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Author(s): Hanna Nel

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An integration of the livelihoods and asset-based community development approaches: A South African case study

Hanna Nel¹

This study provides an integrated framework and practice model of the sustainable livelihoods (SL) and the asset-based community development (ABCD) approaches. A household survey of a rural village in South Africa is used as a basis of analysis to demonstrate the application of the integrated approach. The results elucidate the vulnerability of the people and a range of interlocking and multi-dimensional factors contributing to poverty in the community. The results also show people's assets, capabilities and activities which enable them to cope and survive despite constraints and shortcomings. It was found that the integrated SL/ABCD framework is a useful framework to understand the strengths of a vulnerable community in order to plan and implement sustainable community development strategies.

Keywords: sustainable livelihoods approach; asset-based community development approach

1. Introduction

Analysis of communities is usually done in terms of the deficiency approach which only provides a picture of the needs and problems of such communities, and focuses on what people lack. In comparison, the sustainable livelihoods (SL) and asset-based community development (ABCD) approaches capture the diversity and differences that characterise the reality of people's everyday lives and places the focus not on what people lack, but rather on how they cope and survive, in spite of constraints, lacks and shocks. Development interventions based on a sustainable livelihoods and asset-based analysis attempt to strengthen how people are already able to cope and strengthen their potential with the aim to make livelihoods sustainable. This is different from development interventions based on poverty analyses that undertake to provide those aspects that people lack. Furthermore, the ABCD approach complements and provides a richer description to the SL framework.

The main goal of this article is an attempt towards building an integrated SL/ABCD theoretical framework and practice model to inform data analysis. The objectives of the article are: to conceptualise an integrated theoretical SL/ABCD framework and practice model for sustainable community development; to analyse a rural community, Bapong, in the North Western Province in South Africa, by applying the integrated SL/ABCD practice model; and, lastly, to draw conclusions on the feasibility of the integrated SL/ABCD framework in order to implement sustainable community development strategies.

2. An integrated framework of the ABCD and SL approaches

Community development theory and practice, especially the so-called ABCD approach, can be integrated with the livelihoods approach. Both the ABCD and livelihoods

¹Professor, Department of Social Work, University of Johannesburg, PO Box 524 Auckland Park, Johannesburg 2006, South Africa. Correspondence: hannan@uj.ac.za

approaches are examples of a paradigm shift from a deficiency, needs and problem-based orientation to a strengths and assets approach in working with communities (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Davids et al., 2005). The basic premise of both the ABCD and livelihoods approaches is that all communities, no matter how poor, possess strengths, assets and energies that can contribute to a self-sustained, improved quality of life.

Both the SL and ABCD approaches emphasise not what people lack, but rather how they cope and survive, in spite of constraints, lacks and shocks (De Wet et al., 2003; Schenck et al., 2010). Both the SL and ABCD approaches strive to be sensitive to the different ways people make a living and attempt to improve their well-being (Davids et al., 2005). Both approaches first seek to identify the assets in communities, their trends over time and space, as well as the nature and impacts of shocks and stresses (environmental, economic and social). Both approaches take cognisance of the wider context of the community, such as the political, legal and economic environment, institutions and infrastructure, but the way in which these assets, shocks and stresses are identified and dealt with differs in terms of the two approaches. It seems as if the SL approach is more often done in a top-down manner by the professionals, while the ABCD approach is done in a more bottom-up, cooperative way between the professional and community members.

It is well known that the ABCD approach encourages an awareness and mobilisation of the assets and strengths in communities – a component not emphasised in the SL approach. The intention is to bring to the surface hidden ‘gifts’, to build on or increase what already exists and to cultivate a positive vision for the future (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Ashford & Patkar, 2001). The ABCD approach assumes that as people become aware of their strengths and resources, the likelihood of reaching their goals and realising their potential increases. This change is facilitated by the professionals, in cooperation with action committee members from the community, by surfacing or uncovering, reaffirming and enhancing the sometimes hidden abilities, interests, knowledge, resources, aspirations and hopes of individuals, families and groups in communities (Ashford & Patkar, 2001; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; Green & Haines, 2008). When people become aware of their capabilities and strengths, the likelihood is that their confidence increases, they become energised and they start taking responsibility for their own development, all of which are defined by Sen (2000) and Davids et al. (2005) as what development should be about. However, the SL approach does not elaborate much on the process of the discovery of assets, a component which should be incorporated in the integrated approach.

