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**MANAGING PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION: THE
CASE FOR THE GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION
SYSTEM (GCIS)**

By

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The birth of my son, Mufunwa, in 2001 changed my life in many ways and the way I look at life in general. My dream since then has been to complete my studies before my son starts Grade 1 because I wanted to give him all the support that he needs in his journey through life. He has just started Grade 1 and I have just completed my studies.

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ABSTRACT

The political changes in South Africa since 2004 had an impact on all government operations. Amongst other things, the manner in which government communicates with the people had to change to reflect the new political dispensation. Prior to 1994, the South African Communication Service (SACS) was required to communicate with South Africans on behalf of other government departments about their activities and to coordinate pronouncements coming out of various state agencies. After the 1994 democratic elections, the SACS was however found to be incompatible with the new democratic set up. This led to the formation of the Communications Task Group (Comtask) whose mandate was to review government communication and to make recommendations on possible improvements.

The Comtask found that most government functions, structures and personnel were largely uncoordinated and inefficient. The inquiry also found that government functions were characterised by a lack of strategic planning and co-ordination at all levels of government. As a result, it recommended that a new structure to be called the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) should be established. Amongst other things, the role of the GCIS is to manage government's campaigns which are meant to ensure that there is interaction between government and the people.

Against this background the main objective of the study is therefore to analyse the role of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) in the strategic management of government communication, with specific reference to Imbizo as a strategy for participatory development communication. The focus will be on the communication strategy framework for Imbizo, its implementation and the extent to which it encourages and/or inhibits participation by the people.

Literature on the theoretical approaches to participatory development communication, strategic management, with emphasis on communication has been reviewed. The purpose of this review was to provide a framework within which the role of the GCIS in strategic management of government communication with reference to Imbizo.

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, this study has adopted a qualitative approach with field research and content analysis as the main research methodologies. The choice of two research methodologies was necessitated by the fact that using more than one methodology helps to ensure that the validity of the study is achieved.

This study has concluded that the adaptation of the traditional Imbizo for use in government's interaction with the people is a good initiative. However, it has become evident that for it to become even more effective and useful, there is a need to involve the people during the planning, implementation and evaluation of the interaction. The other challenge is that of the need for the development of community-specific communication strategies which are in line with the broader Imbizo communication strategy. Further research need to be conducted on the use of existing traditional communication channels.

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CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The democratic changes that took place in South Africa since 1994 provided the media in general with a new critical zeal in their reporting. This was largely because they had the confidence that they would no longer be harassed as it was the case during the apartheid era. They therefore had room to be more critical of government. As a result, the political leaders, especially from within the ranks of the African National Congress (ANC), started to become concerned that government achievements were not receiving adequate media coverage. There was also a perception that the media seem to enjoy highlighting stories of perceived black incompetence and that ANC leaders were not receiving fair media coverage.

The then Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki, concerned about this trend, called a meeting of government communicators and those involved in the media and communication industry. The meeting was held at a Western Cape Town called Arniston in August 1995 to discuss government communication and to recommend ways for improvement (Communications 2000:10). The conference brought together members of the media, government communicators, academics, South African Communication Services (SACS), media unions and civil society groups.

The conference recommended that a Communications Task Group (Comtask) be established. Deputy President Mbeki was given a mandate to appoint a 10-member board of inquiry, following a public nomination process (Horwitz 2001:297). This became known as the Comtask Group. The purpose of this inquiry was to review all government communication processes, and to make recommendations for improvement.

Amongst other things, one of the findings of the Comtask was the need for increased access to government information and the need for more government interaction with the people (Communications 2000: 15). This was necessitated by the fact that the new government adopted from the apartheid government infrastructure and systems which restricted people's access to government information.

In order to have well coordinated government communication, the Comtask Group recommended the establishment of a Government Communication and Information System (GCIS). The GCIS was mandated to strategically manage and coordinate government communication and to facilitate the interactive processes between government and the people. In order to achieve this objective, an Imbizo approach was adopted (see 1.7.7 for a definition of Imbizo).

Against this background, this study will focus on Imbizo as a strategy for participatory development communication. The main reason why Imbizo was

introduced was the recognition that there is a need for government (in line with findings and recommendations of the Comtask) to interact more with the people.

The purpose of the interaction would be to explain its policies and programmes to the people and to gain a first hand understanding of the people's living conditions and needs, and to explain government's programme of action to the people.

Although the Imbizo programme is still in its infancy stage, it can be argued that it is gaining momentum, it is receiving extensive media coverage, and people are beginning to talk about it to such an extent that even soccer clubs brand their meetings with supporters "Imbizos".

The main objective of the study is therefore to analyse the role of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) in the strategic management of government communication, with specific reference to Imbizo as a strategy for participatory development communication. The focus will be on the communication strategy framework for Imbizo, its implementation and the extent to which it encourages and/or inhibits participation by the people.

1.2 NEED FOR THE STUDY

The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) has been tasked by the Cabinet approved Task Group on Government Communication (Comtask) to provide development communication and information to the public and to interact more with the people.

The need for coordinated participatory development communication was necessary because the majority of the people in South Africa, especially the poor, do not have access to all of the media, which was largely used in government communication, as well as the high rate of illiteracy. This situation limited their access to government information, which would help them to take decisions that could improve their lives.

The other problem was that the language used in the messages and documents that government distributes to the community was mainly English. The problem with an increased use of English is that most people do not understand English,

and this ultimately minimises the impact of the information that government distributes. The ability of the community to actively interact with government was also limited because most people could not understand the content of the messages.

In order to address the problem of inaccessibility to government information, the Comtask Group envisaged that to ensure the effectiveness of development communication, all appropriate forms of media, including print, electronic and interpersonal face-to-face communications have to be used to provide the required information and to provide a platform for a two-way communication process. As recommended in the Comtask Group report, government had to communicate with the people in the languages and idioms that they understand. This would enhance participation and an understanding of the people's needs and a discussion of possible solutions in an interactive two-way process.

In this regard, Pahad (1998:2) emphasised the need for a two-way communication process when he stated that:

“...If we are talking about two-way communication with the poorest of the poor, then our target is to reach the African women or moreover the African

female disabled child in the rural areas. Unless we are able to do this, we will not be doing enough.”

The implication of the above statement is that there is a need to make sure that all the people in South Africa have an opportunity to interact with government.

The challenge in this regard is that government should make sure that platforms for such interaction are created.

In placing emphasis on the need for interaction between government and the community, Netshitenzhe (1999:1), in his address during the launch of the Tombo Multi-Purpose Community Centre (MPCC) further stated that:

“But this Centre is not only about you telling government what it is that you want. President Thabo Mbeki wishes to know what your views are: whether we are doing the right thing as government and what the priorities should be in this province”.

It is evident from the above statement that the two-way process is not only supposed to be about government telling people about what it is doing, but also to listen to people's suggestions on what needs to be done.

In his State of the Nation (SON) address (2003:10) President Mbeki also alluded to the need for increased access to government information when he said that:

“The process to set up a government-wide call centre will be speeded up. In addition, we will start this year to phase in an electronic system, an e-government gateway, in which the directory of government services will be available, according to citizens' needs rather than the silos of the state bureaucracy, an electronic version of the Multi-Purpose Community Centres”.

Although the above quotation does not directly refer to Imbizo, it is evident though that it places emphasis on the need for increased access to government information. It also places emphasis on the need to use all available avenues for this purpose. Imbizo is in this instance one of those channels through which people can access government information.

