

**THE RESUSCITATION OF HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED UNIVERSITIES:  
THE CASE OF UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE**

**BY**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, **Yolisa Aviwe Mdiya**, student number **2016390888**, declare that the mini dissertation submitted for the Master's degree in Development Studies, at the Centre for Development Support, University of the Free State, South Africa, is my own work. I also confirm that this work has not been submitted to any institution for any qualification.

I am aware that plagiarism is using someone's work and presenting it as my own, and without permission and acknowledgment of the source it is an academic offence and is punishable. I have used the Harvard Referencing for citation and referencing. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this project from the work or works of other people has been attributed, cited and referenced.

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**Yolisa Aviwe Mdiya**

NOVEMBER 2020

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## **ABSTRACT**

The South African higher education system has experienced many disparities that include racial and systemic classification of higher education institutions. Historically, universities in South Africa were located according to the apartheid states and Bantustans, and as a result created racially classified institutions which are now known as Historically Advantaged Universities (HAIs) and Historically Disadvantaged Universities (HDIs). While HAIs are established in city centres, HDIs, like the University of Fort Hare, are remotely located in the outskirts of cities, marginalised and isolated in rural communities.

This study sought to analyse the role of the University of Fort Hare (UFH) in advancing the development of rural communities; and whether or not the university has adopted strategies to ensure if students partake in community engagement activities that ensure active interaction between the university's students and its communities. Through the application of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, the study measured sustainability on programmes currently being implemented at the University of Fort Hare, particularly from two departments: Management and Commerce; and Social Science and Humanities.

Overall, the study found that much effort is placed on an urban UFH campus, and rural activities are neglected. Apart from the academic and community engagement activities of the university, the constant protests and closure of the institution debilitate its functioning. The study recommends that the university implements more activities at the UFH Alice campus to ensure integration of learning and community engagement to be used to assist in the rural development of its community.

**Key terms:** University of Fort Hare, community engagement, integrated learning, sustainable development framework.

## Contents

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	ii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	iii
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	iv
<b>ACRONYMS</b> .....	vii
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	1
<b>INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY</b> .....	1
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>1.1 Problem Statement</b> .....	2
<b>1.2 Aim of the Study</b> .....	2
<b>1.3 Objectives</b> .....	3
<b>1.4 The case study about University of Fort Hare</b> .....	3
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	6
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	6
<b>2. Introduction</b> .....	6
<b>2.1 Historical Background on the differentiated systems in Higher Education</b> .....	6
<b>2.1.1 Global Perspective on differentiated systems in Higher Education</b> .....	6
<b>2.1.2 African Perspective on differentiated systems in Higher Education</b> .....	7
<b>2.1.3 Historical Background of Higher Education in South Africa</b> .....	8
<b>2.2 Development-Orientated Universities imparting skills development</b> .....	10
<b>2.3 Rural Development and HDIs</b> .....	14
<b>2.4 Theory guided by the relationship between Sustainable Livelihoods Framework and HDIs</b> .....	17
<b>2.5 Conclusion</b> .....	22
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	24
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b> .....	24
<b>3. Introduction</b> .....	24
<b>3.1 Research Design</b> .....	24
<b>3.1.1 Qualitative Research</b> .....	24
<b>3.2 Data Collection Strategy</b> .....	25
<b>3.2.1 In-depth Interviews</b> .....	25
<b>3.2.2 Document Review</b> .....	26
<b>3.3 Data collection process</b> .....	26
<b>3.3.1 Data identification</b> .....	26
<b>3.3.2 Data synthesis</b> .....	27
<b>3.4 Data Analysis Plan</b> .....	27

3.4.1	Description of Data Analysis .....	27
3.5	Sampling method .....	28
3.5.1	Limitation of sampling .....	29
3.6	Data Trustworthiness.....	29
3.7	Research Ethical Consideration .....	30
3.7.1	Informed consent .....	30
3.7.2	Confidentiality and Anonymity .....	31
3.8	Limitations of the study.....	31
3.9	Conclusion.....	32
<b>CHAPTER FOUR.....</b>		<b>34</b>
<b>THE CASE OF UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE.....</b>		<b>34</b>
<b>FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION .....</b>		<b>34</b>
4.1	Introduction .....	34
4.2	Contextual Background of the Social Sciences and Humanities faculty.....	35
4.3	Development-orientated strategies from the psychology department.....	35
4.3.1	Training of psychologists.....	35
4.3.2	Limited access of psychological services in rural communities.....	36
4.4	Sustainability of the Psychological Services Centre .....	37
4.5	Contextual Background of Management and Commerce faculty .....	39
4.6	Integration of stakeholder engagement and academic programming.....	40
4.6.1	Integration of stakeholder engagement and practical learning.....	41
4.6.2	Associations provide opportunities of internships .....	42
4.7	Sustainability of the Department of Information Systems.....	43
4.8	Conclusion.....	45
<b>CHAPTER FIVE .....</b>		<b>46</b>
<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>		<b>46</b>
5.	Introduction.....	46
5.1	Conclusions.....	46
5.1.1	Programmes Implemented at the UFH .....	46
5.1.2	Rural Development at the University of Fort Hare .....	47
5.1.3	Training for Students at the University of Fort Hare .....	49
5.1.4	Influences that contribute to ensuring that programmes are sustainable .....	50
5.2	Recommendations .....	51
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>		<b>53</b>

## **ACRONYMS**

CHEC	Cape Higher Education Consortium
HAIs	Historically Advantaged Institutions
HDIIs	Historically Disadvantaged Institutions
HBCUs	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
UFH	University of Fort Hare
PSC	Psychological Services Centre
PSET	Post-school education and training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SETA	Services Education and Training Authorities
SEZ	Special Economic Zones
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHO	World Health Organisation

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1. Introduction

The higher education sector in South Africa is fragmented by the legacy of apartheid. As such, a homogenous higher education system does not exist in South Africa (Reddy, 2004:13). The Extension of University Education (Act of 1959) gave birth to racially segregated tertiary institutions in South Africa. Black universities, currently known as Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs) can thus be categorised as the orphans of tertiary education. HDIs are underprivileged, under-resourced, lack capacity, and were established in rural areas far from elitist orientation experienced in HAIs (Morrow, 2008:263). HDIs are also known as bush universities based on their locality and their status of being under-resourced (Reddy, 2004:15).

HDIs exist on the periphery, whilst at the core are Historically Advantaged Institutions (HAIs) which were designed to benefit the apartheid government and in so doing entrenched the privilege of the White minority at the time (Bunting, 2006:52). Apartheid largely privileged former White universities to attain sustainable livelihood capitals such as human capital, financial capital, physical capital, natural, and social capital (Bunting, 2006:43). The capitals that exist in the sustainable livelihood framework were highly optimized in apartheid South Africa, especially in the HAIs.

The sustainable livelihoods framework is a device used to better understand the existing livelihoods and provides a contextual basis. (Scoones, 1998:5):

A sustainable livelihood approach is in line with sustainable development thinking but provides a more practical way to address the complexities of multiple survival strategies because it focuses on people, their resources, and their activities. (Tao & Wall, 2009:138).

The sustainable livelihood approach encompasses an observation of contextual and systemic challenges and barriers that hinder sustainable development.

This study supports the sustainable livelihoods approach, which has a high regard of understanding contextual analysis of conditions (Scoones, 1998:4) of rural communities, where HDIs exist. Education plays a pivotal role in the maintenance and

renewing of capitals, because education imparts skills and competencies for human development (Morrow, 2008:264).

This is a qualitative study that makes use of the application of the theoretical approach: Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. The University of Fort Hare premises as the case study, where focus is on non-agricultural programmes and community engagement activities in two faculties: Humanities, and Economics and Management Science. The case study exposes the complex challenges experienced by the university.

The findings of the study are presented in the fourth chapter where the determination of the role of HDIs deserves resuscitation - the accomplishment of making something dynamic or vigorous again - and if the University of Fort Hare should be supported as a custodian of rural development and sustainability, because rural development encompasses opportunities of services, income generation and local economic development or activity (Nkomo & Sehoole, 2007:244).

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

The key generator of information for economic and social development relies progressively on higher education (Fussy, 2018:124). However, public tertiary institutions in South Africa are disintegrated by the legacy of apartheid and a unified higher education system in South Africa (Booi, Vincent & Liccardo, 2017:500).

Bush universities aspire to be market model universities, yet their community service learning programmes present both challenges and opportunities which can be explored for the country to improve the quality of rural development and to achieve sustainable development goals (Nkomo & Sehoole, 2007:243). Whether HDIs are strategically positioned to advance rural development is explored in this paper.

### **1.2 Aim of the Study**

The overall purpose of the study determines the role of HDIs, particularly the University of Fort Hare, in the attainment of sustainable rural development through community engagement.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The objectives of this study are:

- To analyse and determine the role of HDIs in a democratic South African context.
- To explore strategies that HDIs use to maximise sustainable rural development through community engagement.
- To examine strategies and programmes that have been adopted by the University of Fort Hare in contribution to sustainable rural development through community engagement.

### **1.4 The case study about University of Fort Hare**

The University of Fort Hare (UFH) has been labelled as a “bush university” and is sometimes referred to as a traditional university. The UFH, being a traditional university, creates an assumption that the institution will only offer basic academic programmes in the social science and humanities field (Cloete, Bunting & Bailey, 2017:3). UFH is founded on the principles of Christianity, and the British colonial powers introduced programmes that were administrative instead of technical programmes such as engineering (Massey, 2010:6).

Though UFH was defined as an institution that produced administrative graduates, the institution has also produced five African heads of state: Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Ntsu Mokhehle of Lesotho, Sir Seretse Khama of Botswana and Yusuf Lule of Uganda. The UFH has a prestigious alumnus, but there is a dire need for radical alteration of institutional cultures and practices that were inherited pre-1994 and those that are intensified by neoliberal economic forces (Booi *et al.*, 2017:499).

UFH has a rich history, and its mission is to compete internationally. The mission of the UFH is:

...to provide high quality education of international standards contributing to the advancement of knowledge that is socially and ethically relevant, and applying that knowledge to the scientific, technological and social-economic development of our nation and the wider world. (University of Fort Hare, 2020).

The institution has six faculties and it registers a total of approximately 8 548 students, the majority being placed on the Alice campus (University of Fort Hare, 2013). The six faculties are a composite of the following: Management and Commerce with seven departments; Health Science with five departments; Education, no specified departments; Social Science and Humanities inclusive of fifteen departments; Science and Agriculture inclusive of fourteen departments; and the Nelson Mandela School of Law with four departments. In this study, two of the six faculties are investigated. One department from each faculty is part of the sample for the study. The sample consists of the Management and Commerce faculty with the Information Systems department, and Social Science and Humanities with the Psychology department.

Case study research provides an understanding of complex issues and usually affirms primary or secondary research (Soy, 1997). A case study research method aims to offer an in-depth analysis captured with rich narratives of lived experiences from those who participated in the activities that are being investigated (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:15). An added advantage of the case study research is the ability to use other methods in gathering information. In understanding the case study, a constructivism approach will be applied. A constructivism approach examines the interaction between people and their environment, whether it is institutions or other people (Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery and Sheikh, 2011:7).

