are lazy. Things need to change because if we don't change we will die poor. Some PLWHA may need to do some gardening but they may not have

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<sup>116</sup> Eva Sekokotla

<sup>117</sup> Stephina Malope, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 12/12/2005 at Chikanoshi.

<sup>118</sup> Suzanne Dimpe, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 12/12/2005 at Roman Catholic Mission's clinic.

money to buy seeds. However, this is not a problem because we are living in the village and everyone knows everyone else. If people who need money can go to these business people like Molai Shopping Centre or Maseding Store, they can ask for some loans that can help them to buy seeds. The issue here is having a vision - the resources are here but they are not used.<sup>119</sup>

According to Prudence Shaku (a sister to a mother who has HIV/AIDS and care giver at Mmamethlake Family Care Centre), she finds it difficult to care for somebody who has HIV/AIDS because of its cost. She started accusing men for being helpless. She said that,

The husbands are not helping us in the village to care for PLWHA. They just spend time drinking under trees and coming back home asking for food. If we were all working together in caring for the sick then there could be no complaints. I think PLWHA need to do all their best and work hard to provide some things that will help them when they start getting sick. The reason I say this is that these people have skills but don't know how to use them and where to use them. We are all sitting down here doing nothing, unemployment is very high and we have the land but we can't even use it. In order to change this I think that we need someone who can come in and help us to move slowly. May be we can learn to enjoy working in the field. We all know that a farmer has to be a white man and we can only be employed by him/her. This is wrong because now we have no choice since HIV is among us.<sup>120</sup>

She also came up with some suggestions to the burial societies in Marapyane,

Most of us belong to stokvels societies. We collect money to buy food and pay for the funeral services, and this has been for years so we can't change this because it has become part of our culture. One day somebody was suggesting that we could use this money to buy some equipment for farming in order to create jobs for people. Nevertheless, I'm not sure if this can work in Marapyane because people don't trust projects that are not initiated by the government.<sup>121</sup>

Pastor Swartbooi Sivuyile of the Universal Church in Marapyane stated in an interview that they have a number of people living with HIV/AIDS.

We support PLWHA with prayer and counselling. The church also gives them food parcels, clothes, and other things from the donations that the church members bring. Nevertheless, we don't know until when this kind of donations will keep going. But I think that the church and other NGO's should provide some equipment that PLWH could use to produce food for themselves because in this village there is a lot of unused land. The government should help these people by giving out some grant. This though is not enough because PLWHA are doing nothing in this

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<sup>119</sup> Suzanne Dimpe

<sup>120</sup> Shaku Prudence, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 8/09/2005 at her home in Marapyane.

<sup>121</sup> Shaku Prudence

village – they would just sit down and wait for that grant. The government should help to initiate some organisations that should help PLWHA to make some income.<sup>122</sup>

Among other NGO's working in Marapyane is the Marapyane Development Centre (MDC) that has an office at Kwa Mocha, the tribal office. The interview with Marapyane Development Centre co-ordinator Lorraine Dire took place at her home in Marapyane. She stated that,

First was to know people who are living with HIV/AIDS and find out how they are living and see what the project can do to help. It was obvious that PLWHA have skills and we thought of how these skills need to be utilised in the fight against HIV/AIDS and poverty so we had to start a support group. MDC is trying to use ABCD in dealing with the issues that are caused by HIV in Marapyane. Moreover, we have decided to allow members of the support group to initiate some projects and submit them to the board of MDC so that they can have access to some support. MDC will not start any projects for people living with HIV/AIDS but they will support the ideas that will come from people themselves.<sup>123</sup>

When asked why MDC involved itself in development with PLWHA who are going to die anytime and how they are doing so, Dire answered

People living with HIV are not going to die anytime; it will all depend on how they behave themselves after testing positive. And with the use of the Anti-Retro Viral treatment they can live much longer and productive lives. From what I have seen is that there is a great need of empowerment among PLWHA, especially women. The reason is to try to discourage the idea of depending on their boyfriends, which makes them vulnerable and to do things for themselves. Skills development is needed so that in the future they may be more productive. Some of them feel like they need to be employed by somebody, which is not very helpful, because they may wait for a long time for any opportunity.

PLWH in the village need human resources and training in different areas, MDC has some members with some skills who are willing to share them with PLWH. Education is the basic concern in the whole process of community development in the HIV/AIDS era. MDC has objectives to help people to turn their skills into something practical, people have skills but these skills are not well oriented in development. We have one member who is skilled in agriculture and this man can help those who want to do some farming in order to know what kind of crops they can plant. Our policy is that we are not going to feed people with fish but we need to teach people how to fish for themselves. We want to see PLWH coming up with ideas that can improve their lives and that will allow them to own the project in this way we believe that the project can be sustainable.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Pastor Swartbooi Sivuyile, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 18/09/2005 at the Universal Church in Marapyane.

<sup>123</sup> Lorraine Sabushimike, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 8/07/2005 in Marapyane.

<sup>124</sup> Lorraine Dikote Sabushimike.

Drawing from these interviews with Marapyane church leaders, a political leader, a social worker and nurses we can see that HIV/AIDS is a challenge in the community that needs to be dealt with in order to achieve development. Apart from the disease that is taking the resources from the community, the culture and tradition of *ubuntu* that existed among people living in the same community has been affected.

The church has been shown to be trying with little effect to deal with poverty in Marapyane. There is now a need to change the strategy in the fight against poverty and HIV in Marapyane as the MDC coordinator has said by supporting the agency and the use of the assets of PLWH. After identifying HIV/AIDS as a serious problem in the community these leaders still believe that something can be done to reverse the situation. Malope Stephinah invites the church to re-empower those who are already infected so that they can help others and themselves. And this is the idea that is going to dominate the following chapters.

Before we get there, however, we need to analyse what we found in the interviews with the key informants so that we can build up a picture of the context in Marapyane at present.

### **3.4. Analysis of key findings of leaders in Marapyane community**

#### **3.4.1. Urban/rural migration**

Drawing from the interviews with pastor Bethuel Motau and father Ambrose Mabebo it has shown that in South Africa, families that have moved to town looking for jobs are more vulnerable in HIV/AIDS infection for both those migrating and those remaining behind, especially children. But the truth is that few jobs are found in towns and when they reach there they get involved in other activities that put them in danger of infections and they come back in the village only to be taken care by the family they have left behind.

This urban migration has also involved the majority of young people who are trained with different skills, and graduates. They are moving to towns looking for jobs and very few of them choose to stay in the village and some of them find it better to suffer in town rather than in the rural areas. They say “in town for sure one day you will catch something but in the village you will die poor because there are no opportunities like in towns”. The development of rural South Africa including the agency of PLWH could be hard as skills and resources of the village keep moving towards rich areas.

The gap between the rich and the poor, injustice and marginalisation are noted to be real problems of development in rural South Africa. The poor living conditions have caused Marapyane village to lose many people who migrate to town looking for better lives and get infected with HIV/AIDS before they return to be buried here in the village. Moving towards town is not the solution to poverty alleviation because we can see that this can create and deepen the poverty that someone thinks he is trying to solve.

#### **3.4.2. Helplessness**

Drawing from the interview with Sister Suzanne (a nurse at Saint Martin Roman Catholic Mission in Marapyane) and Shaku, there is a problem of helplessness among people who live in Marapyane - those that have HIV/AIDS and others. She highlighted that PLWH have skills but some of them are just sitting at home doing nothing. She said that these people don't want to do something because they still believe that only the white people or government could provide them with permanent jobs and loans. They forget however that

no one can give loans to somebody that does not know how he/she will pay them back. People don't want to work at a business that can provide a small income for them because they feel helpless. If this should be true then HIV/AIDS will worsen the situation because if people are helpless and don't want to work, it will be hard for them to fight poverty because HIV/AIDS increases their burden.

Marapyane has land, water and seeds but people would rather buy vegetables from town than grow vegetables in their yards. Sister Suzanne thinks that the historical background of this country has also contributed in this helplessness. For example, her father used to take care of them while their mother worked for whites in Pretoria. People don't want to work (especially men), and every morning one finds them drinking and sitting under trees. Support groups / projects consist primarily of women, not men. The tradition of men relaxing during working time is not a good habit in the fight against poverty in South Africa and this will have to change because HIV/AIDS is worsening the situation in rural areas.

People in Marapyane still have the opportunity to become what they want to become by considering themselves as agents of their own development. Buying food in town is not wrong, but why choose to buy food in town (one that is far away from their community) when they can produce the same food in their community? This helplessness is caused by the lack of vision from the community and the culture of the men who want to spend time drinking rather than working and helping their families as Shaku pointed out.

The interview with Shaku has also shown that HIV/AIDS increases the burden upon the poor women living in the rural areas. The challenge that the pandemic brings in the communities is that men are just sitting at home when women keep running around doing home care for PLWHA. Women who are already overwhelmed by family duties find themselves over working day and night. In fact, men are not active in the fight against HIV and poverty; they only want to have good positions in the projects and dictate what needs to be done by women. Actually they do nothing! This can have a negative impact towards the development of the community as men and women may not work together using the available resources to reach to their development goals.

Young people who are spending time at the bar lounge drinking and smoking dagga go there because they presume that there is nothing they can do at their homes. This however

is not true. There is a lot they can do but they have no vision for the future. This mindset needs to be changed. Possibly engaging them in associations that are involved in community development could help to reduce the number of people who are unemployed, poverty-stricken, moving around etc. and this could help decrease the number of people being infected with HIV/AIDS. The idea of job creation can help in the fight against HIV/AIDS to reduce the infection among youths and fight poverty.

### **3.4.3. Government policy concerning development**

In rural South Africa where the historical background of this country keeps showing its effects, ABCD and the agency of PLWH continue to reveal problems caused by the unchanged mindset of people. Apartheid has finished and HIV/AIDS is now killing and causing poverty. Are we going to wait until the last person dies in order for people to believe in themselves? When are rural South Africans going to stand on their feet and fight against poverty seriously? People were promised much during the first election in 1994 and they are still waiting for the government to deliver. In this time of HIV/AIDS the government will be challenged to change its statements from doing for people to people doing for themselves. Burning tyres and closing roads will not solve poverty until people decide to work together for the benefit of everyone.

After 1994 there was a promise of a better life as well as jobs for all whites and blacks. Due to these promises rural South Africans have shifted their mindsets from self-dependency to government dependency. This has contributed to making people poorer than they expected during the struggle because many people don't want to do anything, as they believe that all development activities are the government's duties.

According to my interviewees many people think of quickly making money rather than spending time farming that could boost the economy of the village. At least if people made money and spent it in shops in the village it would contribute to supporting the economy of the village. Nevertheless, the village is poor, and all money that comes from town goes back to town. This cycle sustains poverty in the community.

Due to its promises to deliver services to people rather than people being producers of the services for their own benefits, the government has caused some problems especially among PLWH. Some people will find it hard to cope with their HIV/AIDS situation

because a sudden change from government dependency to self-dependency becomes a problem. Van Der Water has argued that “poor themselves, precisely because of their historical experience of sustained deprivation, repression and exclusion find it extremely difficult to organise themselves in ways that they could make their plight known and heard by those able to significantly alter their circumstances. The poor in South African context are still very much with us and amongst us”.<sup>125</sup> In another way people are still deprived and excluded from economic participation because the government want to do everything for them. This makes them patients, consumers and subjects of development rather than agents.

The agency of PLWH will be ineffective in rural South Africa in the era of HIV/AIDS if the government does not change its development approach to community development. No one will work for the interest of the whole community when they believe that it is the government’s job. Coming with the idea of ABCD looks like you want to make things more difficult for people – why should people organise themselves for development while the government have promised to deliver services? Therefore, when you call people for any community work they will first look at how much they will benefit before they do anything because they believe that it is the government’s duty to work for people.

#### **3.4.4. Consequences of handouts approach**

Father Maqebob has found it hard to run projects among the community because people were not able to attend to them. The challenge that he has encountered is the consequences of his formal approach to development when he tried to help by giving handouts to the people. This has made them sit down because they knew that the work of the priest and the church is to provide for poor people. This has contributed to creating a dependency syndrome among church members and the community as a whole. Now he needs more effort to change his developmental approach otherwise people will not understand the importance of their own agency.

Furthermore, the idea of who initiated the project is very important. Because people themselves did not initiate this project, it has failed. People were followers and in so

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<sup>125</sup> Desmond van Der Water. “A legacy for Contextual Theology: Prophetic Theology and the Challenge of the Kairos”. In McGlory Speckman and Larry Kaufmann. *Towards an agenda for contextual theology*. Essays in honour of Albert Nolan (Pietermaritzburg: cluster publication, 2001)48-49

doing they become tired very fast and wish to give up. So people did not fail as father explains but father's approach to development has failed and contributed to the failure of the whole project. Doing development in that way is not advised as we have seen. It is suggested that development be rooted among people and allow people to be the initiators rather than followers. This is in keeping with the vision of the Marapyane Development Centre because in the interviews with its coordinator the idea of telling people what they need to do is not on the agenda. People need to think for themselves and do for themselves. They just guide them and wait for them to conclude with their own decision about what they want do.