The ABCD approach mainly focuses on reporting on the ‘capacity building of community members and associations (internal-looking) without reporting on structural changes (external-looking) brought about by the approach’ (Pretorius & Nel, 2012:8). A critique of the ABCD approach is the overemphasis of the contributions of community members and associations towards development, and the neglect of professionals in their role in development; for example, government in development interventions (Emmett, 2000). In contrast, the SL approach highlights policies and the institutional contexts within which the capitals or assets exist, and the responsibility in terms of development. The SL approach proposes that while some capitals may be vulnerable to certain shocks (e.g. cattle to fires, or vegetable gardens to floods), authorities are responsible to act and limit any damage which occurs or to perhaps provide recompense (Scoones, 2009). A critique of the SL approach is that, although capital or assets are central to the approach, people get less attention (Carney, 1998;

Singh & Wanmali, 1998; Drinkwater & Rusinow, 1999; Goldman, 2000; DFID, 2001; Carney 2002). The danger is that the SL could merely become a mechanical and quantitative cataloguing exercise without participation and involvement of the community members. Regarding the integrated approach, it is proposed that collaboration with various other agents of change, such as local government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector, should only happen when residents in the community experience success through their own interventions, using their own assets (Homan, 2008; Mathie & Cunningham, 2008; Mosoetsa, 2011). The responsibility of external institutions should thus be integrated into development interventions but in cooperation and partnership with the community.

A sustainability dimension is added to both the livelihoods and ABCD approaches. A community or livelihood is sustainable if it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capability and assets, and provide sustainable community or livelihood opportunities for the next generation, while not undermining the natural resources (Davids et al., 2005; Schenck et al., 2010).

3. Integrated practice model

In this section an attempt is made to conceptualise a practice model (Figure 1) for sustainable community development, which is informed by the integrated SL/ABCD framework in terms of: basic principles underlying the integrated model to which community development interventions should be adhered to; an integrated process; livelihoods strategies; and livelihoods outcomes.

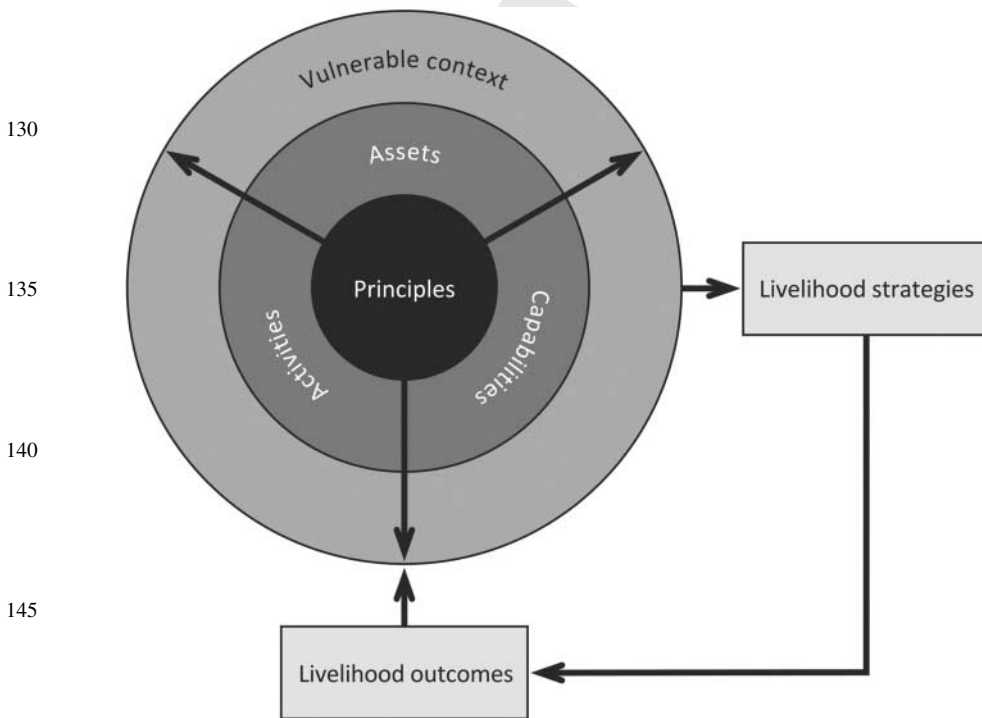


Figure 1: The integrated SL/ABCD practice model

The construct 'practice model' refers to 'a set of concepts and principles that guide intervention' (Weyers, 2011:21). Practice models give direction to practitioners' service delivery by bringing clarity and structure to complex realities they face.