Notwithstanding the uniqueness of the UFH, the nature of the case study will be an instrumental case study. An instrumental case study offers an understanding to a situation and the researcher will have an opportunity to provide reasons for using a particular case (Harling, 2012:2). In addition, Yin (1995) suggests that theory may be adopted in an exploratory way in the case study. Harling (2012) supports the notion of theory being used as exploratory because a case study informs the application of theory. To examine the case study of the UFH, existing theory and a sustainable livelihoods framework will be pertinent, as this will provide a starting point and inform the application of the case. Using theory will also assist in how data will be filtered into well structured data (Harling, 2012:3).

The shortcoming of a case study is that it is not representative of the wider social setting of the identified problem and general assumptions should be avoided (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:67). The shortcomings of a case study research will help

narrow the search to the UFH. The following chapter elaborates the method that will be adopted for gathering data for the case study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2. Introduction**

This chapter provides the literature that is related to the Resuscitation of Bush Universities. It presents an international, regional, and national overview of how higher education institutions were formed, especially those that intended to segregate different groups. It presents a case for a development-orientated university as a key driver for rural development and is guided by the sustainable livelihoods' framework as a measure for sustainable livelihood strategies. The chapter ends with conclusionary remarks of why HDIs are better positioned to assist in rural development while achieving skills development of its students.

#### **2.1 Historical Background on the differentiated systems in Higher Education**

During the UNESCO Conference in 1961, it was expressed that higher education institutions need to be developmental universities and the state should assist in mandating the call for this agenda (Greenough, 1961:16-20). Different models have been implemented in various countries; the sections on historical background provides an overview of differentiated education systems of higher education globally, regionally and nationally. The global perspective provides an overview from practices both in the United States and Europe. The regional perspective provides an overview on dual systems created in Africa and finally, the national perspective highlights the system in South Africa with a concentration on the University of Fort Hare.

##### **2.1.1 Global Perspective on differentiated systems in Higher Education**

The United States of America (USA) has also had elite universities, also referred to as Ivy Leagues. Ivy League universities are positioned in affluent urban areas where merit and privilege usually experience contest in admitting prospective students in the universities (Ornstein, 2019:339). Ornstein (2019) also provides that elitism played a role in the upkeep of English universities such as Cambridge and Oxford. In England, students who attended secondary schools in town schools were of a lower and working class and were therefore deemed to be undeserving of a university education that typically births professionals such as doctors, lawyers and accountants. In fact, the system ensured that town schools produced labourers who did not have analytical or

critical skills, creating a dual system. Cloete and Maassen (2015:3) assert that the development process was done by a selection of elites that created networks and clear distinctions between the learned and unlearned.

The dual education systems became a reality during the pre- and post-revolutionary period (Ornstein, 2019:336). Depending on the class of parents, if a child came from an elite and affording family, they would attend university at Harvard or Yale. The call for reform and transformation became more apparent when there was conflict between merit and privilege, and the demand for education increased (Cloete & Maassen 2015:3). The historical injustice meant that funds were directed to Ivy League universities which eventually created disparities in terms of funding. Equity and equality had been challenged in courts in America since 1896 in the Plessy vs Ferguson (1896) case that established the doctrine of 'separate but equal' which entrenched racial segregation and implied that Black people were inferior.

Unfortunately, because of the systemic historical injustice in the United States of America, historically Black colleges, and universities (HBCUs) experience fiscal discrimination and funding inequalities and yet HBCUs serve the largest number of disadvantaged students in America (Abelman and Dalessandro, 2009:106). The literature suggests that globally, higher education has experienced racialised or classist education systems (Sav, 2010:296).

The constant struggle between merit and privilege remained and was later accompanied by the demand for access into higher education institutions. This resulted in the accommodation of academic elites that were less dependent on class or background (Cloete & Maassen 2015:3). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a new model of education and training was introduced, which focussed on the production of scientific knowledge (Cloete & Maassen 2015:4) and which has been adopted internationally. Since then, universities can be categorised as: research universities, science and technology universities; and finally, as university-industry partnerships.

### **2.1.2 African Perspective on differentiated systems in Higher Education**

Prior to colonial rule, institutions of higher education in Africa existed, particularly in Mali and Egypt, however during the colonial period higher education was neglected or provision was limited (Tefera, 2016:80). Higher education institutions that existed

prior to colonial rule in Africa may not have the same methodologies as Western traditional universities. The difference in methodologies does not erase their existence. Recruitment of students was based on social standing and eliteness. When colonial rule came to an end, some countries created new institutions, whilst others worked towards transforming existing universities that were created by the colonial powers (Tefera, 2016:80).

When Europeans settled in Africa, they built institutions of higher learning according to their social conditioning and not African social conditioning, therefore creating contemporary institutions of learning. When colonizers created universities in Africa, they were informed by practices that existed in their countries (Cloete & Maassen 2015:4). These institutions are founded in a lot of indoctrination of the church and a religious authority was imposed on Africans. The indoctrination did not appeal to Africans and created discontentment, because their history and practises were slowly being erased and that created a superiority complex of Western education (Tefera, 2016:82).

Post-independence of many African countries, some countries opted to build universities, however, these institutions were confined to structural dependence of the former colonizers (Assié-Lumumba, 2006:29). Higher education institutions in Africa require a separate discussion because different countries experience the cost of their freedoms differently. Assié-Lumumba (2006) provides extensive research in this regard. However, it is key to note that Africans had to transform themselves into the likeness of colonizers to receive the same education as colonizers. The education system also differentiated Africans, as those who attained an education were considered to be esteemed consequently creating an elite system. In South Africa was used to create labourers of natives and to limit them to being subservant labourers.

### **2.1.3 Historical Background of Higher Education in South Africa**

In 2001 the Association of African Universities affirmed that African universities need to be role players in the national development plan (Grobbelaar & De Wet, 2016:165). The South African National Development Plan reiterated that universities should be drivers of development through enhancing human capital, generation of knowledge and the application thereof (National Planning Committee [NPC], 2011:262)). In South Africa, the situation is different because the South African

education system was used as a segregation tool and as a result, this saw marginalised groups participating in and utilising an education system that offered them subservient and subordinate positions in society (Morrow, 2008:265).

The post-apartheid government in South Africa inherited systemic challenges of a racially divided country, which also translated to racially divided tertiary education systems. The view of the apartheid government worked towards a separate indigenous culture, the society that ordered African people to be an impoverished and segregated version of the dominant White order (Cloete et al, 2017:2).

The apartheid education system of South Africa played a role in destroying the social fabric of the country. The apartheid education system created differentiated systems in the education sector, hence the resistance to equality, patterns of systemic inclusion and non-discrimination (South African Human Rights Commission, 2016:22). Socially, because of differentiated environments, there have been vulnerabilities experienced by HDIs. There is a symbolic bond between socialisation and survival, and between education and production in the stressed environments of the urban townships, undermined the values of co-operation and communication (Nekhwevha, 1999:492).

HDIs were created for the use of Black people and as such the HDIs primarily served the former homelands. Many of these universities offered degrees that were ordained in the public sector with less reliance on maths and science professions like veterinary science, engineers, and architects (Morrow, 2008:265).

In the post-apartheid South Africa, there was a growing interest in economic, technical, and scientific solutions for the development of the country, but HDIs were disadvantaged because they had very little to offer (Cloete et al, 2017:2). HDIs remain prodigiously occupied by Black students whilst HAIs have grown to be multiracial institutions (Morrow, 2008:266).

The reality is more and more Black students are occupying higher institutions of education and the number will increase because Black people are in the majority. Even though institutions of higher education are attracting Black people, the transformation of these institutions should not only focus on race. Institutions should be cognisant of the intersection of the different forms of oppression in HDIs, instead of reducing the

transformation plan to racial equality, but discounting transformational issues experienced in HDIs (South African Human Rights Commission, 2016:20).

Coloured (University of the Western Cape) and Indian institutions of higher education (University of Natal, now merged into University of KwaZulu Natal) are of close proximity to cities as compared to Black universities like the University of Zululand, University of Venda and the University of Fort Hare (Morrow, 2008:265). The uniqueness of HDIs is the juxtaposition they represent of Black struggle and aspiration with a great alumni of Black excellence. However, the role of HDIs, like HAIs cannot be undermined nor taken for granted as these institutions played a role as “ideological apparatuses” of values and social legitimation (Castells, 2001:6-12) and cannot be single-purpose institutions that only generate research, but should be inclusive and pluralistic to include development.

The ideological apparatuses are evident at the University of Fort Hare, for instance, they have produced prestigious Black alumni who became African leaders and birthed opposition political parties such as the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Movement (Morrow, 2008:267), but this has not translated into the institution’s ability to transform rural development at an acceptable pace.

## **2.2 Development-Orientated Universities imparting skills development**

Oosthuizen and Borat (2005:15) identified that South Africa has an oversupply of graduates with no speciality degrees but rather general studies that are not necessarily in demand in the economy. There is an apparent case of skills mismatch and this has created a barrier to the economic growth in the country (Oosthuizen and Borat 2005:15). In addition, Griesel and Parker (2009:20) found that employers require graduates to have soft skills; that is, basic professional communication and technology skills. Employers also identified that graduates struggle with written communication and the ability to process and use accessed information (Daniels, 2007:31).

Post-apartheid trends indicate that employability is determined by various social factors such as race, gender, and type of institution: whether the institution is an HAI or HDI (Bhorat, Mayet & Visser, 2012:113). The labour market outcome evidence

suggests that graduates from HDIs are significantly less likely to find employment (Moleke, 2005a:16). Empirical work with various firms also indicates that employers perceive HDIs as producing lower quality graduates (Moleke, 2005a:16).

Since HDI graduates do not seem favourable to employers, it is important to explore how to strengthen the skills set of graduates and provide a platform to attain soft skills. The concept of a developmentally-orientated university has been idealised as an opportunity to drive socio-economic transformation (Mbah, 2016:1228). Such a university orientates itself in the generation of knowledge and engages in activities that foster the improvement of living conditions of the citizenry. The aim of a developmentally-orientated university is to bridge the gap between fostering knowledge and participating in activities that ensure use of knowledge to improve living conditions (Mbah, 2016:1228).

A developmentally-orientated university created controversy as universities had to work alongside governments towards development direction (Cloete & Maassen, 2015:7). The concept of developmentally-orientated university made sense in abstract, however, the politics at play created spaces for contestation instead of creating a development of the states (Jansen, 2004:312). The World Bank began to advocate for the “rate of return to investments in education” study, suggesting that university should be trimmed to only train on skills that the market demands (Cloete & Maassen, 2015:8). The autonomy of higher education institutions in South Africa has always been a challenge because apartheid permitted institutions to decide who was admitted, not only limited to merit, but also to race (Jansen, 2004:294). South Africa’s democracy demands that higher education institutions are regulated and Jansen (2004:4) argues that this erodes the autonomy of the institutions.