#### **3.4.5. HIV/AIDS changes the culture and people's tradition**

The interview with Sekokotla has shown that HIV/AIDS increases poverty because it affects people who are active and productive. It also changes the culture of the society because people are not meeting any more for community works, rather they meet for funerals. This needs to be changed so that community members can meet to discuss what they need to do about this pandemic and think about how they can eradicate poverty together. The idea of starting some kind of cooperatives and associations should be the first step to development because in these organizations people will meet to discuss the problems of the community and how they can find solutions.

The issue of the unused land was highlighted because people don't use their land anymore because maybe they think that there is no hope for tomorrow. The land is used only to bury the members of the community. Sekokotla highlights the need to use the local business people by asking for loans that can contribute to buying seeds and farming equipment that may keep the community busy and productive.

#### **3.4.6. Conclusion**

We have looked into the basic issue of HIV/AIDS in Marapyane and South Africa and we have built upon the overview of leaders of Marapyane community and analysed some key issues and findings. Next chapter looks at how PLWH survive in this era of HIV/AIDS and finds out if we can still promote their agency and assets at this point.

## **Chapter IV**

### **The interviews with PLWH in Marapyane, findings and analysis**

As we have noted above, the focus of this thesis is the question whether ABCD is still an appropriate model in a time when communities in South Africa is grappling with a serious HIV and AIDS epidemic. In chapter three we have reviewed the context of HIV and AIDS in the community of Marapyane. Now we are in a position to explore the research question directly in relationship to people living with HIV, which is the focus of this chapter. We will present the research process and questions, and then the findings. The second half of the chapter will analyse the findings in order to answer the research question.

#### **4.1. Research overview**

The research was undertaken through open-ended interviews with nineteen people living with HIV in Marapyane. Each interview took at least thirty minutes. All participants were given the choice to sign a consent form or to give verbal consent. Participants were allowed to withdraw at any point. All participants were promised that all answers were going to be held in strict confidentiality, and that their names would not appear anywhere in any research report.

The following ten questions provided a structure for the open-ended interviews:

1. Please tell me a little bit about yourself.
2. Please tell me about your participation in the HIV/AIDS support group.
3. How do you survive day to day with food, clothing, shelter, etc?
4. How does your situation affect your productivity?
5. What skills do you have and how do you use them?
6. What goals do you have for the future, and how do you plan to achieve them?
7. What do you think the government could do to help your situation?
8. What do you think the community could do to help your situation?
9. What do you think the church could do to help your situation?
10. What do you think you could do to help your situation?

The nineteen people living with HIV included people attached to the Marapyane Development Centre Support Group in Marapyane, and some who were living around the community but had not yet joined any support group. The issue of anonymity of the participants was a strong feature of the research and the consent form was arranged so to ensure that the anonymity of the participants was not violated. This however did not overcome all the difficulties presented in the research, as some participants still did not feel free to sign the consent form. They were happy to give their support in the interviews but not to sign anything. Those participants who had not yet disclosed their status to everybody found the interviews hard and were not willing to disclose their full names and surnames in order to keep control over disclosure. Nevertheless, once trust had been established with the researcher, they were more than willing to proceed with the interviews.

Participants were interviewed at different times and in different places in the village and all interviews were done verbally in Setswana and English. When participants were not fluent in English, an interpreter was available to help. The discussions were recorded in writing by the researcher during the interviews, and were then typed in full. The agency of PLWH and the assets found among PLWH in Marapyane was classified and reviewed in order to find out if the agency of PLWH in the rural areas in South Africa was possible. Classification of the assets identified should assist the church to identify ways in which it could help in promoting effective agency of PLWH in the rural South Africa.

The sample size was relatively small compared with the number of people PLWHA living in the area, and this limits the generalizability of the data, although the findings are used to make generalizations about the whole community.

## 4.2. Research findings: People living with HIV/AIDS

4.2.1 *M. N*, a 25 years old mother of one boy who knew her HIV status since 2004.

I was getting sick almost every week and I had to drop my job because I could not perform well at work any longer. I worked as a trained secretary in Pretoria for more than two years. I'm also good in sewing with the machine and I am computer literate. I did modelling and beauty contests at school. However, unfortunately I never used these skills before because I did not find the relevant job. The reason why I stopped working is because when I was pregnant I kept getting sick and I had to stop working because my boss was not happy for I was absent many times. HIV related TB infection took me out of the job (she said with some tears in her eyes). I would like to run my own business in the future using my skills so that when I die my son might continue to survive with it. The community, the church and the government should support us by creating projects that may help us to cope with this situation. I have skills but I have no money to start something on my own.<sup>126</sup>

4.2.2 *D. L* is 31 years old. She lives in Marapyane and is the mother of one child. She knew her HIV status in 2000.

In the support group I'm the chairperson of BASTHA (Bafenyi Support Team against HIV and AIDS) Bafenyi means Victors in English. I'm also a volunteer in MDC. I survive day to day through church support because I hold some duties in the church, government grant, and I also receive support from my husband. I use this support to buy food, clothes and to meet other needs for my daughter and myself. My situation affect my productivity because I cannot go far looking for jobs and sometimes I get sick and consult private doctors and this takes a lot of money. The monthly collection of anti-retroviral at the hospital costs me transport money and time due to very long queues at Mmamethlake hospital. Every time I want to do something I find myself without money because money is just running out of my pocket all the time. I don't also eat any kind of food because I'm advised to eat good and balanced food and this requires money, which I sometimes don't have.

My situation has affected my productivity because I find it hard to save money. The resources that I have include a plot, the house, and a teaching diploma and I'm a counsellor in MDC and I have a degree in community development. I use my skills at my church and in MDC to serve the community. In the future I want to run an NGO here in Marapyane that deals with HIV/AIDS and poverty in order to improve lives of people of Marapyane. To achieve this I will have to work with other institutions that exist here and I will apply for government support. The government should organize some community development projects and allow PLWA to be part of that even in leadership, and teach our community that PLWH are still part of this community to avoid discrimination against us. The help I need from the community is to be accepted not considered as just a woman who causes shame to family and the community. The church is in the better position to support us with loans, training and acceptance so that

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<sup>126</sup> *M. N*, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 5 January 2006 at the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) in Marapyane.

we can also be competent like other members of the community. My focus will be on using my skills in order to achieve my goals.<sup>127</sup>

4.2.3 *L.M* lives in Maseding section in Marapyane and is a 20-year-old mother of a 3-year-old boy. They are both HIV positive and were tested late in 2005.

I found it hard to prosper with the virus in my body because I always fear that I can die at any time. I'm surviving day to day by my child grant, the support from my mother who is working in town and my boy friend's support. My situation does not affect my productivity because I'm not yet sick I only fear to die. Another concern is that my son is always sick. The resources I have are my mother's small piece of land around our house. I have many skills. I'm good in cooking, gardening and what I enjoy most is taking care of other people old age people and the sick. I will apply these skills in BASTHA where we are organizing some income-generating project for ourselves. We plan to do catering for weddings, funerals and other functions around the community. This will help me to make money for the whole team and myself.

I'm a volunteer and a board member of MDC but also the member of support group; I use my skills in MDC HIV/AIDS project. My future plan is to be a nurse; I'm planning to go back to school to finish my matric so that I can become a nurse. I also think to do gardening but this is very hard in this village because the soil is very sandy, so gardening requires a lot of equipments and this requires more money, which I can't access. The government, the church should help us with some loans to buy equipment for farming. If the community does not come together with PLWH in founding projects we will not overcome poverty. What I can do to help in my situation is to use my skills and work hard with other PLWH in Marapyane so that my son may not suffer when I die.<sup>128</sup>

4.2.4 *V. M* is a mother of five children who tested positive in 2001. She lives in Marapyane and receives her ARV from a private clinic in Johannesburg where she was working as a domestic worker during 2001.<sup>129</sup>

I'm the member of BASTHA and I attend meetings for our project. I also do presentations at the hospitals, churches, and other gatherings. I survive day to day with support from the government grant, and the support from my husband who works in Durban. My HIV/AIDS situation does not affect my productivity because I use ARV that gives more strength to work. But the problem I have is with my heart attack and this causes less productivity for me because I always have to be careful when I'm doing some work. I have a house and the piece of land where I do a little bit of ploughing around my house when there is rain otherwise I'm not working I stay home and look after my children.

The goal I have for the future is to start my own business through my support group. I

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<sup>127</sup> D. L, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 5 January 2006 at the RCM in Marapyane.

<sup>128</sup> L. M, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 5 January 2006 at the RCM in Marapyane.

<sup>129</sup> V. M, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 5 January 2005 at the RCM in Marapyane.

will achieve this by working with other community members including my support group members (Bastha). The government could help us by supporting our business initiatives. Also to help us plan for the future of our children after our death by giving them free education up to tertiary levels. The church could give us training, and loans. In order to help in my situation I will need more training, get registered as a consultant and earn for my work in the field of HIV/AIDS.

4.2.5 *M.* is a 25 year old mother of a two-year old boy. She was tested for HIV/AIDS in 2004 and is currently on TB treatment. She has recently broken up with her boyfriend.

I live day by day with the support from my parents, I'm not working anywhere, and I use my grant to buy food, clothes and fortunately I live in my parent's house. My situation has affected me because I was working in Johannesburg and stopped because I kept getting sick. I have some skills I know sewing, computer skills and I worked as receptionist for 4years in Johannesburg. I don't use my skills because I have no money to buy some materials for sewing. I'm planning to use my sewing and computer skills in establishing our business in BASTHA. I also think of furthering my studies so that we can establish a trust fund to support children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. As soon as BASTHA business works I will make some money that can help me to register at the college. The government should support us with some funding for our project. The community and the church could accept to work with us and give us support of loans, gardening equipments and other resources.<sup>130</sup>

4.2.6 *P. L* is a single parent and is new in the BASTHA support group. She is a voluntary pre-school teacher and contributes financially to the BASTHA establishment

I survive day to day by the remuneration I get from the Pre School where I teach. My situation does not affect my productivity yet because I'm not sick. Concerning my skills I'm a teacher and I have my father's land. My future goal is to further my studies and I will achieve this goal by saving some money from my salary. The government is doing its best because they provide grants; financial assistance for project only the problem is that the process is too long and very complicated. The church and the community could help us by speaking out against discrimination of PLWHA and to advocate against all kinds of abuse. In my situation I will continue to empower myself in order to achieve much before I get sick.<sup>131</sup>

4.2.7 *M. K* is a 29-year-old mother of a four-year-old child. She lives in Marapyane and her interview took place on 13 February at the MDC office from 09h00 to 10h00. She has disclosed her status to her friends, one of her sisters, and a brother.

I survive day to day by doing sewing; the money I earn is used for my basic needs. As for my shelter I am still living with my parents. My situation has little effect on my productivity because I'm am still healthy and strong except for some emotional

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<sup>130</sup> M, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 5 January 2005 at RCM in Marapyane.

<sup>131</sup> P. L, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 5 January 2005 at RCM.

constraints. I have some dressmaking, hair dressing and catering skills. My father's land is also available for vegetable farming in the future. My future goals are to register my business, find the market for my products and my hair salon to create some jobs for others. To achieve these goals I will need to ask for the loan. I think the government and banks should make loans available for the poor rural communities. The church and the community should fight stigma, encourage disclosure, and support those that have already disclosed their status. Assist us in raising funds to support our works. To help in my situation I plan to work harder and save more money to sponsor my support group.

4.2.8 *Anonymous I* is a 22-year-old mother and is a registered student at Pretoria Technical College (and is third among five children at her home). She found out that she was HIV positive in 2005. She is not a member of a support group as yet, but is receiving ongoing counselling through MDC.

I survive through my parents, brothers and sisters support and I sometimes sell in my grand fathers shop. My situation affects me mostly because I have not disclosed to my parents. I'm good in doing business, computer and I'm doing well at school. I'm planning to start an Internet cafe and wish to resume my studies in 2007. My goal in the future is to complete my diploma in business and start my own business through seed funding that my parent has saved for me. The government should create more opportunities for PLWH to participate in projects aimed at addressing their needs. The community should stop stigma and create space for disclosure. The church should stop the judgemental attitude towards PLWH. What I can do to help in my situation is to deal with my personal issues in order to face external environmental pressures.<sup>132</sup>

4.2.9 *J. M* is a 32-year-old mother of 3 children aged 5, 3, and 1 years respectively. She found out about her status during her last pregnancy.

I participate in MDC's fund raising activities. I survive day to day through children grants and family support because I'm not employed and I'm not qualified for HIV grant. I'm surviving under my grandmother's roof and sometimes my boyfriend support the child. I'm skilled in dancing, drama, singing and doing some domestic duties. My skills are not actively used but the MDC plan to use them for HIV campaigns. I'm planning to find a job and make some money. The government should create more jobs. The church should help the government to find jobs for poor people. What I can do to her in this situation I'm thinking of doing gardening to sustain my family but no money for equipments.<sup>133</sup>

4.2.10 *J. N* is a 21-year-old woman and an orphan. She has four siblings and they have lost both parents. The elder sister is the one taking care of her and her other sisters. She was raped in 2005 and later tested HIV positive. She dropped out of school in grade ten

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<sup>132</sup> Anonymous i, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 20 November 2005 at RCM in Marapyane.

<sup>133</sup> J. M, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 12 January 2006 at her home in Marapyane.

for mental health reasons.