It is on the basis of the need for interaction with the community as recommended in the Comtask Report that the GCIS has adopted Imbizo as a strategy for interaction with the people. The adoption of Imbizo as a strategy for government's interaction with the people makes it necessary for a study to be conducted on how Imbizo is conducted from a government perspective. The focus of the study will also be on how Imbizo as a strategy for participatory development communication enhances or inhibits people's interaction with government.

Firstly, it is important to note that the youths in South Africa have demonstrated a certain degree of apathy with regard to political issues and developments in the country. It should be noted that this is not just a South African problem, but an international trend as well. For example, in Britain as indicated in the Independent Review of Government Communication (204:2), the review of government communication was necessitated amongst others by the fact that there has been disengagement and withdrawal from political and democratic processes, which has been evidenced by the declining participation in local and general elections.

This could amongst others be explained by the fact that government communication takes place in an environment where it competes with other

interests, such as sports, entertainment and the perceived lack of government interests on issues that are of interest to the youths. Although the example used in this case focuses on the youths, it raises questions around the impact of government communication. How effective are channels used for government communication? How accessible is government information (with regard to language and the actual packaging)?

Secondly, the other aspect that should be taken into consideration is the manner in which government conducts its communication with the public, the media and its employees (public servants). In the South African context, there is a tendency to focus most of the communication on the outside, and little or nothing to government employees. The problem with this tendency is that a communication opportunity is missed. The importance of focussing a greater amount of communication on public servants is that if public servants have a thorough understanding, it places them in a position where they can be “marketers” of government services. The general trend is that once neighbours and friends have somebody who is a civil servant, the assumption that they make is that that person knows all there is to know about the civil government services.

Thirdly, the GCIS is responsible for the co-ordination of all government communication (at the local, provincial and national level). The implication in this regard is that the GCIS must provide a framework within which government

communication should take place at these levels, and also provide support. This is important to ensure that all government communicators at all levels operate from the same framework.

Fourthly, government communication is a major responsibility, and as such requires that people with the required expertise are recruited and retained. This requires that a clear retention strategy to ensure that there is consistency in government communication is developed. This will involve making sure that proper training is provided to government communicators.

Fifthly, building capacity amongst government communicators at all levels should be prioritized. In this regard special attention should be paid to the regional structures of government. This is important mainly because it will ensure the relevance of government communication. This is because people at the regional level are more familiar with the circumstances at the local level and therefore are able to ensure that communication is tailored to meet the needs of different communities. This will require that regional offices are well- resourced. What is of importance in this regard is that government service should be customer focused and responsive to public needs. The implication is that government departments'

activities will have to transcend narrow department-specific activities, hence the importance of Imbizo.

This study was also necessitated by the fact that as far as this researcher could determine, there is no academic study that has been conducted on the use of Imbizo as a strategy for government's interaction with the people.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

As Horwitz (2001:318) indicated,

“...the Comtask Report conceptualised the communications task of government as providing information quickly, transparently, and with accountability to the people and the media, and enacting policies to spur the growth of communications structures so as to enable people to function as active citizens in a democratic environment”.

It is evident from the above quotation that communication in this context is at the core of government's interaction with the people. This is because if people do not have access to government information, they will not be able participate in government activities. In a democratic society such as South Africa, communication should therefore be seen and practiced as a dialogue.

The role of the citizens is therefore conceived as far greater than simply as voters in periodic elections. This clearly indicates that the citizens of the country should be involved in decision making processes, if democracy is to be consolidated. In this regard, Mtaka (2002:2) indicates that participation at community level is necessitated by the fact that there is a need to move from building to consolidating democracy. It is therefore through building an enabling environment at community level that democracy can be consolidated in the broader community. However, looking at Imbizo as adopted by government, it is evident that the people are not involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the campaign, which compromises the purported community participation. As a result, this could ultimately undermine the democratic principles on which South Africa prides itself.

Mtaka (2002:3) further argues that to sustain democracy, efforts should be made to ensure that all citizens understand the nature of their participation, and what it is in which they have to participate. Access to information is therefore key to participation as it could help citizens to understand government programme and

therefore remain committed to democratic principles. It also shows that there is a need to ensure that all stakeholders are involved in the process so that they can understand their roles and responsibilities to ensure the success of Imbizo. The importance of participation is that it could help to ensure that the citizens have ownership of the whole process.

This approach would also help to ensure that there is a buy-in by all affected parties, which could help in the consolidation of democracy. However, the other concern with government's adaptation of Imbizo is that an Imbizo meeting can only reach a small fraction of the people in a particular community. This is largely because of logistical limitations such as, amongst others, the size of the venue and limited access to the venue.

The other concern is that there is also no way to ensure that the views and opinions expressed at these meetings are representative of the majority views in the community.

It is with the understanding of the need for this study and the research problem that the focus of this study will be on the role of the GCIS in strategic management of government communication, with specific reference to Imbizo.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the research questions formulated for this study. These research questions are based on the need for the study and the research problem discussed in 1.2 and 1.3 above:

- Is there a communication strategy framework for Imbizo?
- To what extent are the target audiences of Imbizo campaigns involved in the planning process?
- To what extent are the issues identified during Imbizo meetings implemented?
- How is the impact of Imbizo campaigns measured?
- Is there a direct link between people's participation during Imbizo meetings and language usage?
- To what extent are the citizens consulted in the planning of Imbizo campaign?

1.5 UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

The following assumptions are based on the research questions discussed in 1.4 above:

- There is no direct link between language and the community's ability to participate during an Imbizo meeting.
- There is no framework for Imbizo communication strategy.
- Citizens are not involved in the planning of Imbizo campaigns.
- Citizens are not consulted in the planning of Imbizo campaigns.
- There is no effective plan to assess the impact of Imbizo campaigns.
- There are no mechanisms to ensure the implementation of issues identified during Imbizo meetings.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Purpose of the study

The study will combine exploratory and descriptive aspects. Firstly, as Babbie (2001:91) indicated, exploratory studies occur when a researcher examines a new area of interest or when the subject of study is relatively new. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:41) further state that the purpose of exploratory research is to gain a broad understanding of a situation, phenomenon, community or person, and could arise from a lack of basic information in a new area of interest.

This study will be exploratory largely because as far as this researcher could determine, no academic research has been conducted on the role that traditional meetings such as Imbizo in general can be used as strategy for development communication. With regard to this study, the role of the GCIS in strategic management of Imbizo as a participatory development communication strategy has also not yet been academically examined.

Secondly, in descriptive studies, the researcher observes and then describes what was observed and as a result, most qualitative studies are descriptive (Babbie 2001:93). It should be noted that in most descriptive studies, the researchers proceed to go on and examine why the observed patterns exist and what these patterns imply, which is also the case in this study. As a result, it has become important to include the descriptive part of the research.

1.6.2 Delimitations of the study

The focus of this study will be on the role of the GCIS in strategic management of government communication. The focus will largely be on the Imbizo as a strategy for participatory development communication. The focus will be on the analysis of the communication strategy framework for Imbizo, and the extent to which it encourages or inhibits people's participation with regard to planning,

implementation, evaluation and overall decision-making. The focus is more on the processes than on the people's reaction to Imbizo campaigns.

1.6.3 Research Methodology

This study is qualitative in nature, with field research and content analysis as the main research methods. These methods have been selected because they enable the researcher to examine the subject of examination in its natural setting. The other aspect is that the use of two data collection methods helps to improve the validity of the research findings.

1.7 CONCEPTUALISATION

Conceptualisation is important because academic concepts that are often used have different connotations, and therefore have different meanings. Concepts as Mouton (1990:59) argues...