An institution’s ability to generate knowledge alone is not enough to address the developmental concerns of its community. It helps if academics understand community development as “a process that provides community members with the ability to act collectively and improve their situation in their local area” (Mbah, 2016:1229). Practitioners understand community development as practices that aim to improve livelihood resources such as the physical, economical, and social needs of the community (Mbah, 2016:1229). Higher education institutions of learning would

benefit from real life experiences of the community and would contribute to academic understanding of the subject matter.

Through integrated community service learning, institutions could assist in the development of communities, partially achieving the functioning and mandate of a developmentally-orientated university. The disconnect between universities and communities is illustrated in a study where people from a Ugandan village refused to participate in research surveys because they felt as though they contributed to information that did not benefit them or did not solve the problem (Zeelen, 2012:162). Communication research feedback is a rare incident that universities rarely undertake (Zeelen, 2012:162). There is no uniform solution, however Nussbaum (2003:22) underpins basic principles that should guide the process and this is the hallmark of Ubuntu – the process of paying attention to what people say, affirming others, and creating processes that are embedded with trust, fairness, dignity and harmony in relationships.

Community service-learning in South Africa has transformed from a political activist tradition to incorporating formal knowledge production in HDIs (Subotzky, 1999:519). The partnership between a development-orientated university and student learning is crucial and where successful, this could bear sustainable results and mutual benefit for all stakeholders (Subotzky, 1999:521).

Democracy in South Africa has demanded that policies be implemented to ensure that tertiary institutions adhere to the core principles of the South African Constitution: human dignity, equality and freedom. In so doing, government implemented policies, including the founding of the South African National Qualifications Authority to oversee the accreditation of qualifications in South Africa (Jansen, 2004:295). Whilst culture and autonomy intersect, it is important for South African tertiary institutions to ascertain internal and external stakeholders to relate to the identity, heritage and societal needs (Saurombe, 2018:126).

The South African government has indicated its efforts in trying to enrol more students in the science, engineering and technology (Department of Education, 2001; NDP, 2011) however, enrolling students in the targeted programmes does not result in the achievement thereof (Cloete, 2004:52). The unfortunate reality suggests that

race, gender and the type of institution are determinants of employment or entry into the labour market (Rogan & Reynolds, 2015:345). Rogan and Reynolds (2015) suggest that graduates from HDIs are unlikely to immediately enter the labour market after graduating.

In a South African study conducted by Rogan and Reynolds (2015, it was indicated that completion of courses at the UFH was influenced by external factors as opposed to personal interest. Of the 742 surveys conducted, 32% of the students amended their choice of study due to the following reasons: first, students changed their courses to complete their degree to start seeking employment; and second, students changed their courses to attain funding. Whilst UFH graduates changed courses due to circumstances, 225 (48%) of Rhodes graduates changed courses based on interest.

Though government intentions are to increase enrolment in the science, engineering and technology fields, research indicates that students at the UFH change their academic choices because failures delay attainment of degrees and/or there is little funding for the programme of their choice.

Figure 1 is a representation of the broad unemployment rates by fields of study as of 1 March 2014 (Rogan & Reynolds, 2015:351). As can be perceived from Figure 1, there is a clear indication that UFH graduates (20%) experience higher rates of unemployment as compared to Rhodes University graduates (7%). For both universities, the education sector experienced a low unemployment rate, and this can be attributed to the enablers that government introduced in the sector and the development of a practical application of the teaching degree accompanied by a 'Fundza Lusaka' bursary that is provided by the state (Rogan & Reynolds, 2015:351). The current trends in the education programme suggest that universities and government embarked on a developmentally-orientated approach, hence the low unemployment rate for education graduates.

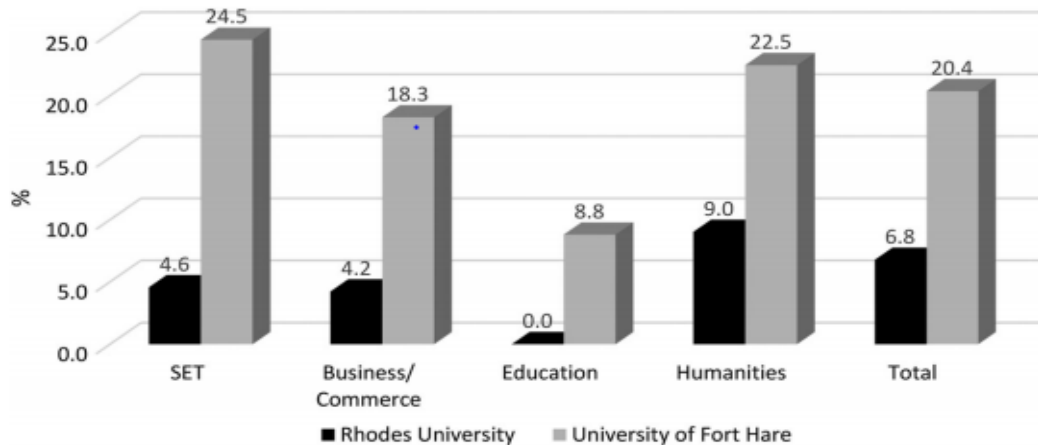


Figure 1: Broad unemployment rates by fields of study (as of 1 March 2014)

Of those who were employed, 73% of Rhodes graduates were employed in the private sector and 67% of University of Fort Hare graduates were employed in the public sector (Rogan & Reynolds, 2015:350), which reflects the intention of the apartheid government’s education planning stance.

The unintended consequences of transitioning higher education institutions are visible. HDIs have produced less research but have achieved equity, yet HAIs have a high number of researchers and experts, but have low equity indices (Booi *et al.*, 2017:499). HAIs have cited that recruitment and retention of black academics and staff have been a major challenge (Booi *et al.*, 2017:499). Subotzky (1997:498) suggests that emphasis should not be placed on achieving equity alone, but overall transformation of HDIs, which as a result would allow these institutions to compete globally and achieve sustainable reconstructive development goals.

HDIs are institutions which have lived experiences in underdeveloped communities (Morrow, 2008:266). The development-orientated approach can provide solutions for HDIs to lead the rural development where they have been placed, but such solutions need to be accompanied by substantial innovations of integrated community service-learning, teaching, research, and outreach programs (Subotzky, 1997:498).

### 2.3 Rural Development and HDIs

The World Bank (1975) defines rural development as “a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people - the rural poor.”

The United Nations Development Programme: Human Development Report (1999:25) indicated that the global dynamics, especially those which have rural communities, are “uneven and unbalanced.” There is an imbalance of power of large, marginalised groups who live in rural communities. South African rural communities are divorcing from traditional farming and being land-dependent when shops provide products without intensive labour from the buyer (Madzivhandila, 2014:91).

The rural communities that in which HDIs exist in have been identified as rural and rurality has been synonymous with agricultural activities. This has been counter-productive to the opportunities that exist in those communities because it is only agricultural solutions that have been explored in rural communities (Madzivhandila, 2014:91). HDIs are disadvantaged from participating in market-related research because enrolments are largely in the non-science fields. HDIs often have a culture of underdeveloped research, underqualified staff and inadequate support for research. There is a deficiency of institutional capacity and infrastructure. HDIs have difficulties in attracting funding and there are existing barriers (academic networking and institutional co-operation) created in terms of the rural geographic area of HDIs (Subotzky, 1999:518). The industrial age contributed to the narrow view of rural communities based on the differentiation of urban and rural communities (Madzivhandila, 2014:90).

Ashley and Maxwell (2001:418) defined four principles that would make rural development a success. The four principles consist of, first, the recognition of diversity in those rural communities. Second, a contextual overview of the past and future changes in rural communities. Third, an in-depth analysis and strategies that recognise multi-occupational opportunities coupled with multi-located households and finally, innovative and creative productive sectors in rural development (Ashley & Maxwell, 2001:418). These principles have been applied in the concluding remarks in the fifth chapter. The findings have assisted in determining whether the programme initiatives achieve sustainable rural development at the University of Fort Hare.

Higher education institutions such as HDIs which are based in rural communities have the added advantage and opportunities to provide guiding strategy formulations in different fraternities and diversification of rural communities (Ashley & Maxwell, 2001:408). Notwithstanding the disadvantages suffered by HDIs, there are numerous

programmes that have contributed to the development and exhilaration of the communities which share historical, political, and geographic links with HDIs (Subotzky, 1999:509).

It has been argued by Jansen (2004), that HDIs are dysfunctional and as a result need to be scrapped, and HAs which are academically superior should be reformed and improved to accommodate the majority of South Africans who have access to these institutions. However, South African HDIs have an added advantage in developing sustainable solutions for rural communities and providing solutions for basic reconstruction. With the proper financial assistance, HDIs have the potential to fulfil and contribute to national policy goals that are geared towards social and community development (Subotzky, 1999:509).

Rural development should not only rely on subsistence farming and commercial farming but diversify non-farming opportunities. Various assets need to be explored into desired outcomes. There is a need to recognise rural development as a multi-sectoral development initiative (Riggs, 2006:184). This does not in any way suggest that rural development and reconstruction become the sole responsibility of the HDIs, but co-ordination and co-operation, both at national and regional level, should be strategically addressed by all institutions (Subotzky, 1999:509).

HDIs are currently strategically positioned to achieve development goals and to make the Rio Declaration (the twenty-seven principles intended to guide countries in future sustainable development) a reality because location of the HDIs is beneficial towards rural development. Rural development should not exclude opportunities for improved provision of services, innovative income-generation strategies, vitalised local economic development, and physical security (Nkomo & Sehoole, 2007:241). Spatial isolation that the UFH and other HDIs experience is telling of the gross neglect and bias that the government has invested into urban areas, and unfortunately, universities that exist in the locus have experienced the same (Nkomo & Sehoole, 2007:241).

Linking the academic core as dimensions of interconnectedness indicated in the figure below (van Schalkwyk, 2015:216) illustrates the relationship that the university has with external and internal stakeholders. The illustration also shows that

engagement with stakeholders exists at two levels at the university. The first is with university management, where funders, government, industry firms, civil society and other communities are kept abreast with the university's mandate. These ensure that the university's strategy is aligned and articulated well with stakeholders. The second interaction affects students directly, because knowledge production (research, teaching and learning) are transferred through engagement activities or service learning. Through engagement activities, there is a transfer of knowledge and skills.