In the HIV/AIDS support group I attend workshops and other business of the support group. On daily basis I survive by my elder sister's support. She tries to cater for my clothes, food, and other needs from her domestic worker's salary. My situation does not affect me because I have not really accepted the results. I have some choir singing skills, and domestic duties but I can also do anything like small business. The resources that I have are the houses that we are living in with my sisters, and the land but these resources are not utilised to make any sort of income. In the future I want to become a nurse and in order to achieve this I will have to attend a first aid course and see if my sister can help me to go further. The government could help us in creating jobs and support our visions. The community and the church could help in getting involved more in HIV/AIDS related ministries. In order for me to help in my situation I will have to live positively so that I can see one day my dreams becoming true of being a nurse.<sup>134</sup>

4.2.11 *J. N* is 37 years old man. He was born in Pietersburg and went to school there. He came to live in Marapyane when he was still young. He receives counselling from the Marapyane Health Clinic (MHC).<sup>135</sup>

I don't belong to any support group and I'm living with my parents who help me to live day to day and I some times sell Mogodu (the intestines of the cow) and get some money to buy food and clothes. My situation does not give me any problem because I'm not yet sick my problem now is unemployment. I don't have resources except the land of my father, but I have some business skills and I survive because of that. My goal in the future is to find money and run big business that can make big income so that I can change my life. In order to reach to this goal I will continue to sell Mogodu with the hope that one-day I will reach to where I want too.

I don't belong to any community organization in that way I cannot find any support even if I die but I wish I could get some money to start business. The government should support us with some more grants that go beyond 200 CD4 count. Also they could help us with some loans so that we can start selling. I belong to apostolic church, I think the Church and the community should help me with some money for loans and donations to start my business but I have not asked from anyone the money. I don't blame the church and community but they should help us with that.<sup>136</sup>

4.2.12 *E. S* is a single mother of 4 children and is the counsellor at the Marapyane Health Centre.

I have no support group and day-to-day I survived by a support from my boyfriend and parents, I also have children grants. I work as a volunteer counsellor at this centre and

<sup>134</sup> *J. N*, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 20 February 2005 in Marapyane.

<sup>135</sup> *J. N* ii, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 22 February 2005 at MHC.

<sup>136</sup> *J. N* is one of the few men living with HIV in Marapyane and who has accepted to live openly with the virus.

my situation does not affect me at any extend because I'm still strong for the work. I have no resources but I have some skills like gardening, sewing with machines, artist and I have finished my metric in 1995. I don't use my skills except the one of counselling that I apply here at the clinic. I wish I could continue to help PLWH in the future and in order to achieve this I will continues to love my job.

The government should continue to use social services to continue distributing food parcels to PLWH, and encourage more private organizations to help PLWH with food, clothes, and other support. The government should continue to encourage MATA "Mpumalanga Aids and TB Association" to continue giving for to PLWH. The church should provide spiritual support to PLWH; raise funds and food parcels for PLWH. Community members should give us their backyards land for gardening and fruits growing also where we can build hospices so that we can give more dignity to PLWHA who are about to die. Myself I can contribute with my skills soon as the projects start here in Marapyane.<sup>137</sup>

4.2.13 R. R is 34 years old and is a single mother of 2 children.

I have no support group and I participate in HIV/AIDS counselling work. I survive day to day with support I get from my parents and sisters because I'm not employed anywhere else. My situation does not affect my productivity because I'm still well. I have no resources but I have some skills like Gardening, and computer literacy. I do not use these skills because I did not find any job around. My future goal is to make a gardening project and I will get the money from the government loan. Looking at the way HIV/AIDS is killing people the government should create more jobs for PLWH because they are able to work.

The Church should organise food parcels for PLWH and raise funds for those who want to run they own business. The community and the chief of Marapyane need to know more about HIV/AIDS to stop discriminating PLWH. Also create projects that should keep youth very busy in order to stop them from drinking and smoking dagga. The chief should call the community meetings and talk to them about HIV/AIDS and encourage the community to work with PLWH in different projects.<sup>138</sup>

4.2.14 *Anonymous II* is a student at Tswane University of Technology and the mother of a 6-month-old son. Her interview was via telephone and a friend who works with her father at a local secondary school posted a consent form. The signed consent form was sent through hand post on 21 February 2006. These were her answers:

I have just joined the support group, which I tend to participate in. I will share my fears, views, experiences and the knowledge. I 'm under parents care and I have a full support of food, cloths, and shelter. My situation has not disturbed my productivity in any form. Among the skills that I have I'm a good cook, computer literate, typist and I know a bit about hairdressing. With most of my focus on studying I don't have much

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<sup>137</sup> E. S, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 20 February 2005 at Marapyane clinic

<sup>138</sup> R. R, interview conducted by Sabushimike L on 22 February 2006 at Marapyane clinic.

time to practise my talents. My goal is to finish school and find a job and grow my child I will also like to teach people who are stereotyped about my situation. I don't have much faith in the government I hold the view that it has failed a lot so I don't see what the government can do. The church and the community should help by loving, caring, and visiting those who are in need like PLWH. They should try not to be judgemental, listen and accept to learn and personally I don't think I can help.<sup>139</sup>

4.2.15 *C. M* is a single mother with one child. She is unemployed and dropped out of school in grade ten. She was tested for HIV/AIDS on the same day of her interview at Mmamethlake Hospital.

I do not have a support group yet because I have just tested now, I have been surviving by the support from my mother who is a pensioner because my father died. My situation did not affect any of my productivity; my greatest concern is that I'm not employed. About my skills, I'm good in running, singing but I have never used these skills in any competition because in the village we are far from potential opportunities therefore these skills are not really beneficial. In the future I want to attend computer classes and try to find a job. In order to achieve this goal I will ask my boyfriend for financial assistance but I'm not sure because he is not trustworthy. I don't know what the government could do to help in this situation but I'm happy that they give us some ARVs that prolong our lives. The community needs to know more about HIV/AIDS and protect themselves against the virus so that we cannot all die. The church should teach more about this disease so that we can also teach other youth about HIV/AIDS. We can also have more centres where people discuss about HIV and work together in order to fight poverty and this disease. I belong to a burial society where we keep contributing small money to cater for my burial needs.”<sup>140</sup>

4.2.16 *M. L* was born in 1961 and is a mother of three children also living in Marapyane.

I don't belong to any support group. I used to work as a domestic worker for a farmer. I am now surviving just by grace because I do not have any income. I have my small house. My situation does not affect me yet poverty does. I cannot do farming anymore because my shack is not fenced. In the future I want to have access to a grant or a government house. This is very difficult because I don't have an Identity Document and because of that I can't access any government grants. In order to achieve this goal I will have to do all my best and get an ID so that I can have all forms of government assistance.

The government should not stop giving us the grant for children and disability grants. The church should help with some money to fence my field because the donkeys jump into my field and graze all my vegetables. The community should understand us because we wish to work hard but we are too weak last year my stokvel or community association dropped me out of the organization because I have spent many months without paying my contribution. The community needs to help us and our children may be they should work in our field sometimes once per week. In order to help in my

<sup>139</sup> Anonymous ii, interview conducted by Sabushimike L on 12 February 2006 in Mrapyane.

<sup>140</sup> C. M, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 23 February 2006 at Mmamethlake hospital.

situation I will continue to rely on my farming work and doing some small domestic duties in order to survive.<sup>141</sup>

4.2.17 *F. M* was born in Marapyane and has his house and family in Marapyane. He is currently living in Soshanguve near Pretoria and is planning to come back home since he is getting sick all the time. He refused to sign a consent form.

I don't belong to any support group because I don't trust support groups, for day to day I was living by work in Soshanguve but I have decided to stop working and try to organise some papers for an early pension. My situation has affected my productivity a lot because now my feet are painful, I have TB and I have lost my job because of HIV/AIDS. I have no resources since I started getting sick I have use all the money to survive and I was working in the factory in Soshanguve. The future goal is to find my early pension and use the money to run small business in Soshanguve not in Marapyane because Marapyane is a rural area so I can't manage to survive here. The government should continue supporting us with project that can help us to survive. The church and the community should stop stigmatizing us and help us to live positively in this era of HIV/AIDS. To help in my situation I will have try all my best and run small business because I'm not working any more and keep getting sick.<sup>142</sup>

4.2.18 *S. M* is a teenage mother with a seven month old baby. She found out that she and her baby were HIV positive when her baby kept getting sick. She lives in Lifiso in Marapyane. She has refused to sign any paper including the consent form.

I'm not in a support group but I plan to organise one in my area, for day to day I survive by the support of my parents. My situation has not yet affected my productivity because I'm still strong. Among the resources that I have is my fathers land; I have more skills in organising speeches that motivate other teenagers in my area to test for HIV/AIDS, and encourage those that are pregnant to breastfeed. My future plan is to go to school and finish my studies and work for an organization that deals with HIV/AIDS. I think the government should respond seriously to HIV/AIDS and its impact on local community. By creating more opportunities for PLWHA to have at least something they can put on the table for their families. The church and the community should help by encouraging me to live positively so that I cannot infect others. They also need to be with us in our daily straggle for living. In order to help in my situation I will have to go back to school and finish then I will know that I can care for myself in the future.<sup>143</sup>

4.2.19 *P. C*, she is 23 years old and the mother of one child and currently living Diepsloot. She passed her standard 9 in 2003 and she is an orphan and started working at

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<sup>141</sup> M. L, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 23 February 2006 at Mmametlhake Hospital.

<sup>142</sup> F. M, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 23 February 2006 at Mmametlhake Hospital.

<sup>143</sup> S. M, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas on 23 February 2003 at Mmametlhake Hospital.

a crèche as a general worker.

P.C tested HIV positive in 2003 while pregnant and since then she has been involved in helping the crèche with some activities of gardening and some times working for some catering companies in Johannesburg. After building a shack for herself and her daughter she is planning to apply for an RDP house. She is not yet affected by her situation of being HIV positive and she is planning to start her own crèche in the same area where she is working in partnership with some of her friends. And the primary focus of her crèche is on the orphans of HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable children in the community. She asks the government to remember people like her who is an orphan and living with HIVirus, by providing some funds that can help her to fulfil her vision. She said that the community and the church should help her with some constructive ideas and loans that can help her to reach her goals of having her own crèche. <sup>144</sup>

### **4.3. Analysis of interview findings**

It is clear from the interviews that all interviewees are optimistic that although things are not going well with PLWH at the moment some thing can be done to improve the life of the whole community through their assets. PLWH have identified some areas that they find very problematic in the fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS. They also suggested what they thought needs to be done in order to provide a sustainable approach to poverty alleviation among PLWH. But PLWH also are very optimistic that if they can be accepted as part of the community then they can do well in their development activities. As we analyse the findings, we first look at the assets that are available in Marapyane community.

#### **4.3.1. The Resources and Skills Found Among PLWH in Marapyane**

The findings among PLWH from the interviews revealed that the Marapyane village has a lot of potential that can make development possible without waiting for the expert development workers. PLWH in the village have many assets that can be used to improve the lives of the community members. Resources and skills that were found among PLWH in Marapyane included:

- Skills:
  - Some are teachers, dressmakers, small business people, caterers, domestic workers, singers, and receptionists. Some are computer literate and others are able to

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<sup>144</sup> P. C, interview conducted by Sabushimike Leonidas at RCM on 22 March 2006.

garden and sew.

- Basic Resources:

- Houses, land, underground water, electricity, roads.

- Other Resources:

- PLWH have access to financial capital like child care grants, disability grants, support from their partners, parents and other relatives, small businesses involving sewing, selling of products, cloths, curtains, or selling fruits. They often belong in community organizations "stokvel" and burial societies that provide money for funerals and weddings.

- PLWH have facilities that can help them to access the resources from other communities i.e. roads, transport, taxi and government buses, use of donkeys.

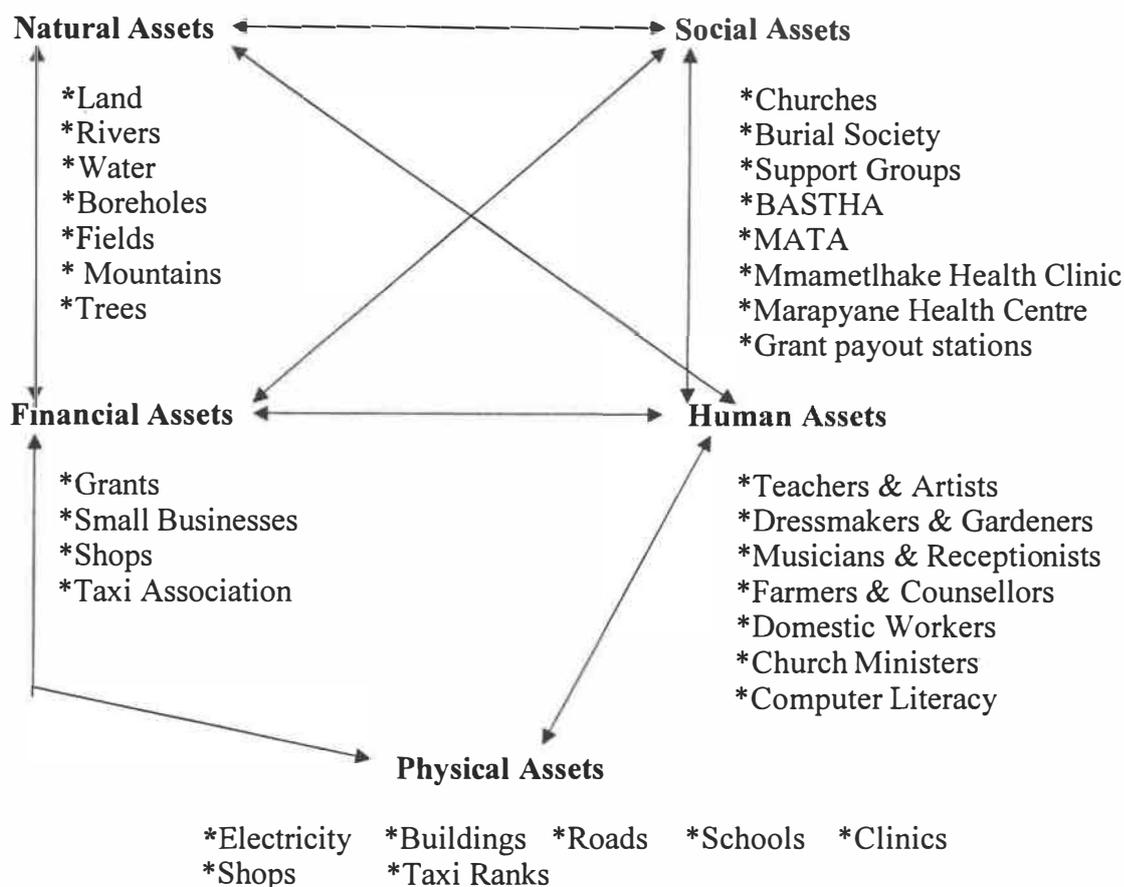
- Marapyane village has small shopping centres where people buy groceries and other goods. That can provide some loans to PLWH's projects.