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3.1 Principles underlying the practice model

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The following basic principles that should be adhered to in all interventions are central in the practice model, namely:

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- People-centredness: in any action in community work, the people and their assets, experiences, perceptions and values are central. People are put at the centre as the agents of change because they are the experts of their community and not the facilitator. They are active participants in development activities in the communities, and not passive victims or receivers of development interventions.

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- Participation: participation is a process and implies 'collective activity of interested and/or concerned people in achieving a jointly-determined goal' (Schenck et al., 2010:91). Real participation is where community members share fully and have an equal voice in all decision-making and efforts directed towards change.

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- Inside-out approach: meaningful and lasting community change always originates from within. Internal (endogenous) assets have to be utilised first and later complemented with outside, exogenous assets, which must be conducted in partnership with the community.

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- Self-reliance and ownership: ownership and self-reliance is a consequence of participation. Community members act responsibly when they care for and support what they create; this creates self-reliance and ownership.

- Relationship-driven: building and nourishing relationships is at the core of building healthy and inclusive communities.

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- Focus on assets: communities are built on resources, assets, strengths, capabilities, capacities and aspirations, and not by dwelling on the deficiencies, needs and problems of residents. Every single person has capacities, abilities, gifts and ideas, and creating a sustainable livelihood depends on whether those capacities can be used, abilities expressed, gifts given and ideas shared.

- Local leadership: the central factor in sustainable change is local leadership and its continuous development and renewal.

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- Holism: it is suggested that all community development strategies should be addressed in a holistic and integrated way. Overlapping and duplication of strategies should be avoided. Governmental departments, NGOs and businesses should be involved with the community members in the analysis of the livelihood and the development of strategies which are geared towards sustainable outcomes (Burkey, 1993; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Emmett, 2000; Ashford & Patkar, 2001; Carney, 2002; Brocklesby & Fisher, 2003; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003, 2005, 2008; Davids et al., 2005; Brueggemann, 2006; Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006; Morse et al., 2009; Scoones, 2009; Ennis & West, 2010; Schenck et al., 2010.)

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3.2 Process

To achieve sustainable outcomes in a community, certain activities have to be executed, namely analysing of assets, activities and capabilities; exploration of the vulnerable context within which the community members live; determining of livelihoods strategies; and sustainable outcomes. It is, however, important that the process should

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not be facilitated by the professional but by an action committee comprised of members of the community. The action committee members have to be trained in the process and facilitated by the professional during the process. The aim of the professional is to facilitate the action committee to become an independent structure from where sustainable projects could be launched (Henderson & Thomas, 2002).

3.2.1 Analysis of assets, activities and capabilities

According to Chambers & Conway (1992) a livelihood comprises the assets/capital, activities and capabilities, that are required for a means of living. The livelihoods framework therefore provides conceptual tools, namely assets, activities and capabilities that enable people to make a living. A livelihoods analysis is defined by Shankland in De Wet et al. (2003:4) as 'the process of identifying the resources and strategies of the poor, the context within which they operate, the institutions and organisations with which they interact and the sustainability of the livelihood outcomes which they achieve'. For the purposes of this integrated practice model, the conceptual tools of a livelihoods analysis were used.

3.2.1.1 Assets/capital

Assets/capital are the tangible and intangible assets of people, which are the building blocks of livelihoods. Tangible capital/assets are resources (such as land, tools and livestock) and stores (e.g. food and savings, often in the form of consumer durables). Intangible capital/assets are the human capacity, values and access people have to tangible assets. Both the SL and ABCD frameworks consist of a diverse range of capital/assets, namely human, physical, social, financial, political, cultural, spiritual and natural capital/assets (Carney, 1998, 2002; Goldman, 2000; Zohar & Marshall, 2004; Mathie & Cunningham, 2005, 2008; Green & Haines, 2008). Social capital provides access to other capital or assets, and it is access that is the most critical resource of all (Mathie & Cunningham, 2005). Assets give people the capacity to act and thus are a source of meaningful engagement with the world.