“...are the most basic linguistic constructions by means of which people order and categorize their reality:”

Mouton (1990:59) further states that....

“...concepts may therefore be regarded as the primary instruments which we employ in coming to grips with our experiences”.

It is with this understanding that the following concepts will be discussed in relation to this study.

1.7.1 Strategy

There is a lack of consensus on the definition of the concept strategy. However, according to Kitchen (1997:45), a broad consensus in literature exists that strategy is essentially concerned with a process of managing the interaction between an organisation and its external environment to ensure the best “fit” between the two.

According to Steyn and Puth (2000:52), strategy is often (mis) used by corporate communication practitioners to describe something “important” (as in strategic messages, strategic direction) or to describe activities (as in communication strategy). Strategy can be seen as an outcome of a thinking process which provides a framework for planning.

It can therefore be concluded that a strategy should reflect the organisation's assessment of its current situation, future operating environment and its key objectives in support of its policies and strategies for achieving them with the available resources.

1.7.2 Strategic management

Strategic management as Thompson and Strickland (1995:14) indicate, is a process that involves the development of "...a mission, setting objectives, forming a strategy, implementing and executing the strategic plan, and evaluating performance...". David (1999:5) in this case argues that strategic management can be defined as the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organisation to achieve its objectives.

As part of the strategic management process, constant changes taking place in the world also make it necessary for organisations to conduct environmental scans on a regular basis. Information technology and globalisation, for example, are some of the external changes that are transforming internal business dynamics in society today.

As a result, strategic management should be seen as an ongoing process because the environment within which a business enterprise operates is dynamic and keeps on changing. This view was further explained by Thompson and Strickland (1995:14) who state that strategic management requires constant evaluation and decisions have to be taken on whether to continue or to change a particular action.

The constant evaluation of strategic management is as Thompson and Strickland (1995:14) argue important, because nothing about strategic management is final. This is largely because all prior actions are subject to modification as conditions in the surrounding environment change and ideas for improvement emerge. The strategic management process is therefore based on the belief that organisations should continually monitor internal and external events and trends so that timely changes can be made as the need arises (David 1999:7).

Thompson and Strickland (1995:19) indicate that strategic management is important because it helps the managers to provide better guidance to the entire organisation, making managers aware of the changes in the environment, in terms of the opportunities and threatening developments, providing managers with rationale for evaluating competing budget requests, helping to unify the numerous strategy-related decisions by managers across the organisation, and creating a more proactive approach to management.

1.7.3 Communication strategy

There is limited available literature on communication strategy. Most of the available literature is either from a marketing or a public relations perspective. This concern was also articulated by Moss and Warnaby (1998:131) who argues that....

“...where mentioned at all within the strategy literature, communication often receives only superficial consideration, often not going beyond the basic articulation of its importance to the strategic management process”.

However, in general, it has been discussed as a process that is directly related to concrete communication goals and target groups. The communication strategy therefore defines how exactly the communication goals are going to be achieved. It also indicates which means of communication are to be applied for whom, when and for what goals (Van Gemert & Woudstra 1999:85). As Steyn and Puth (2000: 53) indicate, in order to achieve the organisation's goals, the corporate communication strategy should reflect the corporate strategy, and as a result, strategy formulation and strategic planning in the organisation are therefore a prerequisite for developing sound corporate communication strategy.

1.7.4 Development

Development, from a communication perspective, is defined as a process that enables all people to improve their quality of life (Du Plooy 1997:345). It is referred to as a process because emphasis is placed on continual change and continued improvement on a lifelong basis. In the South African context, development would, amongst others, involve the provision of education, housing, increasing access to health facilities, and job creation. This should be dealt with against the background of apartheid from which the country has emerged.

1.7.5 Development communication

Development communication is defined as the overall contribution of communication to the development of society (Bassette 1996:9). It also highlights the use of the media to deal with development themes. At the heart of the development communication concept is the need for an exchange of information to contribute towards the resolution of development problems and to improve the quality of life of a specific target group (Bassette 1996:11).

1.7.6 Participation

Participation refers to social and planning processes occurring in different contexts. On the one hand, participation is a means to reach a certain goal. For example, on the one hand participation may mean that all stakeholders are equally involved in the decision-making process to achieve a particular goal or solve a problem. On the other hand participation can be referred to as a goal in itself. In this case, people might be resistant to participate. As a result, getting them to participate could be the main goal of a particular participation process. Broadly, a participatory approach incorporates concepts in the emerging framework of multiplicity development, which places emphasis on the recognition of the role that the local people can play in decision-making on issues that affect their lives.

1.7.7 Imbizo

Imbizo refers to a traditional gathering convened by an Inkosi (a traditional leader). It is normally convened when there is an issue to be discussed or when an Inkosi wants to discuss a particular issue with his subjects, or to address problems within the community.

Imbizo serves as a platform where people discuss issues that affect them in the community such as amongst others, major crisis like drought, and a threat from outside, when there is a need for resources. Traditional leaders use Imbizo gatherings to get suggestions from their subjects and possibly respond to the

issues raised during the discussions. As a result, community members are given the chance to participate in decision-making processes.

1.8 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Background and need for the study

This chapter provides the background to this study. This includes the need for the study, research problem, the key concepts used in the study, and a summary of the research methodology.

Chapter 2: Participatory development communication: theoretical perspectives

The focus of this chapter is on the interpretation of participatory development communication as applied to this study

Chapter 3: Strategic management of government communication: the role of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS)

This chapter provides a background to the establishment of the GCIS, its mandate, and its approach to strategic management to government communication. Some literature on strategic management process will be cited in this chapter to provide more insight into the strategic management processes.

Chapter 4: Analysis of Imbizo as a communication strategy for government

This chapter will focus more on Imbizo as a strategy for government communication. The background to Imbizo will be provided. A comparative analysis of the communication strategy framework for Imbizo will be made with two other communication strategy frameworks for possible gaps and areas of improvement.

Chapter 5: Research design and methodology

This chapter provides a discussion of the research methodology used to collect data for this study. The discussion also deals with how the data will be collected and analysed.

Chapter 6: Results of the study

This chapter will present the research results which were collected using the research methodology discussed in Chapter 5. Summary of the main findings will be presented.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusion and recommendations of this study will be presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2 PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the theoretical framework of the concept participatory development communication which forms the basis of this study. In order to achieve this objective, the historical background of development and development communication will be discussed. The main theoretical paradigms which have been developed to explain the concept development communication will also will be discussed. Their implications on participatory development communication will also form part of the discussions in this chapter.

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CONCEPT “DEVELOPMENT”

According to Mowlana (1998:185), the widespread use of the concept “development” as a conceptual framework for a number of individual, institutional, national and international changes as well as for “progress” is a post-World War II

phenomenon. Between the 1940s and the 1960s, the term “development” became synonymous with growth, modernization, change, democracy, productivity, industrialization and other related Western historical and evolutionary changes. Initially, it was popularized by American scholars and policy makers, and it was soon introduced to Europe and especially the less industrialized countries of the world. The term “development” became a major issue in international organisations, despite its ill defined and less than universally recognised meaning (Mowlana, 1998:184).

During the post-World War II period, especially during the 1950s and 1960s, from the economic and technological perspectives, development was viewed as synonymous with economic and growth measured in aggregate terms (Mowlana, 1998: 188). The strategy used during this period was that of direct economic investment in developing countries, which later became the backbone of the Marshall Plan which was related to development programmes (Mowlana, 1998:188).