- There are many abandoned and unused buildings including the formal teaching college that has many rooms unused and other houses abandoned by families that immigrate to towns and other areas.

- Bafenyi Support Team against HIV/AIDS was mentioned in Chapter three. Also churches in Marapyane have land and buildings.

#### **4.3.2. The Classification of Asset Portfolios that were found in Marapyane.**

After an interview with PLWH in Marapyane, the resources identified through the interviews were classified in five main portfolios (following the Sustainable Livelihood Framework): natural, physical, financial, social and human assets. These resources are composed of different assets portfolios and figure 1 draws them into one diagram showing the assets portfolios and the assets.



**Figure 4.1 Asset analysis of Marapyane.**

### 4.3.3. Agricultural investment

One opportunity that could be utilised by PLWH is agricultural investment. It was found that all interviewees have a piece of land. However, they believe that the government should give them all the necessary equipment needed for agriculture. This is not against ABCD, but the government support should come as an additional support to what is already in action. Thus the dependency syndrome that may be created is avoided.

Through observations it was noted that agricultural investment could be a successful venture because the village buys food from surrounding towns. I found this very different from other rural areas I have visited in Africa. In other rural areas in Burundi, Tanzania, DRC and Zambia, people from towns buy cheap food products from rural areas. It would be rare to find cheap food products in the cities because the rural areas support the cities. This is different in rural South Africa as seen in Marapyane, where people buy expensive

food from town. People need to use the land in order to produce food that will help to feed their families and that will generate an income through selling produce in town.

Sister Suzanne reminded us “a person with HIV needs to eat healthy food”. Many health workers have emphasized this but this food is expensive in rural areas like Marapyane. Therefore, the use of the land will not only produces some income but will also help to keep PLWH healthy longer. Therefore, the application of Asset Based Community Development could possibly be partly a solution for people with HIV in rural areas if people invest their skills and effort in their land. Agricultural investment will help PLWH to make some money that they can use for transport whenever they need to collect their medication at the hospital and for other needs.

L. M said “the problem in the village is the lack of agricultural facilities like fertilizers, borehole water, and fences to protect the fields from the donkeys and other animals”.<sup>145</sup> The local authorities together with poor communities in Marapyane should invest more money in the agriculture sector in the rural areas and form a policing forum that will help to protect the fields in the community. This can be done for example by not allowing cows to graze in their neighbour’s fields. Whoever has cows and donkeys should be obliged to contain them in kraals or fenced fields. The local leadership, institutions, government authorities, together with poor people and other NGO's can help in providing equipment such as seeds, fertilizer etc. to help start up and sustain the projects. Furthermore, they could facilitate a market for the food products that will come from the rural areas to ensure that rural people benefit from their work.

#### **4.3.4. Dependency and Discrimination of PLWH**

Interviewees have asked the church and the community to help by not discriminating against them in any development activity that concerns their communities. The judgemental attitude towards PLWH in the church and the community are the major obstacle for their participation in community activities. PLWH are discriminated against in many church activities because they are considered to be people with disabilities or are seen as people who are shaming the church because of their status<sup>146</sup>. Thinking that PLWH are clients and patients who need donations and handouts is negative and needs to

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<sup>145</sup> L.M 3.6.3

<sup>146</sup> M 3.6.5, PL 3.6.6, M.K 3.6.7, Anonymous 3.6.8

be challenged, since PLWH have skills that can make a difference in Marapyane. They don't need handouts but rather need a support group that will allow them to be agents of their own development. PLWH who were business people still have their skills even though the HI Virus remains in their bodies. The problem arises that when they start getting sick they may need support from friends, relatives and the church.

PLWH need to avoid the dependency syndrome that weakens their ability to do for themselves. They need to keep thinking about how their agency can be effective. A positive way of living, treatment, grants and assistance from the government, faith-based organisations, and other organisations can increase the economic security of PLWH and their communities, but can also increase the dependency among PLWH. Apart from these grants that they receive from the government and other NGO's, the majority of PLWH need some micro-economic activities as a way of both enabling them to survive as well as building inter-communal relationships. These inter-communal relationships have to work towards poverty alleviation and self-dependency because the more the virus continues attacking the body the more the person's assets are needed in order to deal with the disease. And this shows that PLWH need to be active before they grow weak so that they can be able to sustain themselves during the hard times.

Poverty is strongly associated with a lack of assets, or the inability to productively use assets that one has. A person living with full-blown AIDS may find it hard to productively use his or her assets. Assets in this context include human capital, physical, social, natural capital cash and other resources obtained from different activities that may be used to improve the quality of all the already obtained assets before the individual gets very sick. PLWH need to be active before they get weak because their poor conditions of living can improved only through the widening choices of activities supported by their agency that can enhance their development.

PLWH in Marapyane working in BASTHA are trying to achieve to their common goals - this is what development aims for. They are committed to their activities that can improve their lives by widening their choices. In contrast, MATA "Mpumalanga Aids and TB Association" has decided to give food parcels to PLWHA and TB patients. This is not bad in itself, but should not be the only way of helping these people. The two associations need to combine their efforts (even though their visions could differ). BASTHA helps those that are still strong to overcome the challenges of poverty before

they get sick and MATA helps those that are weak and unable to use their skills in order to survive. (There is more about BASTHA below in section 4.3.6.)

If MATA should use its policy as a single and permanent approach to development they could possibly cause more problems than the ones they will be solving. PLWH who are still strong should spend their time and energy on efforts that could help them to improve their lives, rather than queuing every morning waiting for some donations.

Numerous studies have shown that in terms of income, employment and access to facilities in the community, people with any disabilities are markedly worse off than their non-disabled counterparts. Despite almost a century of provision for disabled people, many are still excluded from full participation in community life. In some respects, they are a hidden minority, confined in their own homes or, in some stances, within institutions either in the community or in remote from centres of population. Consequently, there is only limited public awareness of their existence and probably less of their needs.<sup>147</sup>

Many interviewees have asked local institutions to give them greater opportunities to be productive. They also need opportunities to empower themselves so that they can be able to deal with the so-called symptoms of their disability without difficulties.<sup>148</sup>

Although HIV/AIDS attacks their personalities and makes them more vulnerable in the different situations, they believe that they can still contribute ideas and skills that can help in building their communities. A successful community development approach always has the objective of tackling poverty and deprivation, and has to increase the political participation of excluded people such as these so called “disabled” PLWH. It is assumed that poor PLWH always need the community whereby they can find mutual help, but the community pretends as if they don’t need them because they think that they can do well enough on their own. This is a challenge for Asset Based Community Development because this model requires the community to work together as a team for a successful development, rather than as two separate entities.

It is true that the resources of PLWH could be useful to the community, but PLWH cannot progress alone without the supportive efforts of the community. In an HIV/AIDS situation, both the assets of the infected and affected members of the community are

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<sup>147</sup> David Locker. *Disability and disadvantage: The consequences of chronic illness*. (London: Tavistock Publication, 1998) vii

<sup>148</sup> R.R 3.6.13, C.M 3.6.15

affected. No matter how much people try to solve the HIV/AIDS problem on their own, it is probably only when people will agree to combine their efforts that the fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS will be successful.

#### **4.3.5. Gender issue**

The interview with L.M has revealed how HIV infection, gender and poverty are inter-related issues. She described that a taxi driver or businessmen who are rich can access any young women without a problem because he has money. A woman who is poor can be manipulated by these men and be infected by HIV/AIDS. This reveals that fighting poverty among women could decrease the spread of the virus among poor women in the village because it may give them power to resist or make choices of a kind of sex that will be practised during the intercourse.

“The patriarchal character of modern South African society, in which women are expected to submit to the sexual advances of men, plays an important role in the transmission of the virus”.<sup>149</sup> Empowering the marginalized and the poor in the community is one of the objectives of ABCD. The effectiveness of the agency of PLWH will work to empower women in Marapyane village, which could contribute to stop the spread of the virus. In another words, the agency of PLWH is needed in this era of HIV/AIDS to create a power balance between men and women in order to fight HIV/AIDS effectively.

The issue of gender is a serious challenge for any development program because it divides community members and sustains any imbalance of power between men and women. Another challenge that ABCD-users will have in the rural South Africa is that culture and traditions that oppress women have been practised for many years and change will be resisted. Meanwhile, the ABCD-users will have a duty to empower women in the fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS to promote self-reliant and avoid other social issues that contribute in the spread of HIV/AIDS.

A further challenge in poverty alleviation concerns urban migration among women in Marapyane. The causes of labour migrations among women are many but women

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<sup>149</sup> Philip Denis. “Sexuality and Aids in South Africa” in *Journal of theology in South Africa*. (March 2003), 75

mainly move to find work. Cohen has argued, “The absence of the access to sustainable livelihoods, are factors in labor mobility which men and women are isolated from traditional cultural and social networks. Moreover, in the new conditions, they will often engage in risky sexual behavior; with obvious consequences in terms of HIV infection”.<sup>150</sup> He adds that large numbers of children growing up in poverty and without parental guidance will adopt precisely those behaviors that lead to HIV infection. They will become the next generation of the HIV infected, which will permit the epidemic to continue and intensify.<sup>151</sup> Labor migration can also affect children who are left without anyone to look after them and they sometimes become victims in the spread of HIV because parents are not there to teach them about the pandemic, supervise behaviour or provide care and support.

The majority of my interviewees were women and the question arises where the men in the HIV/AIDS epidemic are? How can all the visible PLWH be only women? Whatever the reason, when one speaks of poverty and infection in HIV/AIDS era in the rural South Africa, the most obvious sufferers are women and children.

This will remain a challenge for the agency of PLWH. Is it possible for the women who have to care for families to also have time and energy to engage in activities to develop the whole village? The challenge of ABCD therefore seems to be to first try to unite men and women in this era of HIV/AIDS, because the pandemic has been a great divider of communities. The challenge of ABCD is to make sure that people who are marginalized are prioritised, and to ensure that people participation is equitable.

Mathie argued “ABCD arises as a reaction against the mainstream approach to development that marginalized the poor and powerless. Participatory development work has pushed for change that transforms inequality social relations, whether these are within a community or inherent in the relations the community has with external agencies”.<sup>152</sup> What is happening between men and women in Marapyane is exactly what ABCD stands against and in order that development take place in Marapyane in the HIV/AIDS era, the relationship between men and women needs to be sorted out.

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<sup>150</sup> Cohen, *Poverty and AIDS in Sub Saharan Africa*. HIV and Development Programme on <http://www.undp.org/hiv/publications/issues/english/issue27e.html> 7/28/2005. 4

<sup>151</sup> Cohen, *Poverty and AIDS in Sub Saharan Africa*. HIV and Development Programme.7

<sup>152</sup> Alison Mathie. From clients to citizens: Asset Based Community Development as a strategy for community-driven development. January 2002 Occasional paper. [http://www.stfx.ca/institutees/coady/text/about\\_publications\\_accasional\\_citizens.html](http://www.stfx.ca/institutees/coady/text/about_publications_accasional_citizens.html) 16S

ABCD stands against any kind of restriction related to power and gender no matter where it comes from. Women are more active than men in Marapyane. For example, all members of BASTHA are women, so bringing together men and women in one organisation is almost impossible. Actually, HIV/AIDS has added more burdens on women who are already overwhelmed by other duties of taking care of their families and the community.

#### **4.3.6. Partnership and cooperation in the community**

One of my questions was to explore the goals of PLWH and how they think they will achieve to those goals. All of them believe that they will achieve their goals by working and associating with other people who can help them to achieve. Some of them have some strategic plan to achieve their dreams. This reminds us that every person, no matter how poor, has certain specific ideas about where he or she wants to be and what one wants to be doing in the future. Moreover, each person uses individual creativity to attempt to make these dreams a reality.