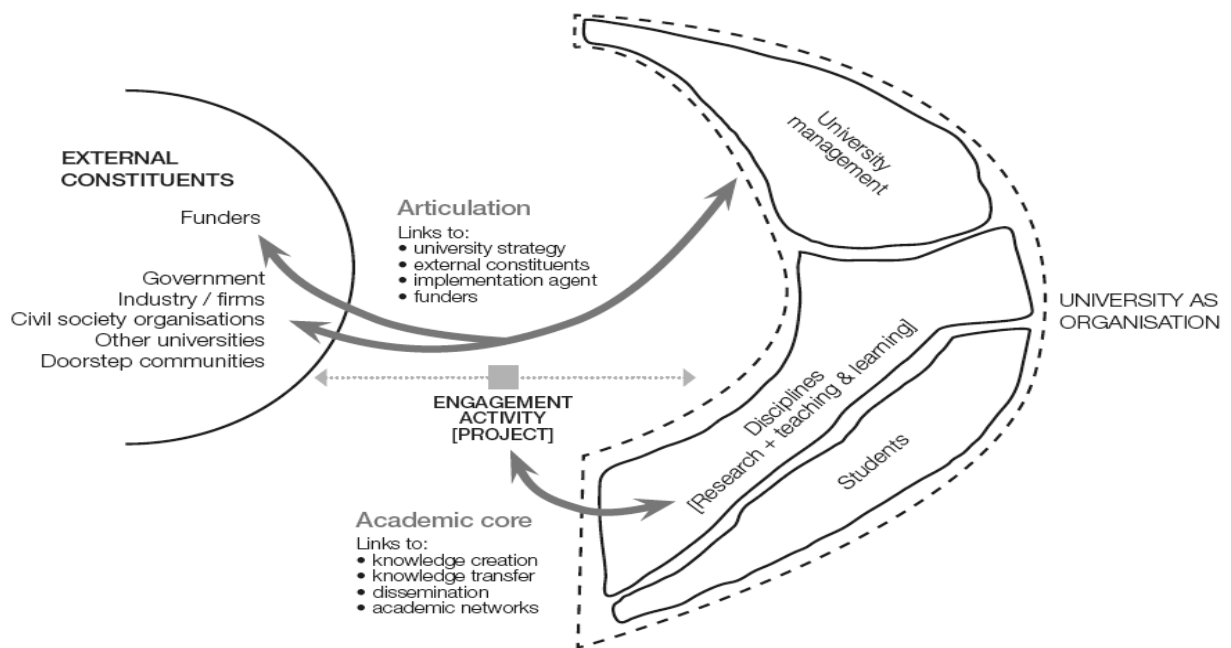


Figure 2: Articulation and linking to the academic core as dimensions of interconnectedness

Inevitably, the call to resuscitate bush universities is an opportunity to resuscitate rural economies as well:

A strategy to achieve growth must be founded on an understanding of how rural areas grow. Growth in agriculture, tourism, forestry, and other primary activities generates additional income through linkage in expenditure and employment. (Nkomo & Sehoole, 2007:244).

## 2.4 Theory guided by the relationship between Sustainable Livelihoods Framework and HDIs

Post-apartheid South Africa presents an opportunity for the current role players not to assimilate to the pre-1994 spatial dimensions without redress of an intensive structural and systemic agenda towards inclusivity and sustainability (Mahlati,

2011:52). Mahlati (2011) emphasises that the systemic hindrance which creates hurdles in the achievement of sustainable development, provides a need to define it. “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED], 1987:43). The sustainable livelihoods framework puts emphasis on people and the strength of the people (Brocklesby & Fisher, 2003:194). The sustainable livelihoods framework also takes into consideration resource management which is distributed in separate sectors (Sen, 1981:18).

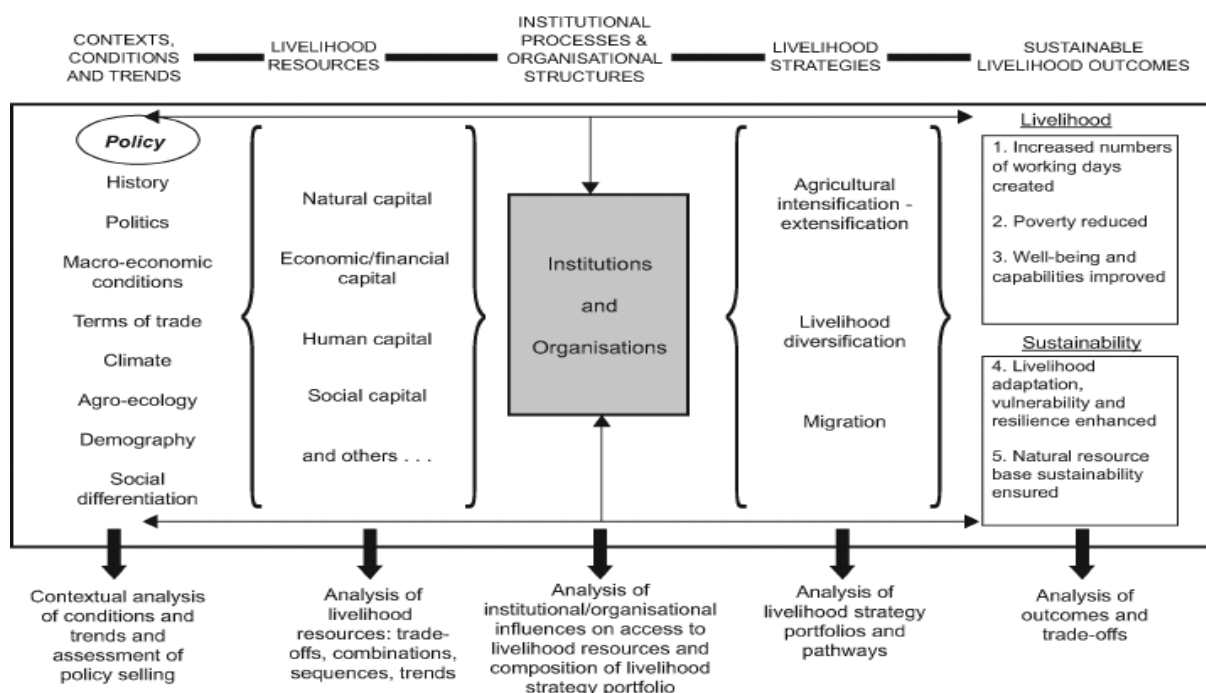


Figure 3: Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (Scoones, 1998:4)

The concept of sustainable livelihoods is rooted in the work done by Scoones (1998) who later collaborated with Castells, (2009). The sustainable livelihoods framework provides an analysis of the following components:

1. *Contextual basis*: history implications, policy, macro-economic conditions, demography, social differentiation, climate, and terms of trade:

Underdevelopment and poverty are multifaceted as they are not a problem resolved by economic growth alone but include other factors and dimensions such as literacy levels, social services, and health services in a community (Scoones, 1998:5). Understanding the context of where the UFH is placed assists in

contextualising challenges and identifies opportunities that could be ventured into by the university. Spatial policies in South Africa pre-1994 were disempowering, brutal and oppressive economies of colonialism and apartheid (Mahlali, 2011:82). The status of rural development and HDIs reflects the dependency theory where HDIs still exist in the periphery and strive to move to the core (David, Theron and Maphunye, 2014:13).

2. *Livelihood resources*: natural capital, financial or economical capital, human capital, and social capital:

Livelihood resources are basic tangible and intangible assets that people use to establish their livelihoods (Scoones, 1998:7). The resources are referred to as capitals to stress their role as means, that is ability and capability (Castells, 2009, 3; Scoones, 1998:7). The UFH does have existing capitals: natural capital as availability of land; financial or economical capital is the monetary basis (debt or credit) of the institution; human capital is the skills and knowledge that can be imparted to successfully implement strategies and as an institution of education that produces graduates, it can be assumed human capital exists at UFH; and social capital consists of associations, affiliations and social relations that assist in co-ordinating actions. An analysis of livelihoods assists in the determination of what is required and where investment can be made to meet the gaps (Scoones, 1998:9).

3. *Institutional or structural processes*: reviews the influence on access to livelihood resources.

Institutional or structural processes have a huge impact in determining how to execute strategies in the context of recognised practices – rules and norms of society (Scoones, 1998:12). Institutions or structures might exist formally or informally; however, they are important in society as they employ some level of power to influence and mediate on livelihood strategies which have an intended sustainable livelihood outcome. Higher education institutions like the UFH are institutions that are established in fulfilling guidelines of establishment set out in the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997. As contained in chapter five of the Higher Education Act, when institutions have been established, institutions make use of

the power that has been bestowed on them and this includes devising strategies to ensure they are operational.

4. *Livelihood strategies: provision of strategies and pathways for the desired outcomes.*

Livelihood strategies provide pathways and activities to be implemented to ensure that fundamental changes occur gradually over targeted years. Scoones (1998) recommended that the previous steps that require analysis need to be combined into a plan. Analysis without strategizing leaves no room for implementation. When the UFH has established opportunities and challenges, it is important to plan how to work on those identified opportunities and challenges.

5. *Sustainable livelihood outcomes:* ensure that the desired strategies achieve the desired outcomes of improved livelihoods and sustainability of interventions. Sustainable livelihood outcomes are usually presented as security and/or improved well-being (Scoones, 1998:15). If the UFH succeeds in the implementation of its strategies, then their graduates should receive better employment opportunities - a return on investment in their education.

Sustainable rural livelihoods are essential to the call for rural development, environment management and poverty reduction (Scoones, 1998:3). In support of the sustainable livelihoods framework, it is important to recognise HDIs as catalysts of sustainable rural development in rural communities (Scoones, 1998:9). HDIs, like the University of Fort Hare, are supposed to have a significant number of programmes that are community-orientated partnerships, which are based on three aspects:

- (a) HDIs drive the call for social equity and redress which fulfil the role of higher education institutions contributing towards the public good as opposed to solely contributing to the interest of the market.
- (b) HDIs have contributed uniquely to the conceptualisation and operational dynamics of reconstruction and development which address national policy goals that will enhance external effectiveness and institutional status, and
- (c) HDIs achieve social integration and enrichment of communities through teaching, research, and community services (Subotzky, 1997:510).

Rural communities have an abundance of land, natural resources and semi-skilled to unskilled human capital, but poverty is optimal in those communities (Desai & Potter, 2014:332). Rural development should strengthen local productive capabilities by using institutions of higher education and learning to enable an increase in capabilities that would benefit the rural economies associated with new industries of technologies skills (Madzivhandila, 2014:92).

Livelihoods diversification is the key for redefining and solving rural development challenges and introducing non-farming activities such as road infrastructure and socio-economic hubs; industries; furniture; eco-tourism; and alternative energy (Desai & Potter, 2014:332). The spatial policies in South Africa disadvantaged many rural communities, however there is an opportunity to co-ordinate non-farming activities and livelihoods located within an area of HDIs and to make use of the capitals or livelihood resources that already exist in those communities (Madzivhandila, 2014:92).

Higher education institutes are key instruments in playing a role in national development, not necessarily limited to knowledge production, but extended to capacity building, interchange of expertise, and political influence (Grobbelaar & De Wet, 2016:165).

Subsequently, the sustainable livelihoods framework recognises institutions and organisations as key established and structured entities that are devoted to a cause or programme. Institutions like the University of Fort Hare have the potential or the 'capacity' to influence access to livelihood resources and provide a structure of livelihood strategy portfolio. In exploring the state of higher education in developing countries, the World Bank and UNESCO concluded that higher education institutions are vital in the contribution of development (Brennan, King and Lebeau, 2004:26).

Intersectionality of race and social class has begun in many institutions in South Africa, yet there is little regard for HDIs because these institutions are still largely occupied by Black people (Tsheola, 2014:868). Those who stand to benefit in tertiary education are those who have a good educational background and sound financial resources.

The existing physical capital needs to be properly maintained and, the existing intellectual capital and the potential of what can be produced. There is an opportunity

to develop strong social capital and to build strong communal relations with the support of a respected alumni (Nkomo & Sehoole, 2007:245).