This dominant capitalist model of development as it relates to developing countries comprised the following main elements: economic growth through industrialization and accompanying urbanisation, capital-intensive technology mainly imported from the more developed nations, centralized planning, mainly by economists and financial experts, to guide and speed up the process of development. In this

context, the assertion was that the causes of underdevelopment are mainly within developing countries themselves (Mowlana, 1998:188). The challenge with this approach was that the conditions in the third world countries were different from those of the developed world, resulting in incompatibility of the Western designed development approaches.

The term development was popular among American scholars and policy makers mainly because of the following reasons as outlined in Mowlana (1998:186):

- The United States (US) was the hegemonic power at the end of World War II, and its government attempted to transform defeated countries and emerging non-Western and less industrialized countries of Asia. They wanted to transform Latin America and Africa into “Western-style” democracies through gradual reforms and reconstruction. The implication of the US approach was that less industrialized countries had to be incorporated into the dominant model of the capitalist economic and social system. This was done without consideration of the material conditions of those countries and the needs of the local people.
- The Marshall Plan was developed to assist in the reconstruction of Western European countries. This led to an increase in the amount of foreign aid to many countries which were on the path of modernization. This move also

led to the establishment of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), with its various programmes and activities. This initiative has since spread to African countries as well. The term development then acquired a special meaning from the viewpoint of the United States as a donor country and developing countries as recipients of funding. The implication was that development was defined from the point of view of the United States and not of the local people.

- The establishment of the United Nations' system and its affiliated agencies involved with aspects of national, regional and international activities of an economic, monetary, financial, technical, educational, scientific, cultural and political nature further helped to enhance the concept of development. This was largely the case especially in the context of the political and economic modernization and growth of less industrialized countries and emerging nations.

As a result, the 1950s and 1960s became known as the decade of development, after many African, Asian, and Latin American countries became independent. The newly independent countries therefore envisaged that they were within reach of the development models which would help to improve their standards of living, establish economic and political infrastructure, and help them to join the community of nations as

participants and equal partners. In this case, they needed to be independent, but the problem was that they did not have economic resources to fund their development initiatives. Thus the US was able to influence development programmes in developing countries.

- During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union and later European countries were keen to study non-Western countries under the rubric of “developing” countries and this contributed to the popularity of the term development. In this context, what was perceived to be development was done not in the interest of the developing countries. But it was rather a way in which developed countries were indirectly fighting against each other.

According to Mowlana (1998:186), during the 1950s and 1960s, modernization, nationalism and political development were the dominant approaches to development and nation building. However, the end of the 1970s was challenging not only on the theoretical but also on empirical levels of the models of modernization and political development. This resulted from Third World countries gaining independence and started to develop their own notions of what constitutes development.

Huesca (2000:73) in this case indicated that, development communication evolved through three major phases, namely, the dominant paradigm of modernization, the

Third World critique of the dominant paradigm, also known as the dependency paradigm, and various initiatives to create alternative approaches to communication for development, also known as the multiplicity paradigm. These will be dealt with in more detail in the discussion that follows.

2.3 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

2.3.1 Modernisation paradigm

When the modernization approach started in the 1940s and 1950s, development thinkers thought that the problem of underdevelopment could be solved by a mechanical application of economic and political systems of the West to countries in the Third World. This view was characterized by development approaches of the West imposed on the Third world countries, and it ultimately resulted in the modernization and growth theory. In this regard, development was perceived as a unilinear, evolutionary process which defined the state of underdevelopment in terms of observable quantitative differences between the so-called poor and rich

countries on the one hand, and traditional and modern societies on the other hand (Servaes, 1996:31).

The communication models during this period (1940s-1950s) placed emphasis on political persuasion and propaganda. This was mainly because the United States was involved in the First and Second World Wars, where the mass media were used to gain the support of the American people and for propaganda against the “enemy”. In the 1950s and the 1960s, the modernisation communication models were exported to the Third World nations. This resulted in a mismatch because they were not well suited for the Third World conditions (Melkote, 1991:147). Melkote (1991:53) further states that the dominant paradigm was mainly concerned with economic growth as measured by the rate of growth output. The theory of development in this orthodox economic approach was simply that there are two main factors which were important, namely, productive resources a society had, and economic institutions to utilise and guide the use of these resources.

These early theories of communication and modernization stemmed from the models developed in the United States during studies of political campaign situations. These led to the idea of a population divided into “active” and “passive” participants, or “opinion leaders” and “followers”, according to interest and activity in relation to media and their messages. The notion of a two-step-flow influence rather than a direct contact between stimulus and respondent; the so-called bullet

or hypodermic theory was predominant during this period (Servaes, 1996: 33). The causal effect, communication effects and the diffusion of innovations theories were also developed within the modernisation paradigm to explain the role of communication in development.

According to Nwosu (1995:13), the evolutionary modernisation paradigm viewed development and communication as a set of interdependent processes through which a traditional social structure is transformed into a modern social structure. The implication is that for a traditional person within a traditional society to become modernized, they must be moved from their present state of being to another stage.

In this regard, access to the mass media becomes a precondition for participation in modern society and that mass media directly affect personal attitudes and behaviour. According to Nwosu (1995:21), one of the important elements is that modernisation in traditional societies must follow the patterns of economic growth as established in Western societies. The Western model of development in this regard encompasses four sequential stages, namely, urbanisation, literacy, media exposure, and participation in economic and political activities; a model that has global implications (Nwosu 1995:21).

The communication effects approach also dominated studies on the role of communication in development. This approach conceptualised the media effects as direct, powerful and uniform on individuals. According to Melkote (1991:90), the bullet and hypodermic needle theories were the terms used to describe the concept of powerful media effects. Melkote (1991:90) further states that these models were developed by among others, Lasswell, Shannon and Weaver, Berlo and Schramm and they conceptualized communication as a one-way process flowing from a powerful source to a passive receiver (Melkote, 1991:90). For example, Harold Lasswell came up with an innovative conceptualization of mass media effects. His model suggested the following questions: WHO says WHAT in WHICH channel to WHOM and with what EFFECT (Melkote, 1991:65)? The other theory which has links with the communication effects is the diffusion of innovations model.

This communication-development model was developed by Everett Rogers and became popular in the 1960s. According to Melkote (1991:75), the diffusion of innovations theory has important theoretical links with communication effects research. It also focuses on the ability of the media messages and opinion leaders to create knowledge of new practices and ideas and persuade the target group to adopt the exogenously introduced innovations.

Between the 1960s and the 1970s, there was a sharp increase in diffusion studies. According to Melkote (1991:77), the increase was mainly because of the technological determinism that reigned supreme during this period in developing nations. Nwosu (1995:23) further states that the diffusion of innovations model placed emphasis on the role of the media in bringing into the community the ideas and information from outside.

According to the diffusion of innovation model, change is understood to be a process by which new ideas are developed. Diffusion is also seen as the process by which the new ideas are communicated to the members of a given social system; and consequences, are the changes that occur within the social system as a result of the adoption or rejection of the innovation. Social change is seen as an effect of communication, and diffusion research is seen as a subset of communication research dealing with the transfer of ideas (Mowlana, 1998:192).

According to Mowlana (1998:192), the assumption of the diffusion of innovation model is that communication by itself can generate development regardless of the socio-economic and political conditions. Melkote (1991:91) further states that this model assumes that the necessary route to the development of an individual from a traditional to a modern person was the acceptance of new ideas from sources external to the social system.

Communication and diffusion research in the United States had found mass media channels to be relatively more important in the information and “knowledge” function, whereas interpersonal channels were relatively more important in the persuasion function of the decision-making process in general and in innovation (Mowlana, 1998:193). The modernisation paradigm was heavily criticized, especially in the 1960s when developing countries got their independence. This gave birth to the dependency paradigm.