The development process should be facilitated by the professional in a manner to enable communities to drive the development process themselves. Expertise should be used from inside the community first before looking for expert knowledge and skills outside the community. The facilitation should be done in such a way that communities identify and mobilise existing (but often unrecognised) capitals or assets, whereby they can respond to and create local economic opportunity. Such unrealised resources include not only personal attributes and skills, but also the relationships among people that fuel local associations, such as informal networks and community-based organisations. Local associations are seen as the driving force and the vehicle through which all of the community's assets can be identified. These associations connect the different assets of the community in ways that 'multiply their power and effectiveness' (Mathie & Cunningham, 2005:2). In discovering the assets, the ABCD approach makes use of various methods and tools; for example, story-telling and asset-mapping, such as inventory lists (to identify human capital) and Venn diagrams (to identify local associations and institutions) (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Ashford & Patkar, 2001; Green & Haines, 2008; Mathie & Cunningham, 2008; Schenck et al., 2010; Nel & Pretorius, 2012; Pretorius & Nel, 2012).

3.2.1.2 Activities

People engage in various economic, social and cultural activities in order to make a living (Morse et al., 2009; Schenck et al., 2010; Mosoetsa, 2011). The assets are drawn on via activities through which people seek to improve themselves. The activities are related to the capital/assets they have. For sustainable community development, people should be facilitated to become aware of their assets and then explore activities directly linked with their assets to improve their livelihoods (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Mathie & Cunningham, 2005, 2008; Green & Haines, 2008). For example, people who are involved in stokvels (a type of saving scheme especially found in developing communities) and burial societies (networks within communities to cope with the cost and shared responsibility of death) could be strengthened to become more sustainable. People receiving grants could be mobilised to use some of the grant money to establish small income-generating projects. Economic activities remain very important for livelihoods. These can include wage labour, agricultural activities for own consumption or for sale, small enterprises (formal and informal, e.g. making clothes, hawking, hairdressing, childminding, domestic work), unpaid domestic labour, 'illegal' activities (e.g. selling liquor, crime), cultural activities, and so forth. A common example of specific cultural activities in Africa is the well-known marriage tradition of lobola. Examples of social activities are funerals, and the gatherings of friendship, family, women and support groups.

3.2.1.3 Capabilities

Capabilities indicate what people can do or be to help them access assets (Carney, 1998; Goldman, 2000; Mosoetsa, 2011). Capabilities become active through entitlements, which can be described as the claiming rights people have (De Wet et al., 2003). People have various claiming rights, and, for this research, claims against the state include grants such as old age pensions, disability and child support grants, claims against the household, including money and food received from family and friends, and claims against the community, including communal resources and services (e.g. NGOs or religious groups).

3.2.2 Exploration of vulnerability context

After assets, activities and capabilities have been assessed in terms of the contribution they make or could make within their context, it is also necessary to explore the vulnerability context in terms of the trends, shocks and stresses in which the assets, activities and capabilities exist (Chambers & Conway, 1992). It is not only important to determine what is happening currently regarding the vulnerable context, but it is also important to determine what the trends are and what could happen in the future. Some of the assets, activities and capabilities may change a little over time (e.g. land and buildings), while others such as cash and social networks can be volatile and depend on the movement of people into and out of the household. The ABCD approach does not specifically conceptualise the vulnerability context in its approach, but implicitly community members discover and assess assets, activities and capabilities, usually within a vulnerable context (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; Green & Haines, 2008). The discovery and mobilisation of assets, activities and capabilities within the vulnerable community in terms of trends, shocks and stresses should thus be included in the practice model.

3.2.3 Livelihoods strategies

Although suggestions by the author are made on the possible outcomes of strategies for the Bapong community, it is the community members, NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs), institutions and all relevant role players in the community that need to decide on strategies and respective outcomes of these strategies. Based on the integrated SL/ABCD model, community workers should take the following into account in developing of strategies. The action committee should drive the process, but facilitated and supported by the professional. Firstly, community members should inform the community about the assets, activities and capabilities of the community, as well as the basic principles of the integrated practice model. Secondly, problems that could be addressed by the community itself, with no assistance from outside, have to be addressed first to enhance the community's confidence and instil self-reliance and ownership within the community (Henderson & Thomas, 2002; Brueggemann, 2006; Homan, 2008).