Though some institutions have merged, the division of what was, is still in existence. For instance, the same institution which carries the same name will have different fee structures and two levels of provision (Morrow, 2008:267). South Africa went through an exercise of merging public tertiary institutions with the hope that mergers would create an inclusive and non-discriminatory culture (Jansen, 2004:10). The University of Fort Hare has two campuses. In the small rural town of Alice, the UFH kept to its adjusted fee structure on a yearly basis. The East London campus was initially the Rhodes University part-time campus, but was changed into the UFH. However, the cost of a programme at the East London and Alice campus differs based on the status represented from the past (Cloete, *et al.*, 2017:5-7; Nkomo & Sehoole, 2007:240).

Some argue that HDIs are a waste of money and that they should be discarded since they are a direct product of apartheid. They also produce a narrow view of socio-cultural conceptions that have not transitioned past apartheid models (Nkomo & Sehoole, 2007:244). Though HDIs do not have first world resources, they have the potential of improving socio-economic conditions of the communities in which they exist. The underdevelopment experienced by rural communities poses an opportunity for development to take place.

Rural development enhances innovation, social cohesion, improved infrastructure, a vibrant community and reduced vulnerabilities (Nkomo & Sehoole, 2007:244). The role of higher education institutions is to create an enabling and inclusive environment to assist in redefining and restructuring the economic system to benefit the rural people and their environment (Mahlali, 2011:134).

## **2.5 Conclusion**

This chapter presented an overview of the role of higher education, particularly that of HDIs. It also provided theoretical guidelines through the sustainable livelihoods framework. The chapter highlighted a case for a development-orientated university to focus on rural development through its initiatives and programmes, because the role of higher education institutions is twofold: first, the role of contributing to the socio-

economic landscape of South Africa through the development of human capital to help steer South Africa into a globally competitive economy; and second, to be of service for the public good and to yield critical contributors or academics that contribute to the development of the country to help it maintain a vibrant democratic society. This chapter also provided suggestions of where engagement between the university and the community happen to drive development in the locus of HDIs.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3. Introduction**

In this chapter, the focus is on the research methodology which informs the research design. The chapter provides a framework that was used for the collection and analysis of data, the sampling technique, and a description of the research method as a technique for collection of data. Issues regarding data trustworthiness, limitations of the study and ethical considerations are discussed extensively in this chapter.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative approach and data collection was extracted from documents that were reviewed.

##### **3.1.1 Qualitative Research**

This study applied a qualitative research method. A qualitative research method was adopted because it best reflects through language, lived experiences and practice instead of numbers. Significance of qualitative research relies on understanding the respondent's attachment to their environment (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2005:37). The use of a qualitative method was applicable to enlighten realities of HDIs and to enhance or improve community development. Qualitative research assists reliance on the subject, where an individual or groups of participants narrate their lived experiences in their own words and this approach affords the researcher an opportunity to gather core information from the subject (Matthews & Ross, 2014:133).

The qualitative approach makes use of interpretive approaches and seeks to understand the subject's definition of a situation; furthermore, encouraged the researcher to be the vehicle of the realities that intended be revealed and to have an eye for the socially constructed interpretations of the livelihoods (Klein & Myers, 1999:74).

Klein and Myers (1999:74) suggest that qualitative research enables the researcher to get the indigenous knowledge of what is being studied. It is the best way of understanding the perspective of the subject and the attachment they have towards the 'definition of the situation' (Punch, 2005:238). Patton's (1990:40) themes of a

qualitative inquiry require a naturalistic inquiry because there is rare manipulation by the researcher and more openness to what emerges, and the researcher eliminates responsiveness and pursues new paths of discovery as they emerge.

The choice of qualitative research is based on the importance of institutions being recognised as juristic persons telling their stories and sharing their own experiences. A natural person is a human being. A juristic person is a legal entity which is recognised as having rights and responsibilities. Thus, a quantitative approach would not accommodate a contextual understanding of the data collected. In addition, a quantitative study would quantify the initiatives, but the purpose of this research is to explore the potential of HDIs in human development and specifically, in looking at the quality of initiatives introduced by UFH to attain sustainable rural development.

### **3.2 Data Collection Strategy**

The data collection strategy adopted for this study was done through the application of document reviews and in-depth interviews. Primary data was supposed to be collected by making use of in-depth interviews, however, this was not a success due to reasons stipulated below. Since in-depth interviews were not successful, document reviews provided a process for secondary data.

#### **3.2.1 In-depth Interviews**

Since this is a qualitative study, making use of in-depth interviews was an ideal approach. The sample was intended to include persons responsible for the programmes or initiatives to be investigated in this research. The purposes of in-depth interviews provide an authentic and trustworthy information of lived experiences (Bryman, 2016:470). This assists in the study as reality is transcribed as a reflection of the interviewee's experience.

Interviews were intended to be recorded and transcribed, with the objective to gather more data about what programme implementers had to say about the programmes or initiatives that are implemented, and also to observe the expression of those interviewed. Bryman (2016:482) asserts that qualitative research does not only concern itself with what the respondent has to say but also how words are expressed. Though the study intended to conduct in-depth interviews, this did not

happen because of UFH's academic closure due to the global pandemic, as well as contentious issues highlighted in the fourth chapter.

### **3.2.2 Document Review**

Document review makes use of existing data sources (Bell & Waters, 2014:125). In this study, documents that are reviewed are primarily gathered from the University of Fort Hare's website. The documents consist of the following:

- UFH's news publications
- UFH's website
- Letters of notice from the Office of the Vice Chancellor
- Government Gazettes about the UFH
- Brochures and publications of the sampled departments

The purpose of the document review is to examine and interpret the information to produce contextual understanding, particularly that of the University of Fort Hare.

Document review is ideal because it is easily accessible, engaging and improves on the work which has been previously done (Bell & Waters, 2014:125). In addition, document review assists the researcher in revealing the meaning and developing an in-depth understanding of the research problem (Angers & Machtmes, 2005:772). To achieve convergence and substantiation, multiple sources of evidence have been referred to and consulted.

### **3.3 Data collection process**

The data collection process entailed a literature review process. The literature review process proposes an analysis of documents consulted, identification of credible documents and synthesizing of the data collected (Cronin, Ryan & Coughlan, 2008:40).

#### **3.3.1 Data identification**

Since the university's closure and the global coronavirus pandemic during the data collection period, the documents collected were identified on the University of Fort Hare's website. The UFH's website seems to be outdated except for the newsletters and press releases web pages. Detailed documents that were gazetted were attained

from the Government Gazette website. Additional sources such as external research documents were sourced from the internet and this included technical reports.

### **3.3.2 Data synthesis**

Data synthesizing assists in terms of identifying key emerging themes from the data collection. The data synthesis is a process of determining coding from the primary study and documents consulted for the research (Tong, Palmer, Craig & Stippoli, 2016:900). Common themes have been identified and the findings are presented according to the main themes that emerged from the data collected.

### **3.4 Data Analysis Plan**

Thematic analysis methods have been utilised in this research. Thematic analysis is illustrated by categorizing and detecting patterns or themes with the qualitative data collected (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:3353). Data analysis will be driven by a bottom-up approach which is inductive: the questions will be determined by the data itself (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:3354).

The University of Fort Hare primary data analysis is entrenched in the findings according to the identified themes. The findings from the case study are well versed (summarised or synthesised) founded on data and research. Data analysis of this research will be guided by semi-structured interviews. Essentially, the data collected describes the following patterns:

- Does the faculty have any initiatives that are non-agricultural?
- Does the faculty integrate the community in the initiative?
- Who are the beneficiaries of the initiative?
- Does the initiative make use of the capitals that are entrenched in the sustainable livelihoods framework?
- How long has the initiative been implemented?
- Is the initiative in partnership with other corporate or civil society initiative?

#### **3.4.1 Description of Data Analysis**

The content analysis method will be applied in this study. Qualitative content analysis primarily focuses on language characteristics as communication in its context and meaning of the text. The communication may be verbal or written (hard and soft copies), including electronic files and data collected in the form of interviews, surveys

and observations. The data is organised into themes where inferences can be drawn (Curtis & Curtis, 2011:204), identifying patterns and providing interpretation of what is being communicated.

Making use of themes creates an assumption that themes already exist since other sub-themes will be categorised into the assumed themes (Curtis & Curtis, 2011). Unfortunately, since themes are created on assumptions, content research limits discussions in the parameters of themes which are obvious instead of latent and covert elements (Curtis & Curtis, 2011). Themes that have been identified are discussed in greater length in the discussion section of the next chapter.

### **3.5 Sampling method**

The sample includes representatives from two faculties from the University of Fort Hare: Management and Commerce, and Social Science and Humanities. The programmes are selected based on non-agricultural programming. In each faculty, the sample includes the department's perspective and the beneficiary's perspective. The department's perspective is illustrated in the documents available on their websites and webpages that provide information on initiatives implemented by the departments. The beneficiary's perspective is drawn from testimonials provided and beneficiaries listed in the webpages.

This study has benefited from purposeful sampling which allows pre-selected criteria based on the research question. The preselection of the sample is based on the understanding that HDIs provided general qualifications and the sample implies that specialist programmes have since been introduced at the UFH. Findings on the sample will also suggest whether these programmes have been practically implemented in the communities where UFH exists. For a purposive sample, the researcher uses their own judgement in selecting cases with a specific goal in mind (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont., 2011:392).

“The goal of purposive sampling is to sample cases/participants in a strategic way so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed.” (Bryman, 2016:418). Purposive sampling is used for informative cases, for specialised cases or to seek narratives of a hidden population like that of the University of Fort Hare.

### **3.5.1 Limitation of sampling**

The purpose of sampling is to reduce the fieldwork because we cannot reach everyone, but sampling tries to achieve results based on representation and informed assumptions are drawn from the sample (Bryman, 2016:416). The limitation of sampling in this study is narrowed to two faculties to ascertain initiatives implemented by the UFH and if the initiatives have a development element for the communities. Since the study intended to conduct interviews with the beneficiaries, the researcher had to rely on provided testimonials as narrated lived experiences of the beneficiaries to mitigate the risk of not attaining narratives of lived experiences.

The sample should always represent a reliable and trustworthy representation of the population (Bryman, 2016:416). The sample is used to expand understanding on the initiatives that are being implemented at UFH.

### **3.6 Data Trustworthiness**

The data collected in this study is published as official communication from the University of Fort Hare to maintain its trustworthiness. The university's website remained the primary source to ensure that trustworthiness and authenticity is adhered to, as Bryman suggests, it is important to make sure that good quality data is collected. Trustworthiness relates to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability:

- **Credibility:** the researcher maintained a level of objectivity and the researcher has no beneficial interests in the case study. The study seeks to better understand UFH.
- **Transferability:** this study makes use of concepts that have been established and the findings are thematic to ensure related themes can be referenced in other related studies.
- **Conformability:** this study references similar studies and consistently maintains a similar level of reporting.
- **Dependability:** details of the research process are traceable, and links to the referenced webpages have been provided.