2.3.2 Dependency paradigm

In the 1960s the modernisation paradigm with its ethnocentric perspective on development was challenged by Latin American social scientists, and a theory dealing with dependency and underdevelopment, the dependency paradigm, was born. This dependency approach formed part of a general structuralist orientation in the social sciences. The dependency theorists were primarily concerned with

the effects of dependency on peripheral countries. Implicit in their analysis was the idea that development and underdevelopment must be understood in the context of the world system (Servaes, 1996: 32).

According to Servaes (1989:19), the dependency approach emerged from Latin America. The dependency theorists set to unravel the effects of the relationship of the periphery and the centre. This relationship is often seen among dependency theorists as the main cause of backwardness in the periphery. According to Servaes (1989: 21), dominant countries have technological, commercial, capital and socio-political predominance over dependent countries.

According to M'bayo (1995:78), the dependency paradigm views the condition of dependency as not only an outcome but also as the effect upon the developing countries, and of the imperialistic expansion of the advanced capitalist states. The dependency relationship takes the form of political, economic, military, media and cultural imperialism. M'bayo (1995:79) further states that the penetration of Third World countries by multinational corporations, the political objectives and foreign aid policies of developed countries in the international market and credit systems are all seen as aspects of the dependency phenomenon.

Most studies that consider the impact of the cultural aspects of the Third World countries do not go beyond quantitative aspects. They mainly show how much information, entertainment, advertising, capital and hardware flows between societies and media institutions. These flows cause imbalances between the centre and the periphery nations, regions and countries, between rural and urban

and between rural and poor (Servaes, 1996: 34). The process of development is therefore analysed in terms of relations between regions, central and peripheral.

The dependency paradigm stresses that the most important obstacles to development are external to the underdeveloped nations. They also believed that due to the fact that the periphery is deprived of its surplus, development in the centre implies under development in the periphery. The dependency theorists also place emphasis on that it is necessary for a peripheral country to dissociate itself from the world market and strive for self-reliance (Servaes, 1996:84). The practicality of peripheral countries' dissociation from developed countries is questionable when one considers that Third World countries do not have most of the resources which are central to their development and transformation.

The peripheral countries' dependence is therefore based upon the international division of labour that allows industrial development to take place in some countries while restricting it in others. The dependency theorists thus maintain that the most important hindrances to development are not the shortage of capital or management, as the modernisation theorists contend, but must be sought in the present international system (Servaes, 1989:21). The obstacles for development are therefore not internal, but external. This also means that the development in the centre maintains underdevelopment in the periphery.

The debates around the dependency paradigm also led to calls from developing nations for the establishment of the New International Information and Communication Order (NIICO). According to M'Bayo (1995:82), there was therefore the desire to counteract, adapt and minimise external influences. These attempts were seen as one of the ways to break the cycle of dependency. Some of the proposals to be used as means of breaking from the dependency cycle involved a cultural dissociation from the advanced capitalist nations.

According to Melkote (1991:143), the dependency paradigm theorists criticized the modernisation models of communication because they use an individual as the unit of response and analysis, which has led to the use of the individual as the unit of change and consequently, the unit of blame. The limitation of this assertion is that it assumes that Third World countries are homogenous, thus ignoring the differences that exist within and among them.

The communication effects theorists place emphasis on the role that the media has in development communication. The main limitation in this regard is that most people in the Third World countries do not have access to the media and other related sources of information. Communication effects models such as that developed by Lasswell were obsessed with persuasion of the receiver to the objective of the source. The social context in this model was irrelevant. With continued debates by development communication scholars, the late 1970s and

early 1980s saw the emergence of the new paradigm, called the multiplicity paradigm.

2.3.3 Multiplicity paradigm

Contrary to modernization and dependency theories, the third paradigm emerged, the multiplicity paradigm. It emphasized that there is no universal path to development, and that development must be conceived of as an integral part, multi-dimensional process that can differ from one country to another. It also implies that the problem of development is a relative one and no part of the world can claim to be developed in all aspects. This paradigm defined development as a need-oriented, endogenous, self-reliant, ecologically sound and based on participatory democracy and structural transformation (Servaes, 1996: 32). It therefore encourages the involvement and participation of the recipients in the conception of development messages, and implementation of development policies and projects.

This new approach to development has emerged from the criticism of the modernization and dependency paradigms. The main starting point of the multiplicity paradigm is an examination of the changes from a bottom-up perspective and from the perspective of self-development of the local community. The basic assumption is that no nation functions completely autonomously and is

completely self-sufficient, nor is there any nation whose development is exclusively determined by external factors. It can therefore be concluded that every community is in one way or another dependent (Servaes, 1996:86). According to Servaes (1989:31), the starting point of this paradigm is the examination of the changes from “bottom up”, that is, from the self-development of the local community.

According to Gooch (1995:90), since independence, emerging African nations have viewed the adoption of modern communication technology as a vital development to social development. The early efforts to develop media systems in newly independent African countries were widely based on the Western diffusionist or modernisation models of development that presents communication technology as the main mechanism to enhance socio-economic development.

The problem with diffusionist approach was that Western-based media strategies that disparage the very social institutions that strengthen traditional channels of communication have not yet yielded meaningful results for African development (Gooch, 1995:93). As a result of such limitations, calls have been made to place emphasis on the integration of diverse national development objectives and active participation of multi-sectoral groups in communication policy and planning (Gooch, 1996:96).

According to Servaes (1989:49), in contrast to the more economical and politically oriented approach in the modernisation and dependency paradigms, the central idea here is that there is no universal development model, that development is an integral part, multidimensional, and dialectic process that can differ from society to society (Servaes 1989:32). Each society is therefore required to develop its own strategy of development. This approach also contends that the development problem is relative and that no one country can contend that it has developed in every respect (Servaes 1989:32).

The multiplicity paradigm also places emphasis on the importance of self-reliance. Self reliance in this case is rooted at the local level; which implies the equitable access to resources by all the people. It also involves structural changes that are necessary in the power structure in order to create conditions for self-management and participation in decision making by all the people from the rural or urban communities and to the world as a whole.

The multiplicity paradigm encouraged participation of the recipients of development initiatives. According to Servaes (1989:54), it is more horizontal, participative, and receiver-oriented. It is fundamentally based on interactive, participatory, two-way communication on all levels of the society.

According to Servaes (1989:57), the multiplicity paradigm rejects the necessity of uniform, centralized, expensive, professional, and institutionalized media, and argues for multidimensionality, horizontality and diachronic communication exchange. This approach implies a more dialectic and active participation by the public. It also takes into consideration the relation with overall societal emancipation processes at local, national as well international levels.

According to Melkote (1991:194), this alternative approach to development places emphasis on the poorest people, active participation of the people at grassroots level, independence of local communities to tailor development projects to their own objectives and the integration of the old and new ideas, the traditional and modern systems, the endogenous and exogenous elements to constitute a unique blend suited to the needs of a particular community. The other important factor in this regard is that reliance in these instances would be on local human skills and material resources, thus fostering greater self-reliance on development and, importantly, leading to freedom from external dependence.

According to Mowlana (1998:195), the Third World response to the modernization paradigm was a critique of them rather than a well defined, coherently identified, and clearly mapped-out approach constituting a model in its own right. Discourses such as the dependency theories, self-sufficiency, and cultural autonomy and dissociation were all responses to the dysfunctioning of the two dominant

approaches rather than a coherent set of alternative proposals for development and communication.