There is a need to have a community organization like a cooperative where they can plan together to achieve future goals. This can help them to identify what they have, what they may access from neighboring villages and how they can access these in order to move forward. The skills of people living with HIV/AIDS need to be combined with those inside and outside the community to contribute to development.

One example of a partnership organisation is Bafenyi Support Team against HIV/AIDS (BASTHA). This is an organization that works under the Marapyane Development Centre. BASTHA was initiated in November 2005, with the vision being to register their project as a business organisation. Their project consists of making money by catering for people who have parties, weddings, birthday parties and other kinds of functions. Thus they needed equipment like cutlery, crockery, table and tablecloths, kitchen towels, decorating cloths, aprons, flower tables (normal and round) and chairs. In order to acquire this equipment each member did their best to either bring one of the items from their house or to buy one item. Each member agreed to contribute a R20 start-up fee and thereafter R10 per month to keep their project going. Fundraising and donations were

accepted to help purchase more equipment and grow the project. Any new member who wants to join BASTHA has to pay a joining fee of R20 and then contribute R10 each month. This project may become a tool that can bring change among PLWHA in Marapyane especially by creating jobs for themselves and other members of the community.

There is a lack of training among rural South Africans and this affects the whole process of community development. There are many churches in Marapyane but their development involvement is very low due to the lack of commitment and knowledge about what the church should do in this era of the pandemic. Clearly, if the church does not understand her role in this era of HIV/AIDS, her ability to contribute to the agency of PLWH in Marapyane is weakened.

Furthermore, the cooperation of local individuals, organizations, and institutions is very crucial for development. One can suggest that PLWH work with PLWH from other rural areas in order to support each other. It is essential, however, to prioritise issues in allocating the resources that exist in the community.

PLWH also need to learn from other countries about strategies that are used in the fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS. Lesotho could be one example where the affected households and infected individuals adopted a number of strategies such as sharing cropping, livestock sales and livestock lending to relatives or other households, to ensure that assets remain in their custody<sup>153</sup>. These strategies are assets-based and are used among PLWH in Lesotho and these same strategies can be used anywhere else as a weapon to fight poverty among PLWH.

#### **4.4. Cultural continuity and discontinuity**

Development depends on the ways in which the culture and traditions of rural South African people accept the change to allow development to take place. Although there are deficiencies among PLWH in Marapyane that can hinder the agency of PLWH, there are also other positive aspects of the village that can give hope that development can still take place. PLWH have resources, skills, government, business and other resources that

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<sup>153</sup> HIV/AIDS and land: case studies from Kenya, Lesotho and South Africa.  
[Http://www.sacp.org.za/ac/ac162j.html](http://www.sacp.org.za/ac/ac162j.html) 2005/05/20

can benefit the village. Looking at the issue that emerges from the interviews like dependency, laziness, unchanged mindset, discrimination of PLWH in development activities clearly these are not the failure of the ABCD approach but is the Batswana culture and political economic approach of South Africa that mitigates against the ABCD approach. There are some practices that need to be changed to allow development to take place among PLWH in the rural South Africa.

#### **4.4.1. Funeral and mourning periods**

In this era of HIV/AIDS, funeral and mourning practices are activities that are draining the 'asset portfolio' of poor people in our communities around South Africa.

Between 1997 and 2001, the adult mortality rate doubled in South Africa, rising from 100, 000 to over 200,000 deaths per year, and there is no indication that the death rate has slackened since. These are the ravages of AIDS in South Africa. The magnitude of this mortality, concentrated among youth adult, has prompted concerned commentary, on a national and international level, that South African society cannot sustain the pressure of the grief, absence, orphan hood, and poverty lingering in the wake of all this deaths.<sup>154</sup>

Multiple deaths have affected the economic and social development of communities in South Africa and there is a need to change the way funerals are arranged in our communities. Funerals are very expensive and the funeral associations are increasing and poor people's resources keep decreasing due to the cost of the funerals and mourning periods.

#### **4.4.2. Environment protection**

Basetsana (an interviewee and student at technical college in Hammanskraal) argued that, "it is obvious that the environment is affected by the fact that people need a piece of land for burial and wood for fire". They need to cook food for more than two hundred guests and also keep the mourners warm for some days. All these are the factors that destroy our environment because of cutting trees for firewood. After attending many funerals and observing how the Batswana conduct their funeral services I came to realise that if these resources (trees) are not replaced, development could be a dream that may never come

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<sup>154</sup> Carnell, 'Funeral and AIDS, Resilience and Decline in Kwa Zulu-Natal'. In *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 125 (July 2006) 21

true. The effectiveness of the ABCD approach will depend on the way people understand the importance of taking care of the environment. A change in our culture will be necessary because the environment helps to sustain life and without it there will be no development. We cannot discuss development and forget the impact of HIV/AIDS on the environment that we all depend on (not only our future generations but us as well). For the ABCD approach to be more effective in the rural South Africa the issue of environment degradation caused by the pandemic will need to be studied with other issues like poverty and development.

#### **4.4.3. Community development meetings**

It is clear from the interviews with PLWH that they gain much strength from meeting together. Organizations such as MDC and BASTHA should be encouraged to continue with their meetings for PLWH and other community members so that they can be able to discuss their development issues. There is also a need to encourage women who are running the activities that are aiming to change the lives of poor communities not to give up, and continue to attract men to join the efforts against HIV/AIDS and poverty.

Failure of one effort is not the end of the journey. If a project fails, a different strategy is necessary. For instance, Father Maqebo should not give up fighting because when he gives up then the whole congregation will suffer with him. He will need to teach his congregants that self-reliance is better than dependency, which only weakens. The process of development has to build capacity in the poor, and development workers need to help poor community with guidance and strengthening their capacity so that they can be able to stand on their own.<sup>155</sup>

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the findings of the interviews with PLWH, and analysed them. The challenges to the agency of PLWH and their assets have been identified, and we have also looked at what is needed to continue after highlighting the impact of HIV/AIDS on the assets of PLWH. We also looked at what has to be changed in order to allow movement towards community development in rural South Africa. After looking at the

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<sup>155</sup> De Beer, "Participation and Community Capacity Building" 22

impact of HIV/AIDS on local development, the next chapter (chapter five) focuses on what this all means about the effectiveness of the ABCD in this era of HIV/AIDS. We will also examine how this affects the relationship to government and the community itself, and then in chapter six we will look at what this means for the church.

## **Chapter V**

### **Asset Based Community Development and HIV/AIDS**

This chapter examines the relevance of the ABCD in a time of HIV/AIDS with a brief reflection on what this might mean for key role players such as the government, civil society, and people living with HIV themselves.

#### **5.1. The relevance of ABCD in the era of HIV/AIDS**

Looking at the issue of ABCD and HIV/AIDS it is clear that one is the enemy of the other. HIV/AIDS tries in many ways to stop the effectiveness of ABCD by attacking the assets and other resources essential for development. But the fact that PLWH are surviving, means that ABCD can still have chance to rule over the pandemic. The interviews have shown that PLWH have skills and assets that allow them to survive on a daily basis and this is the foundation of the approach. The HIV situation has been shown to affect the people and their assets and this in turn affects the ABCD approach. However, PLWH are not saying “Nothing can be done therefore let us die because there is no other hope”. It seems that there is always something that can be done if people are together and try things together.

ABCD is an approach to development and for the fact that PLWH now remain healthy for many years, there is still hope for development. The ABCD approach itself may not fail but what may very easily fail are PLWH and community who will need to meet the standard that ABCD has set for their agency and engagement. Some community members have been infected by HIV, while others are affected, but the resources of both groups are still in their community. For the effectiveness of ABCD all these resources need to be combined in order to produce good result for community development. The failure to do so may lead to the failure of the community, but this does not mean that the ABCD approach has failed.

The relevance of ABCD in this era of HIV/AIDS requires that some steps are taken within the community. The first step is to fight discrimination, and stigma against PLWH in the community. There is no way the community can deal with poverty if is not united. Discrimination against PLWH is the main challenge to the effectiveness of the ABCD.

After the battle against discrimination has been won, a process of disclosure of PLWH to the community will commence, which will allow their problems to be discussed openly where possible. The next step will be a campaign to motivate community members to invest their assets and resources in the projects that are aiming to eradicate poverty especially those that are run by PLWH.

But there are more challenges that need to be discussed in order to promote the effectiveness of the ABCD in this era of HIV/AIDS. The failure of ABCD is the failure of various role players in community development, including government and the community. We look at what this might mean for each group, as well as for PLWH themselves. In the next chapter we look specifically at what this might mean for the church.

## **5.2. Government**

Firstly, the issue of unemployment in South Africa needs to be addressed. Although the government works hard to create jobs in South Africa and although the statistics shown some reduction of unemployment, many people still do not have jobs. "South Africa's unemployment rate dropped from 26.5% in March 2005 to 25.6% in March 2006, its lowest since September 2000, according to statistics SA's latest Labour Force Survey".<sup>156</sup> Looking at these figures, unemployment is still there and the rural areas are the worse affected.

As we noted in chapter two, the dilemma is that HIV/AIDS often affects those that are working, often leading to them losing their jobs. During the interviews some respondents said that if they were working they could achieve their dreams quickly, but without jobs they can't move forward<sup>157</sup>. This becomes not only a challenge for the community alone but also for the government that is accountable to its people.

The issue of not having jobs available is an additional challenge to the ABCD approach, but one has to remember that PLWH still survive with their limited resources. What is needed is to challenge the government with the available skills and call for help. PLWH

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<sup>156</sup> SA's jobless rate at six-year low. <http://southafrica.info/doing-business/economy/development.htm>  
28/02/07

<sup>157</sup> Interview with M. 4.2.5, E.S 4.2.12, R.R 4.2.13

need to initiate some development programs and invite the government to see what they are capable of bringing to the table to assist. This will raise awareness of what PLWH are able to do and will encourage the government to become more aware of the capacity of PLWH. So, putting these skills into practice will help the government to acknowledge the need to support their initiatives.

The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (FMECD)'s report shows that

HIV/AIDS affects the market because adults in their prime are the most important group of customers for a large proportion of products produced by private sector companies. Countries with higher infection rates will have negative demographic development because of the death of youth that was supposed to be potential customers. And their consumption patterns will change accordingly, as available income needs to be spent on health care or for the basic needs of an increasing number of dependants.<sup>158</sup>

With the presence of HIV/AIDS in our communities the government and local companies loose millions of rand training people who will die before they can contribute to the economy of their country. The interviews show that people who could still work loose their jobs as a result of HIV/AIDS infection and that these people who have lost jobs do not have any other ways of generating an income and are waiting to only to die one day.

The South African economy depends on the workforce, the people who work on the farms and in factories. It also depends on educated people, graduates from university who should help their communities, and people with special training in skilled job.<sup>159</sup> However, HIV/AIDS can devastate the work force and take out the very people who were educated and trained to a high level of competence. The statistics show that the majority of people who are infected with the HI Virus youth and other sexually active groups who are often the breadwinners of families. This is bad news for families and government as the economy relies on these occupationally active people.

The government and local companies will need to look at this issue closely and move forward by supporting the agency of their fellow countrymen who are living with the

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<sup>158</sup> Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development fact sheet. HIV/AIDS and Private Sector Promotion February 2005. [http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0001160/factsheet\\_aids-priv.sec.pdf](http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0001160/factsheet_aids-priv.sec.pdf). 8/04/05

<sup>159</sup> Roberts A 1988 AIDS: Your question answered. (Ibadan: Heinemann Education Ltd) 22

virus in their villages. Government needs to partner with PLWH as one of the ways of fighting poverty among those that are affected by HIV/AIDS. If the government does not support the agency of PLWH, people will continue to live in poverty and the spread of HIV/AIDS will continue.

New infections can affect the market and consumption and thus the climate of investment is affected. The government is challenged because if it wants to grow the economy of South Africa to 6% annually, it needs to attract foreign investors. Foreign investors will not be attracted if they have to keep paying for the medical bills of people who are not productive or of people who keep leaving work to bury their relatives.

Global-operating enterprises will be less inclined to invest in regions where labour costs are on the increase and where customer demographics develop negatively due to advanced HIV/AIDS epidemics. There are several studies endorsing the negative impact of the HIV/AIDS factor on companies' investment decisions. Without a clear commitment from and proactive steps by local business coalitions against HIV/AIDS, it will be the governments of the poorer countries, and the individual households, who will endure the problem. Given that public services depend on the revenue generated in the private sector, such countries infrastructure will gradually be eroded and they will become ever less attractive as business environment.<sup>160</sup>

In this world of globalisation there is none who will choose to invest their money where they cannot make a profit. This causes many problems with the recruitment of workers. Companies will try to do what is best for their company, and this may limit the possibilities of employment of PLWH due to their health problems. This is one of the reasons why people with HIV/AIDS lose their jobs. One of the solutions to this problem is to help PLWH to become agents of their own development and depend on their own skills in their own communities. The government will find itself without any other choice but to provide resources that can enhance the agency of PLWH. The government also has to admit that it will not be effective in the fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS without the full involvement of people living in the rural areas.

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<sup>160</sup> [http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0001160/factsheet aids-priv.sec.pdf](http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0001160/factsheet%20aids-priv.sec.pdf). 8/04/05

### 5.3. Community

The issue of HIV/AIDS in our days is a challenge not only for the government in South Africa but for society as well. The communities in South Africa are diminished and traumatised by the death of their members of all ages who are the assets of their communities. From towns to rural areas in our day, development demands that HIV and the poverty it deepens, is dealt with.