Authentic research relates to the fairness of how the respondents are represented in the research and gives educational authenticity which allows members of society to

make room for better social perspective (Bryman, 2016:390-391). This study intends to remain true to the experiences of the subjects and to uphold ethical standards.

### **3.7 Research Ethical Consideration**

According to Bell and Waters (2014:55) ethics provide principles as guidelines that are widely accepted and also help manage expectations of the participants of the study. Research ethics help to maintain the dignity and integrity of the research. Ethics also requires that the participants are not triggered physically or emotionally (Bryman, 2016:423). In this study, informed consent was adhered to, and confidentiality and anonymity upheld.

#### **3.7.1 Informed consent**

Since no participants were part of this study because however all the departments sampled failed to answer calls. It is also worth mentioning that the university's website is not entirely updated as some of the staff members are not part of the organisation and many calls to the Alice campus are directed from the East London campus. In a letter dated 5 March 2020, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Fort Hare, indicated that the 2020 academic programme would be suspended until further notice. Students were requested to vacate the premises of the school by the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020 (Buhlungu, 2020).

Since then, the South African President announced that the country is undergoing a state of disaster due to the global pandemic known as Covid-19, therefore only essential services were permitted from the 20 March 2020. The state of disaster, also known as lockdown limited access for institutions and schools that did not have adequate access to resources that allowed continued learning during lockdown. The University of Fort Hare was no exception because calls remained unanswered and when calls to the East London campus were successful, responses remained non-reciprocal resulting in dead ends. The university's Community Engagement Office failed to transfer calls to the Alice campus. The International Affairs office tried to provide linkages with no ultimate success. Finally, the Student Support Services did not answer calls. The exercise to secure interviews proved to be burdensome and not progressive proving a flawed institution in its administration and stakeholder management.

Therefore, no informed consent processes were undertaken. However, the intention for informed consent was to inform the participants about the aims and objectives of this study. As informed consent ascertains the voluntary participation of the participants, this implies that information gathered is consistent (Bell & Waters, 2014:55). If participants did not wish to continue with the research their decisions would be respected.

### **3.7.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity**

Confidentiality and anonymity are interlinked; hence this research will not identify the names of individuals cited, except for the Vice Chancellor. Names and identifying characteristics of the people who shared testimonies in documents consulted in this study. Common nouns were used to identify experiences of the testimonies provided and only the Vice Chancellor was referred to as the head of the UFH. Confidentiality respects the privacy and the identity of the participants (Bell & Waters, 2014:56).

### **3.8 Limitations of the study**

**Programmes overlap between campuses:** There is a likelihood for the initiatives to overlap between the two UFH campuses, but the East London campus activities are more documented than the Alice campus activities. Since the East London campus is well documented and university partners are in East London, the study provides a peri-urban outlook more than a rural outlook for development. This does affect the 'rurality' of the study, as this negates the call for a development-orientated university for rural development.

**Regular protests at the UFH might affect the timelines of the research:** The occurrence of regular protests at the UFH did affect the data collection. As a result of continued protests and dysfunction at the UFH, an investigation was ordered, and an administrator was appointed to assist in strengthening and restoring governance issues at the University of Fort Hare (Government Gazette of South Africa, 2020).

Unfortunately, the challenges presented by the University of Fort Hare are telling of the management at the university, because the appointment of an administrator led to the role, powers, functions and duties of the Council to be ordained to the new administrator for a period of twelve months, after which the Council would be reconstituted in terms of the new Statute. Since engagements to try and secure

interviews with offices that are responsible for managing programmes for students, and mobility to conduct research was restricted, interviews had to be suspended for the purposes of this research.

**Closure of the university:** In a letter dated 5 March 2020, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Fort Hare indicated that the 2020 academic programme would be suspended until further notice. Students were requested to vacate the premises of the school by the 5 March 2020 (Buhlungu, 2020).

**Global pandemic: Covid-19:** The South African President announced that the country was undergoing a state of disaster due to the global pandemic known as Covid-19, therefore only essential services were permitted from the 20 March 2020. The state of disaster, also known as lockdown, limited access for institutions and schools that did not have adequate access to resources that allowed continued learning during lockdown. The University of Fort Hare was no exception because calls remained unanswered and when calls to the East London campus were successful, responses remained non-reciprocal, resulting in dead ends. The university's Community Engagement Office failed to transfer calls to the Alice campus. The International Affairs office tried to provide linkages with no ultimate success. Additionally, the Student Support Services did not answer calls. The exercise to secure interviews proved to be burdensome and not progressive, proving a flawed institution in its administration and stakeholder management.

**UFH's webpages not updated regularly:** The research was limited because there are not enough documents on the university's website. There are no annual plans nor strategic documents on the university's website. In addition, some of the contact details provided for on the website are outdated and remain unanswered. Accessing the university to set up appointments for interviews was challenging. All the departments sampled failed to answer calls.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

This chapter provided an overview of the research methodology applied in this study. The main aspects discussed in this chapter include the research design, data collection strategy, data collection process, data analysis plan, sampling method, aspects pertaining to data trustworthiness, ethical considerations and limitations

experienced during the data collection process. The study adopted a qualitative approach and primarily consulted the UFH's website and documents.

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **THE CASE OF UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE**

### **FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter consists of findings and analysis of extracts collected primarily on the University of Fort Hare website and that of their partners who reported activities with the university. The findings are presented according to the thematic areas that emerged from the documents consulted. Each faculty is presented separately as the activities differ and the themes apply differently for the Department of Psychology and the Department of Information Systems. This chapter provides a layout of the contextual background of both faculties. Furthermore, this chapter provides key emerging themes from each faculty, which include but are not limited to the following: development-orientated strategies, training of students, integration of stakeholder engagement with academic planning and practical learning. To guide the process, extracts are provided as a point of reference.

Thereafter, the application of the sustainable livelihoods' framework will be applied to determine if the programme being implemented surpasses the vulnerabilities and shocks. When the key findings have been determined and the sustainable livelihoods test has been applied, discussions of the key outcomes will be applied.

For both departments, the sustainable livelihoods framework is applied to examine the experiences of the people and takes into consideration the availability and management of resources. The sustainable livelihoods framework encompasses an analysis of five components: first, the consideration and overview of context, conditions and trends; second, an inquiry of livelihood resources; third, an analysis of institutional processes and organisational structures; fourth, an interrogation of livelihood strategies and; finally, evaluate results of the sustainable livelihoods outcomes. The United Nations Development Programme developed a guidance tool which will be utilised to determine if the programmes implemented by UFH contribute to human development. The purpose of the tool is to analyse strategies for reducing vulnerabilities and strengthening capitals to achieve sustainable livelihood outcomes.

## **4.2 Contextual Background of the Social Sciences and Humanities faculty**

In 2015, the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities was established at the UFH as an intended outcome of the university's strategic planning meeting which resulted in the amalgamation of the former Rhodes University campus (now referred to as UFH East London campus) and the UFH Alice campus. The amalgamation consisted of various departments and programmes. During the data collection process in 2020, the faculty consisted of fifteen departments and for purposes of this study, the Psychology Department's Psychological Services Centre (PSC) findings are analysed and discussed.

## **4.3 Development-orientated strategies from the psychology department**

Extract 1:

*“Although the PSC offers services across a broad range of mental health needs, our activities are particularly focused to attend to youth and adolescents in rural historically disadvantaged communities, women and children who are victims of violence and abuse, the mental health needs that form part of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and family mental health (University of Fort Hare, 2020).”*

The mandate of the PSC is clear and that is to make psychological services available to historically marginalised communities. This is also illustrated in their service delivery and targeted stakeholder groups with whom they engage. Services are offered at Frere Public Hospital; Transnet-Phelophepa Health Train, and a public primary school located in a township in East London. Through the established relationships, it can be concluded that the PSC has managed to focus on its target, providing services where they are needed most, and making psychological services accessible.

### **4.3.1 Training of psychologists**

The PSC services are implemented by intern counselling psychologists who are currently doing their master's in counselling psychology with the UFH. The students offer their service to institutions that the PSC has partnered with, this includes East London Frere Hospital, and predominantly the Paediatric Outpatient Department and Rehabilitation Centre; Transnet-Phelophepa Health Train, and a public primary school

located in a township in East London. The in-service training component is offered through internship training. The service delivered is two-fold:

Extract 2:

*“a) to provide sustainable professional psychological services in areas of need and in so doing;*

*b) providing meaningful practical exposure and further training for psychology trainees within a South African context (University Fort Hare, 2020).”*

In a 2008 survey conducted by Pillay and Siyothula (2008) a total of 325 Black South Africans were registered with the Health Professionals Council of South Africa (HPCSA) nationally. Another study conducted by Burns and Tomita (2015) indicated that approximately 50% of individuals in Africa seek mental health advice from traditional healers or religious leaders. The predominant race that provides mental healthcare services is likely to experience language and culture barriers when clients are Black South Africans because services providers are likely to White South Africans (van der Watt, Das-Brailsford, Mbangi & Seedat, 2020:116).

According to the Guidelines for Universities Internship Training Institutions and Intern Psychologists (Health Professionals Council of South Africa [HPCSA], 2015), a student psychologist is a student who is enrolled for a recognised masters' degree programme at a university accredited by the Health Professionals Council of South Africa. Therefore, providing an internship programme could be a compliance measure as opposed to a voluntary initiative by the university. Either way, internships are a requirement if the university wants to offer an accredited master's in psychology programme. Regulated professions provide a lot of structure and guidelines for the establishment of in-service training. In addition, the guidelines provide that the internship programme should be concluded on a full-time basis amounting to forty hours per week during a minimum period of twelve months.

#### **4.3.2 Limited access of psychological services in rural communities**

The South African government has intentionally planned for the decentralisation of mental healthcare into primary healthcare (Petersen, Bhana, Campbell-Hall, Mjadu, Lund, Klientjies, Hosegood, Fisher and Mental Health & Poverty

Research Programme Consortium, 2009:141). Providing mental healthcare in rural marginalised communities in South Africa was considered as an important task since this was a needed service (Petersen *et al.*, 2009:141). Mental health had to be provided to those who experienced trauma during apartheid, those who experience poverty, and those affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, all of which had a negative impact on communities (WHO, 2001).

Not providing psychological services in rural communities creates a treatment gap for common mental disorders. The consortium that conducted research on planning for mental healthcare indicated that there is a dire need for mental healthcare services in rural communities (Petersen, *et al.*, 2009:144), particularly if we want to break the cycle of poverty and mental health illnesses. The mental health treatment gap contributed by inadequate infrastructure, human resources and treatment options creates far-reaching problems that need immediate attention. Based on the studies conducted, people from rural communities are most likely to consult social workers and traditional healers about their mental health. By recognising this, the psychology department established the Psychological Services Centre (PSC) at the UFH East London campus.

#### **4.4 Sustainability of the Psychological Services Centre**

The Psychological Services Centre provides services to communities that previously did not receive mental health services. Since mental health services were not available to marginalised rural communities, it is important to note that social services were visible and utilised in these communities. The psychology fraternity is an untransformed fraternity and when institutions like UFH begin to recruit those from marginalised communities, it is commendable.