The conclusion that can be drawn is that the dependency paradigm in general and its sub-sector of communication is characterized by a global approach, with an emphasis on external factors and regional contradictions, a polarization between development and underdevelopment, and a primarily economically oriented analytical method. The multiplicity paradigm on the other hand stresses that development communication must be approached from the perspective of the poor to whom it is intended. The participation of the community in this regard is central to participatory development communication.

2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

2.4.1 Background

For the development dialogue to proceed, the development support communication (DSC) experts suggest that popular participation should involve sensitizing local people to become more respectful and responsive to development programmes (Sonderling 1996:36). The role of face-to-face interaction therefore becomes necessary. Participation of the community in the identification of development

needs and the conceptualization of development communication strategies should become central to development initiatives.

The main problem with development communication is that messages are created by a community developer and are sometimes not relevant to a specific community. These messages are often diffused to the community with the specific aim of creating a climate of acceptance by beneficiaries. More often, these messages focus on international or national development and are not community specific (Burger, 1999:89). According to Kasongo, (1997:87), unless people are involved, appropriate media are used and the messages reflect the relevant variety of realities, development through communication will still remain a pipe dream.

There is an increased need to develop communication strategies that acknowledge the fact that the beneficiaries of development are people who know what is good for themselves. This should therefore be the basis upon which the policies and development projects should be based. This paradigm puts the audience in the lead because they assume increased control and access to communication rather than information. It is also able to deal with practical diversities because it recognizes and accommodates the social, cultural and need diversities as opposed to the homogenized diet which mass communication offers (Kasongo, 1997:87).

Given that most of the projects are imposed on the people, they do not take into consideration the context, culture, belief systems and practices of the local communities. This often results in misunderstanding and failure of such projects. According to Robinson (1996:42-43), the following questions relating to context of development should be dealt with in dealing with development issues: from whose cultural standpoint does development start? Whose culture is promoted by the particular development undertaken? Whose cultural norms are respected in the way development is executed? Who is crossing into whose culture?

2.4.2 Participation defined

According to Makumbe (1996:7), popular participation is viewed both as a goal of development which requires that national resources and opportunities be equitably distributed. It is also perceived of and as a way of facilitating and energizing the development effort by means of popular involvement in developmental decision-making. In the African context, it should be noted that the socio-economic development has largely been characterized by an over-centralisation of power and by various impediments to meaningful and effective participation of the majority of the people (Makumbe 1996:3). This has often resulted in limited exposure to the required skills, which ultimately limits people's participation in projects.

According to Roodt (1996:323), a number of paradigms from conservative, to radical, have incorporated the term “participation” into their own discourse in different ways. The use of the term “participation” ranges from a legitimizing exercise to a transformative one both at a personal level and at a global level.

Participation implies a higher level of public involvement in communication systems. It also includes the involvement of the public in the production processes and also in the management and planning of communication systems. It is also a term used to refer to a number of social and planning processes occurring in many different places in many different contexts.

To some people participation is a means to reach a certain goal; to others, participation is an end in itself. Broadly speaking, the participatory approach incorporates such concepts in the emerging framework of multiplicity development. It stresses the importance of cultural identity of local communities and of democratization and participation at all levels, that is, international, national, local and individual. Paolo Freire (1983) refers to this as the right of every man (Servaes, 1996:15).

When dealing with issues around participation, the following aspects need to be taken into consideration: what do we mean by participatory development in South

Africa? Is it a legitimizing exercise for top-down implementation? Is it a transformative exercise? At what level should it occur?

Over the last two decades, the concept of participation has become prominent in the theories of development. Modernisation-based approaches to development postulated a top-down, economically driven view of development as growth and tended to be implemented with little regard for local context or culture (Waters 2000:90).

Participatory models of development are generally considered as being more responsive to the circumstances of the people and communities to whom development is suppose to bring the most benefits. It should however be noted that the relationship between development and communication demonstrates that adherence to participatory ideals and practices has not necessarily brought us any closer to either affecting or understanding communicative praxis or power in development processes.

The participatory approach stresses the need to construct theory from practice, positing the researcher and his or her subjects as equally and collaboratively engaged in development processes. It stresses the need to develop the link between theory and practice in a contextual framework of social transformation (Waters, 2000:90).

In the 1950s modernists worked vigorously to produce development programmes that would solve problems of poverty, health, land and low agricultural production. These programmes attracted a lot of money which was filtered into the target area and its people. In the final analysis, when the money was spent and the problem solvers retreated from the community, they left the people destitute largely because they did not impart their skills on the community. This was questioned in the 1970s and was perceived as exploitation that resulted in poverty (White, 1994:21).

One of the most important questions to be answered is that if the failure rate of participatory initiatives is so high around the world, and in Africa in particular, what makes South Africa different enough, if, anything, to ensure its success here (Roodt, 1996:323).

2.4.3 Different perspectives on participation

2.4.3.1 Distortion of participation

Distortion of participation is where the control of the project and decision-making powers rest with planners, administrators and the community's elite. This practice is often referred to as pseudo-participation. In this case, the level of people's participation is that of being present to listen to what is being planned for them and what would be done unto them (White 1994:16). On the other hand, genuine

participation involves working co-operatively throughout the decision-making process and when the people are empowered to control the action to be taken.

Participatory development communication is not free from distortions that sometimes neutralise the people's contribution to building a participative society. One of the frequent distortions is manipulated participation. In the Third World, people are frequently invited to participate in government projects. In most of these cases people's co-operation is manipulated in such a way that they have the illusion of participating of their own accord when all they are doing is in fact giving free help to carry out government projects designed without consulting the population (Bordenave, 1994:45).

According to Melkote (2000:41), the term participatory development communication has been misunderstood and misused. Participation has been defined and operationalised in many ways: from pseudo-participation to genuine efforts at generating participatory decision-making. While the practice of participatory development communication stresses collaboration between the people and experts, knowledge sharing between the people and experts on a coequal basis, it has not been true empowerment of the people, but the attainment of some indicator of development as articulated in the modernization paradigm.

Participatory approaches have been encouraged, though the design and control of messages and the development agenda have remained with the experts (Melkote,

2000:42). The reality of the social and political situation in most developing countries is such that the urban and rural poor, women, and other people at the grassroots are entrapped in a dependency situation in a highly stratified and unequal social and economic structures (Melkote, 2000: 42).

One of the problems in the practice of development communication is that the concept participation is often not clearly defined. This situation makes participation vulnerable to manipulation. There is therefore the need to define this concept and to determine the levels of participation by all the stakeholders. In dealing with this problem, this study will take into consideration that participation must be contextual. This is because as White, 1994:16) indicated, even at a local level, participation varies in type, level of intensity, extent and frequency. It is therefore important to note that even in one community there are divisions and different interest groups. In order to ensure that development orientated communication attains the desired impact; the diversity that exists in a particular community must be well understood in the development of the communication strategy.

In this regard, Bordenave (1994:40) further states that if a participative society is to be established, there must be a paradigm shift with regard to power relations between all the stakeholders, including the state. This would help to ensure that all affected parties are able to participate in the decision-making processes.

2.4.3.2 Participatory decision-making

Participatory decision-making in development communication requires knowledge sharing between the “experts” and the “beneficiaries’ of development projects (Melkote, 2000:41). However, this strategy has never really taken root among development agencies, partly due to the unwillingness of the experts to give up control over the process and partly due to the inability of development workers to appreciate and operationalise true participatory communication approaches at the grassroots level.