HIV/AIDS is an issue that affects not only the social economy of the country but the community as well. HIV/AIDS is the major development issue facing South Africa and its impact will increasingly devastate people's lives, particularly in the poorer villages of the country like Marapyane. The community will find it hard to trust in the agency of people whom they expect to live for a short period only and who have no hope of being healed. This may also challenge the relevancy and the sustainability of the ABCD in times of HIV/AIDS, which may delay the response of the government towards any development among the communities that are more affected by HIV.

As result the community has to learn to invest their resources in the work that may help those who live with the infection and their families. For the effectiveness of the agency of PLWH, Marapyane community needs to sacrifice some of their land, buildings, and their time in order to support development activities initiated by PLWH. This may look like an additional burden and challenge to people who are already poor and living in the rural areas. HIV/AIDS definitely threatens the sustainable livelihoods of the community and creates conditions that make it harder for the poor to overcome by themselves.

As more people die, there are more and more funerals. More and more people have to take time off work to travel to attend funerals. Because so many people are dying of AIDS, some factories have had to stop people taking time off to go to their friends and work mates' funerals. The funerals are arranged also in a very costly way that more funerals mean more expenditure. In some countries, it is such a problem that governments are limiting time off work to immediate relatives only. AIDS in Africa does not only endanger individual lives but the whole industries and national economies are being threatened.<sup>161</sup>

Among other challenge that the Marapyane community is facing is that as PLWH begin to help themselves, they may threaten vested interests of others in the community. For

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<sup>161</sup>Roberts A. *AIDS: Your question answered*. 23

instance, those who have invested in the funeral services business may lose their businesses due to the organizations of PLWH in the community. An organization initiated by PLWH may take over the burial services for their own members and this may challenge the whole community structure, because funeral associations are the businesses that are growing faster than any other businesses in Marapyane. This makes it harder to invite these people from some businesses to come and join this new movement of PLWH. The agency of PLWH will not make everyone in the community happy, just as empowerment of the oppressed does not make the oppressor happy.

The community should be encouraged to be open to change and development. When projects initiated by PLWH in Marapyane produce good result, it might make it possible for other businesses may take new directions. It should be discouraged that the main investment in Marapyane is currently in funeral service organisations rather than in other businesses that could benefit the community.

Clearly, the organizations initiated by PLWH should benefit the community. If BASTHA's idea of farming works in Marapyane it is going to benefit many people in the village by improving their lives. It was noted above that Marapyane buys food from towns like Johannesburg and Pretoria. If initiatives by PLWH succeed in Marapyane the community will be able to enjoy their own food products. This could possibly decrease suffering caused by the pandemic, as hunger is one of the consequences of the pandemic. Moreover, the purpose of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives.<sup>162</sup> It is believed that good nutrition improves the lives of PLWHA. Living in the rural areas in South Africa the most important activity that can provide an income for PLWHA is agriculture. If this works properly the cooperatives initiated by PLWH will not only work to provide a better life for PLWH and the whole community, but may also to provide opportunities for the breadwinners of the families to provide for their families.

#### **5.4. The Issue of the Agency of PLWH is a Challenge to PLWH Themselves**

In the previous section we have seen that HIV/AIDS is a challenge to the community and the government but the interviews have also shown challenges for PLWH in Marapyane.

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<sup>162</sup> Tony Barnett and Alan Whiteside. *Aids in the Twenty-First Century*. Disease and Globalization. (Palgrave: New York, 2002) 276

There are some requirements that need to be met in order for the ABCD to be effective among PLWH in rural South Africa.

#### **5.4.1. Laziness and fear of death**

For the use of the assets of PLWH to be effective PLWH need to do away with laziness and accept to work hard as a team. Laziness has been identified as a major challenge in poverty alleviation because if people are not willing to work for themselves then it is very difficult for outsiders to be of assistance.<sup>163</sup> PLWH need to use their assets, skill and other resources that exist in Marapyane to develop themselves, because waiting for the government to bring them money may take a long time, which they don't necessarily have.

This will be a challenge for them because they have to learn to depend on themselves rather than waiting to be helped by parents, relatives, and grants. From the interviews we have discovered that PLWH in Marapyane have assets and resources, but they don't know how to put these assets into productive use. This is a real challenge for their agency because they consider themselves poor and sicker than anyone else. This contributes in making them poorer and dependant on donations. They will have to learn to be independent and work.

This laziness among PLWH may be caused by the loss of hope for the future, discrimination that they face in the community, and the fear of death. They all know that there is no cure for HIV/AIDS so no matter what they may plan to do death is always before them. This may affect their concentration and focus because they do not know what the future holds for them. The first step to the agency of PLWH in Marapyane is to build a positive attitude about life and to try to live positively with the aid of support groups. BASTHA has been planning to work towards these goals by involving PLWH in support groups so that they can pool their skills and resources in order to achieve a sustainable livelihood. This positive way of living is the foundation of their agency in Marapyane.

#### **5.4.2. Being Responsible taking the ARVs**

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<sup>163</sup>See interview with Shaku Prudence

ABCD will be effective in the rural areas if people agree to be tested before they get sick, as many die sooner than they should because they discover that they are infected only when they get sick. The message of ABCD will work hand in hand with testing campaigns in the villages. Another challenge for the agency of people living with HIV/AIDS is the faithfulness of those who are already on the treatment taking their ARV's. Some PLWH in Marapyane are not taking their medication regularly because of the fear of loosing their grants. The government policy concerning the disability grant given to PLWHA has some conditions. One of these conditions is that PLWH have to have a CD4 count less than 200. This is a serious challenge because PLWH may decide not to take the ARVs regularly because if their CD4 count improves they may loose their grant allowance. This is very dangerous because the failure to take ARV's regularly may result in drug resistance, which may complicate the whole process of treatment and this can result in death. This will be a challenge for poor PLWH and those who are fully depending on their grant for their survival. For the associations of PLWH to be more effective, PLWH need to be faithful in taking their treatment so that they are able to keep themselves strong and healthy, and are able to work hard for their development.

ABCD will also depend on the behaviour of those that are living with the virus. Their organizations will depend on their responsibility. Clearly they need to stop re-infecting themselves and others. Some PLWH live with the virus in denial and keep sleeping around without condoms and this can increase the number of new infections. For ABCD to be effective the fight against new infections needs to be highly supported so that the community can stay strong and healthy and be able to support those who are struggling with the virus.

#### **5.4.3. Migration to Town and Back**

Migrating to town looking for a better life is the dream of every young man and woman in most of rural Africa and South Africa. The challenge is that these PLWH in Marapyane are still young and most of them have been working in town and have come back home because of their health problems that may have contributed in the loss of their jobs.<sup>164</sup> The challenge here is about the duration of living in this village - whether it is permanent or temporary. If PLWH lives in the village only for short periods and then

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<sup>164</sup>V. M 4.2.4

leave again, the organizations of PLWH in Marapyane might find it difficult to function. For their organizations to be effective there is a need for PLWH to be involved for a long time – something only those who are at home to stay will be able to do.

The issue of migration away from rural villages is caused by many social problems like poverty, marginalization and being far from government services. People may want to work locally, but if there are no facilities or jobs around them then their effort may be in vain and they may then decide to go where the facilities are more accessible. Such departures leave many gaps in the structures built for development in Marapyane.

Another challenge is that the majority of PLWH who are part of the support groups are women and girls who could get married at any time. Some of these women are already planning to get married in other villages and towns around Marapyane. In this way there is a continuous loss of members. The challenge is how to convince such women to continue as part of the organization wherever they are. If this does not work there should be another way of looking at the effectiveness of ABCD by focussing on capacity empowerment of PLWH who become the agents of their own development wherever they may be in South Africa.

The organization of PLWH is possible but it has challenges and until people accept to be involved with each other and co-responsible for organizations, it will be hard to succeed as people keep moving from one area to the other.

In order to discourage this movement from towns to rural areas in South Africa, the government needs to invest more money in the rural areas to replace the assets that are lost due to HIV/AIDS. Moreover, more access to other resources that can improve the lives of poor people in the rural areas needs to be planned. Bringing more government services to the rural communities, electrifying villages and encouraging people to do activities that can produce food and other goods that can generate income and jobs in rural areas could do this. The government needs to help by providing markets for goods from the rural areas in the cities so that the economic situation of the rural areas is strong. There is a need for a strategy that will enhance increased income and well-being, reduce vulnerability, improve food security, and make more sustainable use of natural resources among the affected and infected families in the rural areas. Achieving this may decrease the rural town migration.

## 5.5. Conclusion

According to the discussion we have had above the effectiveness of the ABCD will depend on the following factors:

1. Early HIV testing so that one can be able to access health promotion and treatment before is too late and PLWH must be encouraged to be faithful in taking their ARV medication.
2. Freedom of speech and activities to encourage the involvement of PLWH in the community is the first step towards the effectiveness of the ABCD in HIV era. But this cannot be achieved if the fight against stigma and discrimination against PLWH is not successful in our communities.
3. ABCD requires the community to rely on one another's assets and resources and this calls the community to be united in finding solution of their struggle. PLWH and other community members should be motivated to work together and if they fail to do that they have failed to solve their problems, which is not the failure of the ABCD.
4. As the community depends upon the government, the government also depend upon communities: if one fails the other also fails. Therefore the government is called to support development initiated by PLWH and their communities. As these rely on each other, government support may lead to the achievement of PLWH development goals.
5. PLWH are called to live positively and work hard in their support groups in order to fulfil their development goals. They also have to live responsibly taking care of their health so that they can continue to be strong and healthy in order to continue being productive.
6. The idea of moving away from their village needs to be discouraged and efforts made to encourage group cohesion to improve the sustainability of the group and of the development programs.
7. The business people of their community need to be mobilised and educated about the

importance of the ABCD and motivate them to support the initiative of development of their community.

Finally, we anticipate the next chapter by noting that the church also has to learn to include PLWH in their development program and allow them to be part of decision-making team so that they can feel ownership of their projects. We will turn to discussion this in more detail now in chapter six.

## Chapter VI

### **The Church's relationship to the assets and agency of People living with HIV**

This chapter examines the challenges that the church is facing in this era of HIV/AIDS and analyses the issues that may impact negatively on the effectiveness of ABCD. Issues raised during interviews will be used as the foundation of the discussion. The role of the church in promoting agency of PLWH and avoiding harm will be discussed.

#### **6.1. The church**

Confronting HIV/AIDS demands a range of strategies that can withstand the daily loss of resources. These losses are a challenge for the church because the resources that are found inside and outside the church are needed to enhance the effectiveness of the ABCD.

The interviews with PLWH indicated that they are pleading with the church to organise loans that can support their agency. This call goes especially to those churches that have refused to identify themselves with PLWH, believing that PLWH are paying for their sins and are being punished for their sins. The ABCD approach among PLWH challenges such church leaders who still do not want to acknowledge that HIV/AIDS is a disease that dehumanises people who are made in the image of God and who need to be cared for.

The ABCD approach will continue to confront discrimination towards PLWH and the marginalisation of their skills in church development activities. In other words, the ABCD comes as a call for the church to remember its position in the society. Among all members of BASTHA, only one member is a leader of a church in Marapyane. So the question can be asked; how are the churches involved in the organizations of PLWH? PLWH themselves have taken the initiative. This is a challenge to the church because PLWH have waited long, expecting the church to start something to help, but it never happened.

All my interviewees belong to different church organizations and it appears that their churches are not aware of the need of PLWH in the area of skills development. This

could be one of the reasons why PLWHA have had to come together and do it for themselves. This collaboration of PLWH puts the church to shame. The church has a responsibility to act for the interests of those in need of help. During the interviews, PLWH in Marapyane asked that the church support them by initiating community co-operatives, small business enterprises, farming organisations, funeral services organisations which PLWH can lead. The organisation of PLWH indicates that the church seem to be failing to help these people in their struggle to become contributing members of society.

In order for the organisation of PLWH to be effective, PLWH will need some support in various leadership positions because development is dependent on the empowerment of the people through capacity building. PLWH need to be empowered so that they can run their organizations effectively. One cannot expect PLWH in Marapyane to wait until they get formal education in administration while the church has people with all those skills. The church and other governmental and non-governmental organisations will need to be invited to come in and assist in the area of skill development.

The effectiveness of the agency of PLWH in this era of HIV/AIDS depends on the inclusiveness of people who are currently excluded in development activities. The church is challenged because the more people get infected, the more its ministry needs to be extended and the more facilities are needed to meet the demands. The church cannot close its eyes when people in their neighbourhoods are suffering from HIV/AIDS. At the end of the day the church has the responsibility of looking after PLWHA. This may create greater burdens on the church, as orphans and old aged people are left behind by the church members who die of HIV/AIDS. In order to win in this battle the church and PLWH should come up with some programs that will enhance the effectiveness of the ABCD.

According to the interviews the issues that people living with HIV are laying at the door of the church are:

- To care for those that are sick
- To provide spiritual/psychological support
- To encourage testing before it is too late to stay healthy or get onto ARVs
- To organize saving clubs and extend small loans
- To encourage more self-help groups
- To create income generating projects

- To encourage voluntarily labor among the community members

The church needs to support the agency of PLWHA by building on a theology that recognises their humanity and dignity, and which treats them fairly and acknowledges their vocation. All the measures listed above should be undertaken by the church to support the agency of PLWH. These are practical steps to take and fall well within the role of the church.