3.2.4 Livelihoods outcomes

If capital/assets, activities and capabilities can be transformed into sustainable strategies, this will lead to positive livelihood outcomes, such as an increase in income, improvement in well-being, reduction in vulnerability, improvement in food security and more sustainable use of natural resources.

4. Results of the rural community survey

Now that the theoretical framework and practice model have been established, an analysis will be undertaken regarding the demographic, social and economic conditions of families in the rural community of Bapong in terms of the integrated model. The case study used for this article was the rural South African community of Bapong, which is situated near the town of Brits in the North West province, approximately 200 km from Johannesburg and surrounded by many commercial farms. The area is rich in minerals and is characterised by mining activities. The University of Johannesburg conducted the research in collaboration with the Eastern Platinum Mine to inform on its social responsibility programme in Bapong. The Department of Social Work and the Department of Development Studies undertook the study to assess the everyday living conditions of families. The total population of the area was estimated to be around 49 290. Members of 739 households were randomly selected and interviewed over a period of seven weeks by four interviewers in the completion of questionnaires. The interviewers were community members who were trained for four days. Consent forms were completed by all respondents. The results of the questionnaires will first be briefly summarised and then reinterpreted to illustrate the integrated SL/ABCD approach. Because of the historical nature of the study, statistics for 2001 and not statistics for 2011 are used in this study. The reason for using the data from this historic study is that it was a comprehensive study conducted by a team of researchers who reported the findings in terms of the SL framework, and therefore provided a useful, extensive database for the reinterpretation of the data to fit the purpose of this article.

Bapong is a rural, poor community, with Tswana as the predominant language and with limited employment opportunities. Many people are migrant workers who were working in urban communities. The majority of the people make a living in the informal sector and a number of people are self-employed. Some community members are employed

at the Eastern Platinum Mine and a flower farm. The majority of families are single-mother households.

355 **4.1 The basic results of the rural community survey**

The data indicated that the household size of the community was between one and 15 people and the average number of people per household was five. Fifty-four per cent of the sample was younger than 24 years of age, typical of the North West province, where 51% of the population was younger than 24 years of age (Stats SA, 2001).

360 In terms of the marital status of people aged 18 years and older, the majority indicated that they were single (55%), 34.8% were married and 10.2% were divorced. Fifteen per cent of children under the age of 15 years indicated that they lived with relatives and not their parents – the reason being that parents were migrant workers who worked in the cities.

365 The average level of schooling passed by learners in Bapong was between Grades 7 and 8. One in 10 people of the community had no formal education and one in four had only six years of schooling. There was a high school drop-out rate, where only 15.5% of children who attended school finished Grade 12. The population of the urban community had no post-matric qualifications.

370 The following health problems were indicated in the study of Bapong: high blood pressure, tuberculosis, diabetes and respiratory problems. Often, high blood pressure and diabetes could be linked to stress and bad eating habits. Tuberculosis could be one of the AIDS-related illnesses, although information on HIV and AIDS prevalence was not gathered. The respiratory problems could be a result of many people who were snuffing or smoking and the problem of air pollution. People preferred visiting clinics to traditional healers. According to Mosoetsa (2011), people in the rural communities usually prefer traditional healers to medical doctors.

380 Families lived primarily in private houses (60%), consisting of between three and four rooms per house, while 40% lived in informal settlement shacks, consisting of an average of two rooms per shack but go up to 15 rooms. Ninety-five per cent of households had electricity in their houses, although the electricity supply was irregular due to power cuts or the inability to afford electricity. The electricity is mainly used for light at night. Wood and paraffin are used as sources of energy for cooking and heating. Nearly all households had toilet facilities, mainly via pit latrines. However, nearly 4% of households in Bapong had no sanitation facilities and people relieved themselves in the nearby bush.

385 Interestingly, almost all households had a television, radio, refrigerator and telephone (either land-line or cellular phone) in Bapong. According to Stats SA (2001), 42% of households in South Africa had access to a telephone (land-line or cellular phone). Compared with the North West province, 34.5% of households had access to a telephone, which was much lower than Bapong's figures.