It is also important for development practitioners to note that people need to be involved in the conception of messages. This encourages and persuades them even more effectively to accept the given information. According to Kasongo, (1998: 87), unless people are involved, appropriate media are used, and the messages reflect the relevant variety of realities, the much talked about development through communication will still remain a pipe dream.

In order to realise a participatory approach to development that is inclusive and sustainable, and avoids the pitfalls in the South African context, the following key analytic problems need to be investigated: What factors in other countries in Africa have inhibited genuine participation by groupings outside of a small elite? To what

extent do similar conditions exist in South Africa? What makes South Africa unique in ways that could contribute to a different outcome?

In dealing with these issues, it is important to note that apart from the obvious objective of job creation, either through employment or entrepreneurship, a real need exists to integrate the previously disenfranchised into decision-making structures in a meaningful way (Roodt, 1996:321).

At the same time it is important for the organs of civil society, such as civics, development forums, committees, and political parties, to establish working relationships with formal government structures. These should move beyond mere demands of protest politics to playing both a watchdog role and a development one, especially in terms of genuinely representing people's needs and wants (Roodt, 1996:322).

In dealing with participatory decision-making, the following questions need to be answered: Who are the significant decision-makers and influential people in a particular area? Whose interests do these influential decision-makers serve? How do these members of the population, generally excluded from the decision-making processes try to hold these decision makers in check, exert their own influence on the political process? To what extent do present structures of production,

particularly land ownership and agricultural production, affect local participation in decision making?

It is relatively simple to say that participation is an important component of development and that involving the poor is fundamental to development, which leads to the eradication of poverty and injustice. But mobilizing people at grassroots to participate is not a small task. As White (1994:16) states, participation varies in terms of type, level of intensity, and frequency. However, it is important because it helps people in raising their awareness and consciousness of what they need to do to improve their living conditions.

2.4.3.3 Participation and conscientisation

If people are given the opportunity to acquire appropriate knowledge, they will be in a better position to develop their own strategies to determine the course of their own lives. The concept of conscientisation is therefore central to the theme of participation. In order to activate consciousness and critical awareness of one's own situation and environment, one's identity, talents, and alternatives for freedom of action is imperative to participatory action. The consciousness can be enhanced through participatory processes that increase understanding and a sense of control necessary for making contribution to development decisions (White, 1994:24-25).

2.4.3.4 Participation and the role of the state

According to Midgley (1986:146), the role of the state in the community's social development initiatives has not yet been fully explored. The existing view is that state sponsorship of community participation stifles initiative, thus weakens local self-reliance and subverts local authority. The other concern raised by the proponents of community participation approach is that the state may attempt to use community participation for ulterior motives and seek to manipulate these programmes for its own political ends (Midgley, 1986:147).

Governments have in the past declared their support for community participation and in a number of cases, provided finance, staff and other resources. According to Midgley (1986:148), the support was conditional or externally imposed and did not include the ideals of self-determination and participation.

Poor communities were thus not involved in decision-making processes and they did not have the final say on matters that affect their lives. Community participation in most developing countries has been haphazard and with a few exceptions state resource allocations to participatory projects have been lost in the administrative inefficiencies of government administration. Bureaucratic indifference, procedural delays and many other administrative problems have effectively blocked the realization of authentic forms of community participation.

Proponents of community participation place emphasis on the strengthening of the community's capacity to deal with its own problems through its initiative and effort (Midgley, 1986: 146). The critique of the community participation approach is that it ignores the fact that the state is the major provider of social developmental services, and as a policy maker, determines how social development programmes should be implemented.

According to Midgley (1986:151), there are several alternatives that can be explored to deal with the role of the state in ensuring community participation in development initiatives. Firstly, the possibility of abandoning the concept of authentic participation. In this case, a more limited definition which recognises the realities of modern societies and the difficulty of achieving absolute popular control over local affairs and the total involvement of all members of the community could be adopted. Emphasis could thus be placed on obtaining maximum resources and services from government agencies in order to improve social conditions.

Secondly, to completely do away with the state involvement of any kind. The proponents of non-participation by the state argue that all anti-participatory tendencies by the state will have been completely done away with. According to Midgley (1986:156), a major drawback in advocating the use of non-government

rather statutory organisations in community participation is the inability of the voluntary sector to redistribute resources. While the state on the other hand has resources and power to mobilize and redistribute resources, voluntary agencies are dependent on charity.

2.4.3.5 Participation as donation of labour

In South Africa, government often calls for people to volunteer in campaigns that are supposed to uplift their lives. In most of these instances, people volunteer with the hope that this might provide employment opportunities for them. For example, Imbizo amongst other initiatives calls and encourages people to volunteer their labour in government projects. In this regard as Cohen (1996:114) states, in some projects, community participation is equated with free unskilled labour and donations of local raw materials by the community. This is often done in the “spirit of self-help”.

The community members are invited to perform manual tasks such as carrying pipes, dig holes, and perform unskilled construction work and maintenance tasks at no cost to government. However, they are not involved in the planning process. This is because in this approach planning is done by professionals who do not stay in the same or similar environment as the beneficiaries of development efforts. The

community only provides labour to carry out the plan, which has been designed by a team of external specialists.

The immediate benefit in using this approach is that it lowers the costs that developers could incur. However, it can also be argued that labour contribution may increase the people's identification with the project, which is one of the objectives of participatory development communication. In this instance, people may have a sense of ownership because they would have made a contribution in the conceptualisation of a particular community development initiative.

Although there are some advantages in the perception of participation as the donation of labour, there are also some disadvantages. Firstly, the problem could be that those in higher positions in the community assign the tasks and the people who should do the work do not choose such tasks voluntarily. This could result in resentment towards the project, even though it could have been beneficial to the community.

Secondly, the other problem is that of top-down, economically driven approach to development where development strategies are implemented with little or no regard for local context and culture (Waters, 2000:90). The danger of ignoring the local context is that it could result in inaccurate solutions provided to deal with

particular problems in the community. This could to a large extent be counter-productive.

Thirdly, in some instances, assumptions, which are not always applicable to the situation, are made in the choice of target groups, solutions, effects and costs. The problem with making such assumptions could be that in some instances the external experts do not understand the local circumstances. As a result, some of the strategies that are employed could be incompatible with the local community, which might ultimately lead to their failure. It therefore becomes important for a needs analysis research to be conducted to determine what a particular community needs and the appropriate channels that can be used to communicate the goals and objectives of the initiative to the community.

Fourthly, other problem with the top-down approach is that Western countries provide solutions to problems, which are not perceived as problems by the intended beneficiaries. In order to ensure the success of participatory development communication, it is therefore important to shift from the top-down modernisation paradigm to a multiplicity approach, which is needs oriented, self-reliant, and based on participatory democracy and the sharing of resources.

Looking at government Imbizo from this interpretation of participatory development communication, it could be argued that enabling people to take part in decision-

making could enhance its impact, whilst on the other hand imposing decisions on the local people could lead to resentment towards Imbizo. However, it is important to note that in actual practice, Imbizo is a highly centralised project, with limited or no involvement of the local people who are meant to be its beneficiaries.

2.4.3.6 Participation as sharing of costs

The focus of this approach is on the sharing of costs between the community and the community developers. The costs in this regard, among others, may include labour, finance, time and raw materials. The project leaders in this approach are not only concerned with cost reduction, but also with cost recovery. In order to achieve this objective, community members are invited to make cash contributions towards the maintenance of services (Cohen (1996:225)). The willingness of the community to contribute towards the costs of a particular community initiative is often taken as an indication that that community values the services provided to them. The assumption is also that they are committed to help to ensure that such services are sustained.