## **6.2. The challenges of the church in enhancing the agency of PLWH in rural South Africa**

In order for the church to respond effectively to the issues that were raised by the PLWH in Marapyane, her response has to be based on:

- The theology of acceptance
- Human dignity
- Justice and hope
- Social support groups
- Practical involvement by building community networks
- Motivate culture change:
  - Shortening of mourning period
  - Change in tradition practice with HIV risk
  - Change in funeral expenditure

We turn to each of these in turn to consider them in more detail.

### **6.2.1. Theology of Acceptance**

During this era of the HIV/AIDS pandemic the church has the challenge of building its doctrine around the theology of acceptance. The theology of acceptance recognises that sexual sin is equal to other sins identified and described in the Bible. PLWHA are members of our communities and our churches and they need to be accepted as part of our church families without allowing judgemental attitude towards them. “Since Augustine, many Christians have believed that natural disasters are linked to moral failure. They believe that somehow pain, sickness, famine and death are entirely the consequence of the disobedience of Adam and Eve and their descendants”<sup>165</sup>. The task of the church in this pandemic is to change the attitudes of its members towards HIV/AIDS

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<sup>165</sup> Nicholson, *AIDS a Christian Response* 26

and encourage the acceptance of PLWHA in the community.

The biggest challenge that HIV/AIDS poses to the Christian church is the call to become a true community where acceptance, love, and belonging flourish. The Christian vocation to build community becomes a clarion call, because those who are HIV-positive experience the exact opposite. The church has become for them a place of stigma, discrimination, and rejection. As one woman put it: 'church groups always come when we are dying or even already gone. But when we are trying to live with HIV, when we really need them most, Christians are nowhere to be seen.'<sup>166</sup>

The church has delayed responding to the issue of HIV/AIDS because it believed that HIV/AIDS was one of the consequences of the fall of Adam and Eve. Therefore the church believed there was nothing it could do in the HIV/AIDS situation. Church leaders have been accused for using biblical texts to justify the stance that "HIV/AIDS is a punishment from God and pronounce that a person has died of AIDS because of promiscuous behaviour".<sup>167</sup> This allows for discrimination against people who are HIV positive to flourish. The church has the task of reinterpreting the Bible in a way that will benefit those in need of spiritual support and assistance with physical suffering.

Most Christians are convinced that HIV is the wages of sexual sin. Nicolson argues that some people believe that "God still exercises terrible judgment, in order to bring people to acknowledge him, and because sometimes terror is the only way to bring people to repentance."<sup>168</sup> HIV is seen as God's rebuke to people because He desires for them to repent and turn away from their sins. But the problem is that this belief would have God including even innocent children who never committed any particular sin in the HIV/AIDS judgment, and this makes God out to be a terrorist. PLWHA are not accepted in some churches because they are seen as to be paying for their sexual sins. This is not correct, because the Day of Judgment has not yet come. The church has the task of teaching its members about all the attributes of God - which includes the facts that God also loves, is kind and compassionate.

The AIDS crisis forces theologians and the church not to concentrate only on God as judge. We should also re-conceptualize God as a compassionate presence in suffering, alongside those in pain. We need to avoid thinking that AIDS is a punishment sent from

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<sup>166</sup> Beverley Haddad. "Reflections on the church and HIV/AIDS". In *Theology Today* 62 (2005) 33

<sup>167</sup> Beverley Haddad "We pray but we cannot heal" *Theological Challenges posed by the HIV/AIDS crisis. In Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, (125 July 2006) 32

<sup>168</sup> Nicholson, *AIDS a Christian Response* 29.

God upon people for any reason because it breaks down the Christian concept of God as loving and just. It also begs the question whether those who do not have HIV/AIDS consider themselves to be without sin. It is clear from the New Testament that none of us are without sin. Judging others are forbidden in the New Testament.

Beverley Haddad has reminded the church that “the world needs Christians who become the people of a God who stand alongside the poor, the oppressed, and the suffering to provide acceptance, love, belonging, and hope. This era of HIV/AIDS is our moment to live out Christian community and hospitality, so that others may see and know that salvation lies with our God”.<sup>169</sup> The task of the church in HIV/AIDS situation will be that of responding to the pandemic with a theology that builds on love and care for the sufferers. This will encourage PLWH to feel loved and cared for, which will encourage them to see themselves part of the community and people who have something they can contribute to development.

### **6.2.2. Human Dignity**

Another task of the church is to make sure that PLWHA are treated with dignity and respect and are empowered so that they can be effective in their work. The pandemic invites the church to be active in trying to affirm the humanity of those that are affected and infected by the virus. Borrowing from Korten’s ideas I can say that the Christian involvement in development has to strike a balance between relief aid and sustainable development. Relief aid is meant to address an immediate need for a set period. If used as a permanent strategy for development, it becomes a crippling tool that disables rather than empowers people.<sup>170</sup> This is against the calling of God.

If development is to be a liberating process, which enables persons and communities to realise their full human potential as proposed by God, there is no need to separate the great commission from the development work of the church. There is a link between the mission of the church and development activities that reflects Christian faith in action. The role of the church in the HIV/AIDS era is to help PLWH to realize their full human potential as proposed by God. The task of the church on the earth is to bring forth justice, human dignity and respect. PLWHA are still human beings and they need to be respected

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<sup>169</sup> Haddad, “Reflections on the church and HIV/AIDS”. *In theology today* 62 (2005) 37

<sup>170</sup> Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* 115

just like anybody else created in God's image. A key task of the Church in the HIV/AIDS era is to identify with all the attributes of God. As much as we may wish to judge and to punish people, we need to show them love and mercy and respect. This human dignity has to be shown through our church's response to the HIV/AIDS situation.

The church has the task of responding to the needs of PLWH who are positively trying to help themselves. The church cannot heal them, but it can help them to live and die with dignity and loving care as members of the body of Christ. PLWH are the members of our communities and families and for that reason we need to lovingly care for them until their last breath. "The church will have to change to become a more listening and supporting church: a church that walks with, not before or above PLWHA; a church and leadership which is not before or above the most vulnerable and affected groups".<sup>171</sup> The church has to recognise that no matter who we are or what we are, we have to respect each other as the creation of God because God creates us all.

The involvement of the church members in community development is one of the missions with which Jesus charged his disciples. This mission must be holistic, meeting both the spiritual and the physical needs of the community. "In this HIV/AIDS era the church has a task to move from passivity, apathy and powerlessness to constructive impatience in order to take its rightful role as a movement that lifts up freedom, and through its gifts need to offer development".<sup>172</sup> God has a continuous creative involvement with the world towards the completion of His creation. In other words, God is engaged in an on-going development of the cosmos. The church is called by God to be involved in transforming and developing the world around us. The church members are also called to carry the struggle of humanity towards its full dignity - this has to involve the abolishment of discrimination between privileged and under-privileged communities and peoples. When the community is poor and suffering from HIV/AIDS, the church members must also share in the sufferings with them and provide support to those that are suffering.

### **6.2.3. Justice and Hope**

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<sup>171</sup> Musa Dube. "Let us change our gears! Some ethical/Moral guidance in the HIV and AIDS struggle" A paper written for and presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of all Africa Conference of Churches, held in Cameroon Yaoundé, 20-27 November 2003 163

<sup>172</sup> Horder-Rich. "Development as freedom and freedom and development"? In *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (July 2001) 96

The church also has the task of creating a vision of transformation that will help in protecting PLWH and their agency in order to reach their goals. This vision of transformation has to fight against all kinds of discrimination and marginalization of PLWHA in the community. Poor communities are deprived of certain rights and this becomes the real cause of poverty, which is also a factor that contributes to the spread of infections. This is unjust and the church has to challenge all means that are used unfairly in allocating the products of our development. We need to cling to faith, but also have some practical means of addressing factors that lead to the escalation of the disease. Issues of gender discrimination, urban migration, unemployment in the rural areas needs attention from government, the church and other institutions existing in the rural areas in South Africa.

This moment of HIV/AIDS is the moment that Haddad has called another kairós moment in South Africa. She argued, “This is the moment in which the church has to grasp the opportunity to become a place of hope, healing, and redemption. Now more than ever before we need to take hold of our mandate to become bearers of hope in a situation of deep hopelessness. We need to become the people of a God who stands alongside the poor, the oppressed, and suffering to provide acceptance, love, and belonging. And we theologians need to grasp the significance of this moment”.<sup>173</sup>

The church needs to emphasize the use of the Bible in dealing with cultural practices that contribute in the spread of HIV/AIDS. Unequal access to family and tribal resources for women and children is unjust. The church is obliged to stand up and preach about this unjust practice. In order for the assets and agency of PLWH in rural South Africa to be effective, there is a need for cultural practices to change e.g. in the way funerals are prepared, shortening the period of mourning that has shown to be the root of poverty among the community etc. The task of the church is to teach the community that these practices need to change so that the resources that are spent on these activities can be used to help fund other community projects. Some traditional issues that contribute in the spread of the virus of HIV need to be reviewed and discussed in the church so that new infections may be stopped. Sermons on morality should consider other issues that lead people to contract the virus but should also concentrate on educating and empowering

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<sup>173</sup>Haddad, “We pray but we cannot heal: Theological Challenges posed by the HIV/AIDS crisis”. In *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, (125 July 2006) Vol 1,90

people to deal with HIV/AIDS and its effects in the rural areas in South Africa.

Poverty, injustice and marginalisation are real problems in rural areas in South Africa. The church needs to stand up on behalf of the marginalized poor and speak out against injustice done to rural communities. The lack of investment programs from the government and other investors are the cause of unemployment and urban migration. The church has the task to challenge the government so that development policies that focus on rural South Africa may be implemented to avoid rural to city migration that contributes in the spread of HIV/AIDS. It is clear that the issue of HIV/AIDS need a moral, political and theological response.

PLWH and their skills are not considered in community development and this calls for the involvement of the church in the struggle that will allow PLWH to be part of community development. The church will need to use its prophetic voice to speak on the behalf of PLWH in order to influence equal participation of PLWHA at local development programs. "An Asian Ecumenical conference for development in 1970 stated that people are crying not for food alone, they need and demand freedom, dignity, justice and participation as well. Their quest is for integral human development".<sup>174</sup> PLWH need dignity, justice, and participation and not handouts alone. This can be achieved through the mediation of the church between rich and poor, government and NGOs that work to reduce poverty in rural South Africa.

#### 6.2.4. Vocation

The church needs to be involved in development for the sake of the sufferings of others - if it has no compassion for the poor and marginalized society, and then its ministry is meaningless. "Any pity that removes us from the reality of human suffering is not Christ-like holiness but a false inward. Becoming holy opens eyes blind to Christ's presence in suffering people, increases awareness of our neighbour's pain and draw's the Christ follower into the human struggles of the day".<sup>175</sup> The task of the church in this time of HIV/AIDS is to empower, motivate and build the capacity of people affected and infected

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<sup>174</sup> Ukur, F: "Development and Mission." *In the Ecumenical Review*. WCC Vol. 26 No 1 January 1974: 9.

<sup>175</sup> Carmichael, L "Creating Newness: The spirituality of reconstruction." In: L. Hulley , L. Kretzchmar. *Desmond Tutu Prophetic Witness in South Africa* (Cape Town: Human Resources, 1996): 197.

by the virus.

Christians should get involved in the fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS with a full understanding and recognition that the dignity and rights of these people should not be violated. Many development actors have challenged the Christian's approach to development, which involves handing out food, clothes, and other materials.<sup>176</sup> Doing development without involving people in all aspects of planning, sustains poverty because people become more dependent rather than being producers of their own development.

De Gruchy challenges this approach of handouts saying that "looking at poor people we seem to accept that there is a class of people who can do things and a class of people who are not able to do so. In making this fundamental assumption of being not able to do, are we not simply mirroring the power dynamics that lie at the heart of the experience of poverty, and hence reinforcing the very problem we think we are solving?"<sup>177</sup> Poor people are always active for their survival but the handout of some Christian organizations ignores this.

As the church continues to consider PLWH as useless and hopeless people in the community, it has become blind to the contribution PLWH can make to development. This has also caused a problem of having to continually helping PLWH by giving handouts. This approach ignores the skills, and gifts of PLWH. It could be suggested therefore that if ABCD fails in our communities, the church may have contributed in one way or another to this failure. The church has the task of empowering PLWH so that they can use their skills and assets for their community development.

The task of the church is to promote sustainable development among PLWHA by motivating them to work as agents of their own development and not depending on the handout. De Gruchy argued that Christians should support development by creating the space in which dialogue can occur so that poor people can be agents in shaping not only the struggle for development, but also the very vision of what development might be<sup>178</sup>.

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<sup>176</sup> Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* 118

<sup>177</sup> De Gruchy. "Why Agency? Why Assets? Why Appreciation". *In the African Religious Health Assets Programme. Assets and Agency, Papers and Proceedings*. (Pietermaritzburg Colloquium, August, 2003) 31

<sup>178</sup> Steve, De Gruchy. "Of agency, Assets and appreciation: seeking some commonalities between theology and development" 33

As we noted in chapter two, PLWH need to define development and together with other partners provide strategies that can be utilized to implement it.