The problem is the Psychological Service Centre exists in an urban area where the distance between the university and its partners is not more than three kilometres or less than 10 minutes' driving. It is noteworthy that a centre of such a nature does not exist on the Alice campus and such services are not extended to rural communities in Alice. In addition, scholars who live in a remote town with very little activity and little access to recreational activities are most likely to need such services (University of Fort Hare, 2020). Notwithstanding, the sustainable livelihoods framework will be

applied, and the section will interrogate the capitals. Of the five capitals, the natural capitals will not be applied for purposes of this study.

- i. Human capital refers to the abilities, skills and experience tasked to make the livelihoods a reality. The PSC can legally have four interns per supervisor according to the guidelines. Depending on the number of supervisors, it is possible for all master's students to be recruited to add the manpower to implement programmes of the PSC. This means that the recruitment of interns is dependent on the availability of senior experienced supervisors at the centre. However, the community-based approach of the programme extends to members who would not otherwise receive psychological services. The supervisory role between the students offers an opportunity of upskilling and learning. The site does not provide the number of master's students enrolled, neither does the website provide the number of supervisors involved in the programme.
- ii. Social capital refers to the networks, associations and the broader population receiving assistance from the programme. The PSC is monitored through a professional body. The requirement for interns to be registered with the professional body ensures that the interns are recognised as reputable professionals and creates a likelihood of securing employment. The fact that the interns engage with various stakeholders could possibly create more visibility of their skills and expertise. The broader the scope, the broader the reach and possible networks.
- iii. Physical capital refers to the infrastructure or resources (machinery) that produce the input. The PSC is located at the UFH and operates as a centre that benefits from an academic programme.
- iv. Financial capital refers to the monetary funds available to achieve strategies employed by the institution or organisation. There is no indication of how the master's students are paid or whether the programme pays the interns. The assumption is the programme is functional based on funding available.

Is the initiative vulnerable to the likelihood of shocks? The advantage of the initiative being run as a centre does not necessarily carry the same implications as an academic programme. Services of the PSC do not just serve students; from their web

page it seems as though the institution benefits the community more than the university community based on the multiple partners with whom they engage.

With regards to institutional or structural processes, the accreditation body (Health Professionals Council of South Africa) did well in enforcing internship programmes for masters' students. Often institutions fail to empower those who come from marginalised communities unless there is legislation that provides a need for transformation. Legislation forces institutions like the UFH to implement programmes that would empower communities and for young professionals to enter the workplace with certain practical skills established.

The livelihood strategies implemented for the programme have key components that ensure communities benefits. As Grobbelaar & De Wet (2016:167) inferred, higher education institutions are key instruments in playing a role in national development that is not confined to the ambit of knowledge production, but is spread through capacity building, interchange of expertise and political influence. The outcome yields towards sustainability and this is emphasised through law and compliance.

The PSC plays a transformative role in the East London community by introducing practices that did not exist in marginalised communities and for students who experience upskilling through strengthening communities. The initiative intends for livelihood outcomes that strengthen well-being. It can also be argued that the internship programme yields towards increasing income opportunities by ensuring that students are skilled to make use of their academic knowledge – a return on investments.

#### **4.5 Contextual Background of Management and Commerce faculty**

The Management and Commerce Faculty does not have centres that ensure that the faculty partakes in community engagement, therefore only academic programmes that are closely aligned with the study could be interrogated for the study.

The Management and Commerce Faculty of the University of Fort Hare consists of seven departments including the Information Systems Department. Traditionally, the information and technology profession were embedded in engineering studies because engineers were considered as the only technical designers (Vasilecas, Caplinskas, Wojtkowski, Wojtkowski, Zupancic and Wrycza, 2005:2). However, due to

the turbulent business environment, globalisation, and non-regulation of the information and technology sector, there was a need to create automated business models that assist in the operation of businesses. In particular, interdepartmental procedures needed support systems and this birthed information systems (Vasilecas *et al*, 2005:2). In contrast, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Germany's economic activities benefited from university-led scientific innovation (Cloete, Maassen & Bailey, 2015:208). Germany is testament to the fact that key counterpointing of universities with the market and society can yield positive results. There is no clear indication of when information systems was introduced at the UFH, but it is commendable that the university adhered to current trends in the education sector.

The Information Systems Department brochure provided information to guide this research. The document provided an overview of the programme, including how the department develops its programmes, and it contained testimonials and an overview of the modules offered by the department. In addition, the department shares its activities by publishing work that it has achieved through the university's website.

#### **4.6 Integration of stakeholder engagement and academic programming**

The department's programmes are selected by an advisory board which consists of various stakeholders. This was evident from the 2019 Information Systems Department brochure.

Extract 3:

The courses are reviewed annually under the direction of a Departmental Advisory Board. This Board is an independent body of external experts established to provide advice to ensure that the needs of the current jobs market are understood (Information Systems Department, 2019:6).

The Information Systems Department Advisory Board is commendable because the department draws industry expertise from various key players in the information systems fraternity and that includes members from the industry. Essentially, the position where the university's strategy engages with external stakeholders as a means to respond to external pressures is also known as a middle structure (Clark, 1986: 23). The purpose of the board forms an integral part in ensuring this academic programme is in line with current industry demands – reinforcing the middle structure.

In addition to that, the board provides connections that broaden the understanding of the programme and practical work, linkages that include internship training, industry visits, guest lecturers and provision of academic resources.

#### **4.6.1 Integration of stakeholder engagement and practical learning**

The department partakes in practical learning and stakeholder engagement to ensure that practical learning ensues. Learning is practical and diagnostic, ensuring that the needs of the students are met.

Extract 4:

*“In 2015, the Information Systems Department partnered with Microsoft and students were taught the process of developing an application. The learning workshop was intended to expose students to how Microsoft develops applications (University of Fort Hare, 2015).”*

The department does implement numerous activities to assist students in accessing networking opportunities for them to build on skills and knowledge that makes them more attractive as employable candidates.

Extract 5:

*“In 2017, a news article on the university’s website indicated that first years admitted into the programme undergo a computer literacy assessment during the school registration period. Once the assessments have been completed, needs are identified, and students are then offered training sessions to strengthen their capabilities (University of Fort Hare, 2017).”*

Universities work under enormous pressure to build the South African human resource. Tierney, (2004:75) identified the following pressures: lack of resources; changing dynamics of universities (for instance, remote learning); and increased uptake of technology. These pressures demand that universities find contemporary solutions and strategies to engage and work with external stakeholders to calibrate the effects of external pressures (Cloete, *et al*, 2015:208). Engagement with stakeholders is not spatially bound because of technology, therefore access to experts is not limited to locality or proximity to the university (Jongbloed, Enders and Salerno 2008:306). Engagement with stakeholders has provided students with practical

experience and a glimpse of the expectations that come from completing an information systems qualification.

#### **4.6.2 Associations provide opportunities of internships**

The student handbook also provides information of professional associations and societies that students can join as members and this is intended to again broaden the understanding of fraternity trends.

Extract 6:

*“The work done by the UFH further received a testimonial from a scholar who indicated an appreciation of the programme, because through an internship programme, the candidate was voted as the best intern in East London and was later offered a permanent position in the same company as a Junior Network Engineer (Information Systems Department, 2019:6).”*

Post 1994, in South Africa, an inclusive system of learnerships was created through the Services Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). The SETA is legally established and mandated to develop certified learning programmes and to partner with industry roleplayers to provide workplace training to the employed and internships to the unemployed. SETAs provide a legal framework for entities to make workplace training available to those who are in employment, and to offer training to the unemployed (Reddy, Bhorat, Powell, Visser and Arends, 2016:58).

From 2010 to 2014, there had been an increase in the number of learnership registrations (from approximately 50 000 to 70 000, projecting an increase of 54%); and an increase in skills programmes registrations (from approximately 66 000 to 138 000) (Reddy, *et al.*, 2016:58). The SETA programmes provide an opportunity for increased employment: of the unemployed population 0,74% were involved in SETA learning programmes and the number increased to 1,6% in 2014 (Reddy, *et al.*, 2016:58). It is also noteworthy that the high unemployment rate in South Africa has a high contribution of youth that has incomplete education or secondary education without matric (Reddy, *et al.*, 2016:58). Since the majority of employment seekers do not have a school exit certificate (matric) there is a strong argument that SETAs learning programmes should target the enhancing of skills in that cohort.

Unfortunately, the Information Systems course is only offered at the East London campus from undergraduate level up to doctorate level, therefore emphasising the juxtaposition of urban and rural campuses. It is, however, perplexing that the university, particularly this department, is producing and presenting research on digitally marginalised communities without implementing outcomes from their own research.

#### **4.7 Sustainability of the Department of Information Systems**

There are macro factors that influence the change in education, including globalisation and increasing demand of technologies. These changes should be constantly balanced with information generation that universities are responsible for, because there is an intrinsic relationship between universities and the labour market to meet the needs of society (Cloete, *et al*, 2015:208). Information Systems is rapidly growing in demand in several universities and the UFH strategised to implement such a programme in a robust manner. However, its sustainability will be measured against the sustainable livelihoods framework in the section below. The programme is implemented as a response to current trends. In addition, the programme shows efforts from the UFH to introduce new programmes that are a response to trends. The fact that the programme is not implemented at the Alice campus is not progressive, because those who are in rural communities remain removed from current trends.

A study conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], (2016) indicated that the divergence between urban and rural communities is widening since 1950 and up to 2014, with an urban increase of 30-54% (OECD, 2016:40). There is also increasing migration into urban areas that have limited ability to accommodate the increasing number of rural migrants into urban areas. Rural migration to urban areas is a hindrance to rural development, because economic and social conditions remain undermined by little progress in key areas such as education and health (OECD, 2016:21).

Nevertheless, since the programme is implemented in the East London campus, it is important that the programme is analysed in its context. The first area of analysis of the sustainable livelihoods framework is the types of capitals that ensure success in

terms of implementation. There are five capitals, however natural capitals are not applicable in this context.

- i. Human capital refers to the abilities, skills and experience tasked to make the livelihoods a reality. The Information Systems Department consists of eight staff members. The department has two professors - one being resident and the other being an adjunct professor from Rhodes University, five lecturers that have studied until master's level and one administrator. It is difficult to determine the ratio of staff members to students because there is no document that provides lecturer-student ratios. Therefore, no major inferences can be drawn except that there is an availability of human capital to implement the programme.
- ii. Social capital refers to the networks, associations and the broader population receiving assistance from the programme. As indicated in the paragraphs above, the Information Systems Department has an advisory board that provides networking opportunities and assists in determining the layout of the programme based on current trends. In addition, students are guided in terms of which professional bodies to join and to extend their network.
- iii. Physical capital refers to the infrastructure or resources (machinery) that produce the input. UFH is a public institution that was built in East London. Whether the institution is conducive to learning is not clearly indicated in the university's documents.
- iv. Financial capital refers to the monetary funds available to achieve strategies employed by the institution or organisation. UFH is a public institution that is primarily funded by the state. Additional funds may be sourced externally by making use of funding agents and alumni. There is no clear indication of the status of funds at the institution.