390 In the rural community, many households (35%) indicated that there were no institutions or organisations to go to when they experienced serious problems or needed help with money, children, and so forth. Respondents also indicated that politicians, government officials and NGOs were not active in the community and not wholly trusted. There was no police station in the community and the visibility of the police was also very low.

The employment status of the community reflected high levels of unemployment. Thirty-three per cent of people in the rural community older than 18 years of age were unemployed. Reasons for this included low schooling and post-schooling levels, not enough job opportunities in the country and a population growth of 2.5% per year (Stats SA, 2001). In the rural community, 42% of the population between the ages of 18 and 60 had never been formally employed.

Thirty-three per cent of people in the community considered themselves as having serious debt. Nearly all of the debt was owed to shops, indicating the high poverty levels since households have to go into debt to afford consumer goods. People also owed to others, such as churches, NGOs, cooperatives, banks, relatives, friends, neighbours and money lenders.

Fifty per cent of households in the community received money or goods on a regular basis, of which most came from government grants. The kind of grants received from government included old age pensions (52.2%), child support (21.7%) and disability grants (5.6%). In the community, no support was given by NGOs and religious groups in terms of goods and money.

On the one hand, these results paint a picture of a dependent and despondent community, caught in a trap of unemployment and poverty, of people being distrustful of authorities and institutions. The community is poorly educated and stricken by high blood pressure, respiratory problems and other illnesses. On the other hand, it seems as if the community has potential to offer opportunities for community workers. The fact that a high number of people lived in private homes (60%) could be a sign of stability. The young population (51% of people are 24 years old or younger) could be mobilised to address issues such as poverty and unemployment and lifestyle issues. The fact that almost all households in Bapong had electricity and a television, radio, refrigerator and telephone is a positive indication of people's assets. Community income-generating projects could be established by assisting community members receiving grants to add an amount of the grant towards a community project. The statistics, as indicated above, could also be used as a strategy in the motivation to government and private businesses for the establishment and improvement of services.

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4.2. Interpretation of results in terms of the SL/ABCD integrated model

If the results are scrutinised and interpreted within the integrated SL/ABCD framework, a more holistic and constructive scenario evolves.

4.2.1 Assets/capital

The household composition of the community averaged five people per stand, with the marital status of 55% of the respondents reflected as being single. A deeper analysis of the household data showed that there appeared to be a tendency (35%) towards nuclear families (formally married), in which both parents were present, which compared with national statistics of 32% (Stats SA, 2001). With respect to the different forms of families, they were primarily nuclear or single families – the most common types of family. As much as 85% of the children lived with one or both parents, showing that families can form the basis of community development programmes. This tendency can be interpreted as a social asset and an indicator of a healthy livelihood because families form the backbone of a community.

In terms of the high rate of single parents, it is interesting to note that the tradition of paying lobola (95%) was still strongly entrenched and 'prohibited' women from living with boyfriends (Deane, 2001). Lobola is a traditional Southern African custom whereby the man pays the family of his fiancé for her hand in marriage. This custom has both positive and negative effects. It is positive in that it aims at bringing the two families together, building relationships and trust between the families, and indicates that the man is capable of supporting his wife financially and emotionally (Mosoetsa, 2011). This indicates a positive tendency towards some stability in the fabric of society, which can be described as the social capital in terms of the integrated practice model. However, on the other hand, there are instances where families use lobola to pay their debt; some men see it as a monetary transaction and the women as possessions of men (Mosoetsa, 2011).

With respect to the housing situation, 60% of people owned their own houses and 40% of housing consisted of hostels and shacks (De Wet et al., 2003). Most houses (95%) had access to water and electricity, although they were not in constant supply. In addition to reasons that would have been either due to power cuts or the inability to afford electricity, this could also have been culturally driven. Wood and paraffin are part of the people's culture and used in a creative way in addition to electricity. Almost all households had basic consumer goods, namely a television, a radio, a refrigerator, farm equipment and portable cell phones. These figures indicated that the physical assets of the people of Bapong, in terms of housing, electricity and consumer goods, could be rated as positive.

Despite the high unemployment rate, people were active in both formal and informal economic activities. The fact that women were involved in informal job-generating opportunities, such as selling crafts, hairdressing, sewing/knitting and cooking/baking, was evident of the capabilities and skills of the people and the initiative they took to make a living. The human capital/assets of women were therefore evident from the reinterpretation of the results. A number of projects have been launched with women as the target group, and the capacity-building of women is now a main focus in South Africa.