The vocation of PLWHA needs to be recognised whenever the church tries to solve the issues of poverty and other consequences of the pandemic. Poverty and HIV/AIDS are not an emergency but a lifetime crisis. It is evident that most religious organisations and other NGO's that prefer to go the route of handouts find it difficult to sustain themselves in the face of problems that are affecting almost the whole developing world. If supporting agencies stop its funding or cease to function for some reason, people dependent on handouts will be in dire straights. Therefore developing the agency of PLWHA is more effective in the long run rather than depending on donations from outside their communities.

### **6.2.5. Practical Involvement of the Church**

Another task of the church in this era of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is to be more practical in its community by applying the holistic ministry approach that Jesus used during His time. This means that the church is involved in the task of providing for spiritual and physical needs of the community, especially PLWHA.

#### **6.2.5.1. Church and its own resources**

The HIV/AIDS situation invites the church to use its resources like buildings and land in order to facilitate the activation of the agency of PLWH. The church's building could for instance be used as offices where PLWH meet to organise their projects.

Land around the church can be used as a starting point for their gardening projects and other activities that can help in their development. The funds that are held by the church can be used to provide small loans for those who want to buy seeds for their gardening projects and or to start small businesses. For any effective fight against poverty among PLWH and the whole community, Dixon has suggested that "there should be a need to grow the economy, encouraging investment, business, and international trade. Micro banking, income-generation schemes, and other self-help program these entire have a vital role to play in helping those with HIV rebuild their lives and help orphans

survive”<sup>179</sup>. It is of course important that the church serves the local community, but part of serving the need is to include the idea of creating more opportunities for those in trouble.

### **6.2.5.2. Church and its Members**

The Church has the task to mobilise its members with their skills and assets to get fully involved in community development with PLWH. When one member suffers the whole body suffers together. Richardson refers to Nicholson when he writes:

A purely private life is not compatible with the Christian life. AIDS can only be dealt with if we see ourselves as being bound together in a relationship of mutual responsibility and interdependence. According to him there is a need to rediscover the church as the family of God’s people, and to rediscover the human race as one family. The pain of one affects us all. We are co-dependent; people with AIDS need the love, support and very often the practical assistance from the rest of the community.<sup>180</sup>

The church has the potential to fulfil its defined mandate and calling during this time of HIV/AIDS so that all will have life and have it even more abundantly as Jesus said. And this involvement has also to be practical and this is why De Gruchy invites the church to come out of the buildings and get involved in social and community activities because faith without works is dead (James 2: 26). “This is the calling for the church in South Africa, to get involved in the issues of national reconstruction and social development”<sup>181</sup>.

### **6.2.5.3. Clergy and its International Connections**

Giving counseling to somebody and sending him or her home empty handed is very simple. However, keeping in touch with the sick and needy person, widows and orphans is a challenge the clergy is facing in dealing with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The clergy will have to use its international connections in order to provide enough support to the community that is struggling with the burden caused by HIV. The clergy is very well connected to national and international organizations and can therefore contribute in

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<sup>179</sup> Patrick Dixon. *AIDS and You* (OM Books: Secunderabad, 2002) 114

<sup>180</sup> Neville Richardson. “A call for care: HIV/AIDS challenges the church”. *In Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, (125 July 2006) 42

<sup>181</sup> Steve De Gruchy, “Of agency, Assets and appreciation: seeking some commonalities between theology and development”. *In journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 117 (November 2000) 20

networking that can help in creating opportunities for PLWH in rural areas in South Africa. In this way the clergy itself is considered as an asset that cannot be ignored in the fight against poverty. The clergy should use its influence to raise funds for development programs that could create employment for PLWH and the whole community.

#### **6.2.5.4. Church Supervision and Guidance**

The church can be involved in evaluating the running of the projects initiated by PLWHA in the rural areas in South Africa. The strategies in the fight against HIV/AIDS and poverty need to be reviewed over a period of time by the church in order to know which adaptations are needed. It is important for the community, PLWH and the church to adopt strategies to ensure that natural, social, human, physical and financial assets remain safe and are well utilized for development. This can be organized in the form of community cooperatives or projects. Monitoring projects is a heavy demanding task, but without such activities development assets may be wasted. Such activities may also help to reduce the mistake of pumping money into projects that are not beneficial to PLWH and the community.

#### **6.2.5.5. Building Community Networks**

Building a community requires a partnership network with the community itself and other development actors. The reality is that if one is not infected, one is affected in one way or another by HIV/AIDS. This makes HIV/AIDS a disease that demands a cooperative response and the church has a task to involve the whole community in the fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS without looking at which denominations they come from. People need to work together to defeat this pandemic. The church will have the duty of calling upon other organizations, non-governmental organizations and the government to work together towards a nation free of HIV. It is true that people are suffering because of HIV/AIDS, but the agency of PLWH needs a combined effort from all involved. The idea of African *ubuntu* in this time of pandemic should be emphasized, where one shows love and mercy to someone who is now suffering because of HIV. The agency of PLWH can be achieved only through a united effort, and by working together for a common goal, HIV eradication and poverty alleviation in the community will be achieved.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

The fight against poverty among PLWH and other issues created by the HIV/AIDS infections is the duty of the local church. The local church also has the duty of activating support from other church organizations and the government in order to meet the needs that are created by this pandemic. The church has the task to involve all churches regardless of race, culture, language, and nation by providing assets that can enhance the agency of PLWHA in the rural areas. We are all called to help in the fight against poverty caused by HIV/AIDS by supporting the initiatives of those that are already infected in our communities. The compassionate care for the community including those that are ill and dying goes hand in hand with community development where the contributions of local institutions are needed.

## **Chapter VII:**

### **Conclusion**

We are now at a position to conclude this research project, by summarizing the argument so far. Chapter one introduced the key research problem and findings, and introduced the place where the research was done, namely, Marapyane. Then in chapter two we looked at the theoretical and theological aspect of ABCD with emphasis on two main issues “Agency” and “Assets” in development. Chapters three and four covered the research findings with community leaders and PLWH in Marapyane as key informants. Chapter five examined the relevancy of the ABCD in a time of HIV and some reflections on implications for key role players. The final chapter (six) looked at the challenges that the church is facing in this era of HIV/AIDS and some issues that need to be addressed in order to enhance the effectiveness of ABCD among PLWH.

#### **7.1. Ten key challenges identified in this thesis.**

In drawing this thesis to a close, we reflect on ten issues that have been identified as key issues to the effectiveness of the assets and agency of PLWH in rural South Africa.

##### **1. PLWH and the rest of the community will have to work together to reach their goals**

ABCD is based on the assets and the resources existing in the community and it encourages the community to work together in trying to find the solutions to their problems. This approach cannot be effective if the community does not work together to combine their efforts in order to fulfill their dreams. This is a challenge in the HIV/AIDS era because the virus has shown to be the cause of division in the rural communities. This division has contributed to discriminating against PLWH in community development efforts because the community believes that PLWH are only patients who are waiting to die and who have nothing to contribute to community development. Nevertheless, if there is going to be progress against HIV/AIDS and against poverty in the community, there will need to be a clear focus on working towards one goal.

## **2. Fight discrimination against PLWH**

PLWH are considered “living dead” because they are living while waiting to die soon. PLWH are seen to be the cause of poverty in their families and considered to have nothing to contribute because the virus keeps taking resources from the community. Due to these reasons, PLWH find themselves discriminated against in many activities that could help them and others. Therefore the agency of PLWH can only take place if the fight against discrimination of PLWH is won. After all the challenges that PLWH face on daily basis, the ABCD approach itself does not fail but rather the community may fail to reach to the commitment required by the approach itself.

## **3. Inclusiveness**

The ABCD approach is inclusive but the pandemic causes discrimination in the society and the community becomes a society of people who can do and those who cannot do. These however could be false assumptions, because although PLWH are discriminated against, they still survive and they are using resources to survive. The study has shown that PLWH are part of the community and are gifted and talented enough to take part in the community development. According to the ABCD approach the agency of PLWH could be effective if their communities work in partnership with them.

The church has been identified as one of those institutions that can contribute to enhancing the agency of PLWH. However, this important institution needs to meet some requirements in order to support the agency of PLWH. Firstly they have to promote inclusiveness and accept that PLWH are part of the church organization and members of the community. Secondly, they should accept that PLWH are created in the image of God and that they need to be respected and accepted as children of God. Lastly PLWH should be regarded as agents and not clients of development activities. The fulfillment of these basic requirements shall contribute in making the agency of PLWH possible.

## **4. The use of skills needs to be encouraged and supported**

PLWH have skills; some of them are teachers, receptionists, farmers, small business owners, tailors, development workers etc. However, according to ABCD these skills

cannot achieve everything by themselves; they need to be supported and encouraged by the local associations, institutions and the government. The study has shown that PLWH can try to help themselves through their associations but they still need the support from the community in which they live as well as neighboring villages. This is why the relationship of the church and the PLWH in the community is so important. This church-PLWH relationship is the channel that may assist PLWH to use their skills and contribute in building their communities. We may conclude that the agency of PLWH is possible but depends on how the local church and the community utilize such agency.

### **5. Networking with other institutions**

The study has shown that PLWH don't have enough resources to meet their development goals and still need some help from the community. Local shops and other small business are called to help in this struggle by providing loans that can help PLWH to start their own business and other small projects. People living in Marapyane are required to contribute to the agency of PLWH by creating a network with PLWH that may help to achieve more for community development. This will encourage the community and PLWH to work together using the resources that are found in their community for the benefit of the whole community. This network will help PLWH to feel more accepted in the community and will help them to participate at the same level as the rest of the community.

### **6. Capacity empowerment of PLWH**

PLWH are gifted and have resources like anyone else. Their agency needs to be recognized so that development can be achieved. Yet they also need to be equipped with some development skills in order to empower their capacity so that they can be more effective in their struggle against poverty and other problems created by the pandemic. The church and other associations that are working in Marapyane will be asked to invest more in these activities. Empowerment through capacity building of PLWH will help them to organize themselves and their projects e.g. in writing proposals, administrative work etc. It was found that PLWH and their organizations fail to access government support because they fail to meet the administrative requirements. Writing proposals and business plans demands skills which PLWH in rural areas usually do not have.

This study has shown that there is a lack of training among rural South Africans and this affects the whole process of community development, although people may be motivated to do something for themselves. This is a lesson for the church in Marapyane that seems to be passive and doing nothing towards community development. The situation of HIV/AIDS in rural South Africa provides an opportunity for the church to be proactive and get involved in community development by creating relationships with those that are need of help. The effectiveness of the agency of PLWH will not benefit their families alone but will benefit the whole community.

### **7. Fight poverty effectively among PLWH**

We have seen also that poverty contributes to the infection of HIV/AIDS and promoting the agency of people living with HIV/AIDS will help people of the community to survive from day to day. For example we have seen that youth who are not employed spend many hours at the bar lounges drinking and smoking drugs. Developing their agency may help to keep them busy with activities that help them and their communities.

### **8. The use of the land as the basic asset for PLWH**

Looking at the resources that are found in the rural South Africa, land was a common asset that existed in many communities. There is an opportunity for PLWH in the village to make use of the land and therefore create more opportunities through agricultural efforts. Churches that have boreholes and other basic agricultural facilities should make these available to support projects that are initiated by PLWH. Most people interviewed believe that the government is the one that should give them all equipment necessary for agriculture. This is not against the ABCD approach, but the challenge here is to change the attitude of people and help them to understand that government support should come as an additional support to what is already in action to avoid dependency.

Marapyane villagers are buying food from town: vegetables, fruits, and other foods. In other rural areas in Africa people from towns buy cheap food products from rural areas. IN those areas it is rare to find cheap food products in the cities because the rural areas support the cities. This shows that the agency of PLWH in Marapyane could use this land in order to produce food that will help to feed their families and bring a small income by

selling the produce in town rather than buying from town. If this is effective in the community, PLWH will be able to provide some jobs opportunity for the community.

### **9. Early test of HIV/AIDS and treatment**

The thesis has involved PLWH since they still strong and able to work. We have tried to distinguish between PLWH and those who are in their last stage of AIDS. Most importantly, we have to conclude that the agency of PLWH will be more effective if PLWH know about their HIV status before they get sick. It will not be helpful to tell people to think about their agency when they are already sick and bedridden. This is an essential requirement from PLWH - they have to learn about ABCD before they become weak otherwise their goals may not be achieved. Also the issue of being faithful in taking their medicines will help because this will keep them strong and healthy in order to continue contributing to their community development and their families.

### **10. Urban-rural migration.**

Although the issue of Urban-Rural migration has come up a few times in the research, one has to acknowledge that migration to the city is a dream for many young people. Johannesburg and Pretoria are the major cities where most people from Marapyane migrate looking for jobs. Many young people graduating from schools decide to go to the city looking for jobs, believing that the village has little to offer them. These are the assets that are moving towards cities, leaving the village poorer. This can also be a decision made by PLWH, since they think that at least they can find something to do in town. Their migration weakens PLWH organizations.

Where possible PLWH Should be encouraged not to move away from their villages with their resources and skills as this may result in weakening the whole effort of building their agency.

### **7.2. Conclusion.**

The research has suggested some key issues that need to be addressed in order to allow the ABCD approach to succeed. The failure to develop may not be a failure of the ABCD, but it may be the failure of PLWH, the rural churches, rural communities and

other key role players in community development.

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Father Maqebo Ambrose,	Marapyane	24/11/2005.
Eva Sekokotla,	Marapyane	12/08/2005 .
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