The macro influences outside the department have the possibility to disrupt or expose vulnerabilities relating to students accessing the curriculum and completing the academic year. Though the department may have clear plans and strategies, UFH itself experiences dire shocks that result in school closure and non-functioning, particularly in 2020. The university's closure has had a negative effect on the functioning of the department.

By virtue of being connected and associated with UFH, the department's livelihood outcomes are not achieved if disruption occurs. If the university manages to function, then the path towards livelihood outcomes becomes more of a reality, because students attain their degrees and are in a better position to seek sustainable job opportunities that do not necessarily require upskilling.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

This chapter provided an analysis of the programmes implemented at the UFH, particularly at the Psychology Department and the Information Systems Department. Key themes were presented that indicated that the programmes are implemented at a peri-urban area and not necessarily in rural communities. The emerging themes indicated that there is work being done with regards to UFH being a development-orientated university, which is intentional about training students, and if not training, then ensuring that there is integration of stakeholder engagement with academic planning and practical learning.

This chapter also measured the sustainability of the programmes and initiatives. It has been established that sustainability is imparted through the institution ensuring that initiatives are enforced through policies and legislation while adhering to issues of compliance.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5. Introduction**

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of this study. The fourth chapter provided context to the situation at the University of Fort Hare, and the context was presented according to the premising themes in the study, namely development-orientated strategies, integration of stakeholder engagement activities with learning, academic programme design, and training integrated in academic programmes. The second part of the study measured whether the programmes have been implemented in a sustainable manner, ensuring continuity, and it was concluded that when institutions embed programmes and activities, there is a likelihood of sustainability. This chapter presents conclusions and recommendations based on the data collected and presented in this study.

#### **5.1 Conclusions**

Historically disadvantaged institutions have been in existence for several years. Mergers and re-institutionalisation might have set back numerous institutions like the UFH. However, to a certain extent Jansen (2004) had a convincing point when he suggested that HDIs should be closed, however the non-maintenance of HDIs should not render them as a closed case. In fact, Jansen's suggestion is valid to the extent that certain aspects of HDIs should be managed at a higher level in order to rebut the disruptions. Initially, anecdotal evidence suggested that the presence of HDIs in rural communities presents an opportunity for HDIs to be custodians of rural development. However, the research provided evidence that HDI's in rural communities tend to experience neglect and substantially carry more history than reform for the current situation. The study did conclude that there is room for improvement in the implementation of the UFH activities and more work has to be done at the UFH Alice campus as there is a great need in that area.

##### **5.1.1 Programmes Implemented at the UFH**

Findings and analysis from programmes and initiatives implemented by the Department of Psychology and the modern academic programme implemented by the Department of Management and Commerce were presented in the previous chapter. There are key differences between the two programmes: first, the programme

implemented by the Department of Psychology is established through a centre called the Psychological Services Centre (PSC); second, the PSC operates to assist students fulfil their in-service training; and third, the PSC provides services to internal and external stakeholders, and does so by providing a service to the community. In contrast, the Department of Management and Commerce does not offer any in-service training to their students and the department does not offer any services to external stakeholders, instead the primary focus is academics. Since the focus is on academics, the study interrogated an academic programme that seemed to closely align itself with external stakeholders, that academic programme being the Department of Information Systems.

Whilst making use of thematic coding, the key themes that will be discussed in great length are rural development, service-learning and determining influences that contribute to ensuring that programmes are sustainable. The themes will be discussed referring to the key findings of the study.

### **5.1.2 Rural Development at the University of Fort Hare**

The University of Fort Hare (UFH) has two campuses, one in Alice, a rural town in the Eastern Cape, and another campus in the centre of East London, a metropolitan city in the Eastern Cape. The study was intended to interrogate activities at the Alice campus of UFH, however access deemed that activity not achievable.

The purpose of this research was to look for programmes or initiatives that are not the norm in rural communities. Often rural development is linked with agricultural activities; however, this is not true. There is no doubt that agriculture plays an integral part within rural development, but environmental degradation and climate change create shocks and vulnerabilities. These shocks and vulnerabilities determine non-agricultural solutions which have the potential to slow rural-urban migration, combating environmental pressures in cities.

By applying the four principles defined by Ashley and Maxwell (2001:418), rural development is not achieved in its entirety at the UFH. At the Alice campus, first, there is no clear indication nor recognition of diversity not linked to agriculture; second, the PSC initiative does have a clear understanding of an overview of the past and future, but this does not account for the rural development at the Alice campus; third, there is

minimal indication of in-depth analysis and strategies that recognise multi-occupational opportunities coupled with multi-located households. It is only the PSC in an urban area that has identified multi-occupational opportunities with multiple stakeholders which have the likelihood of impacting multiple households in peri-urban communities. Finally, developing innovative and creative productive sectors in rural development should be a mandate of the Information Systems Department, however the department has not extended delivery outside the classroom.

Essentially, the UFH has an opportunity to provide non-agricultural programmes and solutions in a rural setting, but both psychology and information systems remain on the East London campus. For instance, Asian communities have managed to establish industries and downstream strategies that promote integration of the agricultural sector and other services such as tourism (OECD, 2016:204).

Development of infrastructure has been highlighted as one of the key improvements in ensuring that rural development becomes a reality. Infrastructure is not limited to buildings - it extends to ports, roads, and information communication and technology (ICT). Soft infrastructure is also an integral part of rural development (OECD, 2016:206). Soft infrastructure includes institutions of learning, health, legal, and financial institutions. "Together, hard and soft infrastructure form the foundation for economic growth and development" (OECD, 2016:206). If the UFH continues to offer key programmes in East London, then there would be less activity in Alice.

Building hard and soft infrastructure in rural communities ensures that some activity occurs. Asian countries also ensured that rural development becomes a reality by making use of special economic zones (SEZ). The main purpose of SEZs is to develop systems of support (incentives and networks) to drive desirable development outcomes (OECD, 2016:206). Rural areas provide spatially delimited areas and can take various forms with regards to processing zones. African SEZs have failed to yield positive results. Of all the established SEZs in Africa, only Ghana and Mauritius have managed to provide significant positive results (OECD, 2016:206). It is no surprise that SEZs are not a success in Africa. Neither the UFH nor the East London Industrial Zone have established concrete strategic relationships with each other, in other words, there are laws in place to benefit the parties. (Special Economic Zones Act and the

Sector Education and Training Authority Act). Both institutions have failed to leverage on regulatory support.

The success for rural development depends on the opportunities and capacity of each rural community. If the UFH fails to recognise the untapped potential, then it fails to be custodian for rural development in the Eastern Cape, particularly in Alice. Other opportunities are presented through technology which offers an opportunity for modernisation and transformation. Technology can foster socio-economic development. Technology often makes use of available resources to increase productivity by introducing a solution. Technology has improved every economic sector, particularly in rural areas. For example, in Malawi, an e-health service was provided for rural communities to make use of mobile phones to transmit nutritional data from local clinics to a national database that is referred to as the nutritional surveillance system (OECD, 2016:216). Not only does the e-health service create an efficient system, but the turnaround time safeguards the child mortality rate and decreases the data collection costs.

Again, if success for rural development depends on opportunity and capacity of each rural community, then the UFH needs to do more than being a mere institution in Alice. The institution should devise solutions for rural development and develop partnerships that want to capitalise on rural development, but solutions cannot be solely directed and limited to the East London community.

### **5.1.3 Training for Students at the University of Fort Hare**

The programmes analysed in this study indicate that there has been a deliberate effort in linking students with associations and potential clients or recruiters where they showcase their skills. Though the Information Systems Programme does not provide clear opportunities of community engagement, the provision of associations implies that by creating a network, a student could potentially have access to the networks even though the university does not have a codified established relationship with the association. The PSC, on the other hand, has a deliberate and explicit relationship with its stakeholders and a codified requirement to establish an internship programme.

“University-community engagement must contribute to building stronger universities – in both teaching and research – in order for the university to fulfil its potential contribution to development” (van Schalkwyk, 2015:204).

Often universities struggle to balance the tension between external stakeholders and simultaneously ensuring a strengthened university function of knowledge production and teaching. Since it is difficult to draw a balance between teaching and knowledge production, universities see service training as an ad hoc activity. After the key findings from the Department of Higher Education and Training (2013:39), universities indicated that service training initiatives are more ad hoc in nature and there are no linkages with the academic programmes.

Whether explicit or implied, the UFH does try to ensure connectedness and engagement. It would be ideal if the Department of Information Systems also established explicit relationships with other counterparts, particularly with the special economic zone established in East London. Also, a dedicated centre outside an academic programme would ensure that the activities with external stakeholders are kept intact.

#### **5.1.4 Influences that contribute to ensuring that programmes are sustainable**

Through the analysis provided in the sections above, it is noteworthy that there are some shocks and vulnerabilities that hinder sustainable implementation of programmes. There are also mechanisms that the state and institutional bodies can use to ensure that compliance is adhered to and that programmes are implemented. It would seem that the ideal situation in ensuring that programmes are sustainable, is to incorporate a body that ensures that there is compliance like the HPCSA demanding that a Master’s in Psychology Programme be accompanied by a service-learning practical. It is then that the institution devises strategies of partnerships with other institutions.

If terms and conditions for service-learning remain implied, then there is an injustice because practices will remain or go away based on people’s perceptions and not necessarily by requirement. One of the missing aspects in the Information Systems Department is ensuring that the practice is entrenched and implemented religiously. It is important for institutions to embed programmes so that programmes do not enjoy

the life span of the individual in charge, but rather, for the institution to be known for its practises.

The UFH has integrated and modern programmes (Information Systems) are implemented at the East London campus. What was initially a part-time institution, is now accommodating full-time students. The question of ratio of lecturers to students remains insufficiently addressed and whether the East London campus is conducive to full-time studies remains a mystery. What is certain is that not enough progressive and innovative solutions are derived on the Alice campus. Another persistent reality is that South Africa experiences the structural challenges that are a result of the legacy of apartheid and this creates racialised hierarchical access.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

There is greater probability for innovation to stem from the East London campus than the Alice campus. Inevitably, it could also be argued that the Alice campus remains politicised through student protests that cause the university to shut down. For the university to re-imagine itself, it is required to consider the following recommendations:

- i. To revive the institution and to align not only its history to its mission, but to ensure that programmes are implemented...:  
...to provide high quality education of international standards contributing to the advancement of knowledge that is socially and ethically relevant, and applying that knowledge to the scientific, technological and social-economic development of our nation and the wider world (UFH, 2020).
- ii. The UFH can brand itself through actual work. The university carries an African presidential alumni that could align itself with providing solutions for a rural Africa, but this means that the university must make investments on research that advances rural development.
- iii. Ensure that community engagement activities are strengthened with key stakeholders.

The UFH has not tapped into the potential of rural development and more work needs to be done to ensure that it is a custodian for change.

The Department of Higher Education in South Africa is mandated to transform higher education institutions to better position skills development with the needs of the re-emerging and transforming economy. Though extensive progress has been made, some development challenges have been tenacious. The reality is inequality in South Africa has persisted, particularly income inequality and an increasing unemployment rate. The risk remains for those in and from rural communities that are far from the reality of a transforming world and young people who are new entrants to the labour market.

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