The average level of education was Grade 6, which represents eight years of schooling, with a fairly high drop-out rate of school-going children evident in the community. Although the data showed that no-one had a postgraduate qualification, an awareness of the advantages of formal schooling (human capital) is now well-established in communities and, in general, school buildings are fairly well supplied by the central government (physical capital).

Lifestyle-related health problems existed in the community, namely high blood pressure, tuberculosis, diabetes, smoking and snuffing (De Wet et al., 2003). Awareness empowerment programmes could be applied to address lifestyle-related problems. There was also a strong movement by the Department of Health to establish permanent clinics in all communities and to make the dispensing of medicine more efficient and affordable.

People in the community supported each other emotionally and financially. They visited their friends and families at least once per week and also sent money to family members for support (De Wet et al., 2003). This is a common trend amongst people who are exposed to vulnerable circumstances (Kotze, 1993; Graaff, 2006; Mosoetsa, 2011). Their social assets in terms of personal support systems were well established.

Stokvels and burial societies were some of the ways in which people supported each other financially and emotionally. Spirituality, which is part of social capital, was very prominent in the community – for example, members of households were active in prayer meetings and church choirs.

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The community was culturally rooted in the black culture and people valued cultural habits and customs. For example, members of households were active in savings projects, such as stokvels and burial societies, as indicated earlier. According to a study by Mosoetsa (2011), the perceived or real failure of the state to deliver services has led to civil society playing a major role in the lives of households in community-based organisations, namely stokvels and burial societies.

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4.2.2 Activities

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Economic activities remain very important for livelihoods and therefore unemployment is a challenging problem in the country. The unemployment rate in the rural community was 34% (De Wet et al., 2003), while 66% of people were employed. The reasons for the high employment rate were that, firstly, the rural community is a mining community where job opportunities are available, and, secondly, many breadwinners were migrant workers who were working in urban areas. It is clear that people in general valued employment and were willing to take up employment wherever it is available.

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The following jobs were undertaken by people in the community: domestic work, driving, farm labour, mining–underground labour, gardening, machine operating, carpentry, cashiering, cleaning/cooking, sales, and security. The employers providing these jobs were mainly from the mine and a flower farm. A number of people were also self-employed. The reasons given why some of them stopped being in certain employment included closure of the company, the employer had emigrated, they were retrenched or the job was only temporary. Sixteen children younger than the age of 14 years were working. The majority of these children were working in their own dwellings, while some of them were involved in informal sales activities, such as selling vegetables, snacks and sweets. Three of the children were involved in farm labour and one in the repair of speakers.

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People in the rural community were trying to improve their financial position by being active in the informal sector by doing sewing/knitting, baking/cooking, arts and crafts, hairdressing, and so forth (De Wet et al., 2003). These activities contributed towards a sustainable economic life. An activity to address unemployment was to rent out backyard dwellings, which showed signs of creativity and independence.

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People in the community (33%) were in debt, but there was a strong cultural element of community-driven saving schemes, such as stokvels and burial societies. The data on crime and violence are a microcosm of the challenges facing South Africa. However, initiatives were taken by residents in the community to establish neighbourhood watch actions to monitor neighbourhoods and combat crime (De Wet et al., 2003; Morris, 2003).

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In terms of spiritual needs, respondents from the community had a stable morality, and wanted to be involved in spiritual activities (Zohar & Marshall, 2004). Activities such as church prayers and church choirs created a form of stable morality.

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Regarding the youth, there were many young people in the community (54% of respondents were under 24 years of age), but although no structures and activities had

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been established for them, strategies could be mobilised with the youth, based on their capabilities, talents and strengths.

4.2.3 Capabilities

As indicated earlier, capabilities indicate what people can do or be to help them access assets. In the community, nearly 50% of the respondents received money or goods on a regular basis, of which most came from government grants (De Wet et al., 2003; Morris, 2003). The kind of grants received from government included old age pensions, child support and disability grants. People in the community are now more aware than in the past of government grants and there has been an increase in the accessing of these grants. The positive effect is that these grants are helping people who are in dire poverty circumstances (Patel, 2005). Other forms of capabilities are the human talents and assets of people in the informal sector, such as art and craft work, baking and cooking, and so forth.

In the community, schooling was affordable and in some cases disadvantaged families were not required to pay school fees. The government's vision towards free education for all primary school learners could contribute to a higher education rate (Mosoetsa, 2011).

Owing to the fact that welfare and government services and NGOs in the rural community are not well established, people are more dependent on each other when they do experience serious problems. The result of this, according to Mosoetsa (2011:45), 'has led to civil society playing a major role in the lives of households and communities' where a range of informal associations and networks such as burial societies, stokvels and women's groups fulfil social, economic and political functions. This has also contributed to stronger relationships that strengthen the social asset base in the community. In urban communities, people tend to make more use of welfare and government services and NGOs because these services are more established (Morris, 2003). The trust and positive relationships in the community, one of the principles underlying the SL/ABCD approach, will most probably contribute to the successful application of the integrated SL/ABCD approach. The above analysis can be categorised as presented in Table 1.

4.3 Vulnerability context

The people of Bapong lived within a vulnerability context in which they were exposed to risks through circumstances, for instance natural disasters such as drought and flood; economic circumstances, such as women who were dependent on their husbands for financial support, or those who made a living from small income-generating projects such as hairdressing, selling crafts and cleaning; hardship, such as people who have died from tuberculosis and high blood pressure-related illnesses; economic policies; and trends over time, such as men who are working in the cities and not living with their families.

4.4 Livelihood strategies

Policies, institutions and processes which could be summarised as capabilities are developed to shape people's access to assets and livelihood activities. For example, governmental institutions, NGOs and police should be capacitated to deliver more

Table 1: Categorising of livelihood analysis

Assets	Activities	Capabilities
605 Household composition	Employment in the mine	Government grants
Type of housing	Job skills improvement	Schools in community, and school fees not needed to pay
Prominent role of women, children live with one or both parents	Informal sector activities	Existence and access to informal associations and network (e.g. stokvels and burial societies)
610 Level of education	Saving schemes	Claiming rights of people for grants and resources
Health – clinics	Combat crime	Access to clinics
People support each other, social and spiritual assets	Handling of crime	Access to mining jobs
615 Cultural habits and customs	Spiritual needs satisfaction	Welfare and government services and NGOs
Skills and talents of people – human assets		

620 efficient services. Another example is that the community workers could initiate a process to form partnerships between the mining company and small business entrepreneurs, such as the hairdressers and people who sell crafts to establish sustainable enterprises. It is, however, important that partnerships should be formed between institutions and community groups, based on the requirements of the community group. Even the development of infrastructure such as housing, sanitation and electricity should be done in consultation with the community. This would contribute to the situation in that the community group would take ownership of the development and not the institution.

630 **4.5 Livelihood outcomes**

The livelihoods process could be translated into outcomes as presented in Table 2 for the Bapong community.

635 **Table 2: Outcomes for Bapong community**

Asset outcomes	Activity outcomes	Capability outcomes
640 Strengthening and preservation of families; empowerment of single parenthood	Education and skills training	Grant coordination
Women empowerment	Health improvement	Grant education
Infrastructure development: housing, sanitation, electricity	Economic development through, for example, small entrepreneurial skills development	Infrastructure and services development
645 Youth development	Crime prevention	Health improvement through lifestyle improvement
Social and spiritual development	Cultural and spiritual upliftment	Education of people of their rights

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5. Final conclusions

The integration of the livelihoods and asset-based approaches provides a holistic and constructive view on poverty analysis. From the study it is evident that the integrated SL/ABCD approach and practice model provide a framework for the analysis of a community from which strategies and outcomes can be deduced for the development of the community. The integrated SL/ABCD practice model further emphasises that people, especially deprived members of the community, are central to the process and have to be involved from the beginning of the process. It is also apparent that the main focus should be on the assets and strengths of people rather than their problems and deficiencies. While the ABCD approach emphasises the participation and contributions of community members and associations in terms of development (facing inwards), the livelihoods approach also centres on policies and institutions and their role in the development of the community (facing outwards). In the end, community members would buy more into such a paradigm **because** they would be able to identify with it more strongly.

The findings and conclusions of this article are based only on one case study and therefore the findings cannot be generalised. It is recommended that further research should be undertaken to apply the integrated approach to other communities.

Disclosure statement

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