The limitation of this approach could be that not all community members may be in a position to make cash donations if required to do so. This might lead to problems of money collection and access to the services, especially to those who cannot make donations. In cases where this approach is adopted, proper consultation

must take place. Efforts must also be made to make sure that people agree on the nature of such donations, and whether this is a viable option or not. Otherwise, it could divide the community, and as a result, it might fail to achieve the desired results.

As Cohen (1996:225) argues, the willingness to contribute to a community development initiative may not always be a reliable indicator to measure the community's potential for a partnership. It is therefore important that any participatory development communication initiative, such as Imbizo aiming to develop a partnership with the community takes into consideration among others, the local context, that is, community organisations, available infrastructure and the community's economic circumstances. This is important because all these factors play a major role in the effectiveness of any participatory development communication initiative.

The implication for this approach is that a needs analysis must be conducted to determine the nature of cost sharing and how it will be managed, and the nature of community involvement in decision-making processes. The implication for Imbizo as used in the South African government context is that the planning process should be preceded by a needs analysis which would provide a clear picture of the issues that need government attention. This should be done in consultation with all the stakeholders.

2.4.3.7 Participation as taking part in decision-making

Participation in decision-making in development communication requires amongst other things, as (Melkote, 2000:41) states, knowledge sharing between “experts” and the “beneficiaries” of development projects. However, this strategy has never really taken root among development agencies. This is partly because of the unwillingness of the experts to give up control over the process. It is also because of the inability of development workers to appreciate and operationalise true participatory communication approaches at the grassroots level. This could be accounted for by participatory development practitioners’ lack of understanding of the community and the resources that exist in that particular community.

This is also the problem with the current government adaptation of Imbizo because there is limited usage of existing traditional communication channels (word of mouth, community meetings, etc.) in the communities. Instead, the focus is on the generation of extensive media coverage.

Participation in decision-making is important because it helps in creating a community’s pride of ownership through regular involvement (Cohen 1996:226). The involvement of the community is important because it would help the community and experts to determine the costs, management processes,

monitoring and evaluation. This could also have a bearing on the success or failure of the project.

It is therefore important to recognise the relationship between participation and power as it has implications on the nature of community participation. The participatory approach also implies that all the affected people must share the power to be active participants in all stages of planning, resource mobilisation and allocation, and maintenance of the project. This is important because these aspects demonstrate the power relations in the community, which would ultimately have a bearing on community participation.

In order for participatory decision making to succeed, communities should be invited, and have more decision making powers on goal setting, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of the project. It is therefore important that greater flexibility in planning and implementation be exercised (Cohen, 1996:227). With regard to Imbizo, power relations are biased towards government as it decides on the targets, resources, maintenance, and areas to be visited for the purposes of the campaign.

One of the problems which affect participatory decision-making is that a centralised system, which places emphasis on fewer people taking decisions, reduces the chance for authentic participation to take place (Cohen (1996:227). It

is in this case that Cohen (1996:227) further argues that in centralised governments, most development planning takes place in urban-based government departments and pays only lip service to community participation. This describes what is happening with regard to government's Imbizo programme as the process is highly centralised, with limited or no involvement of the affected stakeholders.

It is also important for development practitioners to note that communities need to be involved in the planning of projects that affect their lives. This is because participation encourages and persuades them even more effectively to heed the given information and to support the development initiative.

In dealing with participatory decision-making processes, it is important to ask questions around the implementation of commitments that government had made. In this regard, questions arise on how the communities will hold the decision makers in check and exert their own influence on the implementation processes. The other aspect to be considered is that as far as Imbizo is concerned, there is no mechanism to keep government in check and to make sure that the promises that have been made are fulfilled.

2.4.3.8 Participation as power to create contractual obligation

In this approach, community involvement does not focus on costs alone. It is defined as a process of establishing a minimal institutional infrastructure to manage and maintain the project. According to Cohen (1996:225), project managers focus on getting local leaders to legitimise the project, forming committees to promote, manage and to monitor local contributions. The focus is also on the usage of services and infrastructure, and the transference of technology through training of volunteers and other technical aides.

In this approach, a contract, which spells out the roles and responsibilities of all affected parties is often drawn up. This procedure provides the community with an opportunity to either accept or reject the contract and to negotiate some changes through the formal power structures of the community (Cohen 1996:226). According to Thomas (2002:52), this approach can be described as a dialogue between all affected parties, which is underlined by mutual respect. A major advantage of this approach for the community is that they are able to negotiate terms that suite their conditions.

This approach is important because there is often a lack of skills transfer in most development projects, which is ultimately to the detriment of the community. In the 1950s, for example, modernists worked vigorously to produce development programmes that would solve problems of poverty, health, land and low agricultural production. These programmes attracted a lot of money, which was filtered into the

targeted communities. In the final analysis, when the money was spent and the problem solvers retreated from the community, they left the people destitute largely because they did not impart skills to the local people.

This tendency was questioned by most development scholars in the 1970s and was labelled as exploitation that resulted in poverty (White, 1994:21). The approach which emphasises contractual obligations is therefore important because it attempts to deal with concerns around skills transfer and the prevention of exploitation of the local community.

The other problem is that in the African context, the socio-economic development has largely been characterized by an over-centralisation of power and by various impediments to meaningful and effective participation of the majority of the people (Makumbe, 1996:3). This has often resulted in limited skills transfer, which ultimately limits people's participation in projects.

It can therefore be concluded that for sustainability of development projects, any attempt at ensuring community participation should take into consideration the importance of skills transference. This would in the long run help in ensuring that poor communities are self-reliant once the development practitioners have left the community.

The main problem with the creation of contractual obligations could be that the negotiations involve local leaders and committees, and may not always be representative of all community members. It is therefore important that community leaders who are involved in contractual discussions consult with community members and that they take their circumstances into consideration when they become involved in such negotiations.

2.4.3.9 Acknowledgement of the beneficiaries

There is a need to develop communication strategies that acknowledge that the beneficiaries of development are people who know what is good for themselves. This should therefore be the basis upon which the policies and development projects should be based.

It is important to note that in order for genuine participatory development communication to take place, the beneficiaries must take the lead because they understand their circumstances better, and that they are in a better position to articulate them. This will enable the participatory development communication

approach to deal with practical diversities because it will be able to recognise and accommodate the social, cultural and need diversities as opposed to the homogenised approach offered by mass communication (Kasongo, 1997:87). This can be seen as a bottom-up approach, which is central to genuine participatory development communication.

As Cohen (1996:230) argues, there is growing evidence that top-down strategies in development have failed to make any substantial impact on the lives of poor people. There is also recognition of the move towards a bottom-up approach.

2.4.3.10 Beneficiaries should also take responsibility for the project

People's participation is important because their responsibility in the project will be an assurance that the local resources will be mobilised and that they are preferred to costly outside resources. According to Cohen (1996:230), participation allows people to determine the objectives of the project, to support project management and to use their local knowledge, resources and skills. This should normally result in more effective and better run projects. In this context, community participation should be seen as a managerial contribution and not merely implementing what has been planned by experts who do not live in a particular community.

Participation is therefore seen as a way of extending provision of services to all community members, including those who are traditionally excluded, mainly women, the rural and urban poor.

Participatory development communication in this case can be seen from two perspectives, namely, as a means or as an end in itself. As a means, participation is seen as a way of harnessing community resources to help in the achievement of pre-determined goals and objectives. The results of participation are therefore more important than the act of participation itself. On the other hand, participation as an end implies that the process of people's involvement is seen as strengthening the capacities of the poor to intervene more directly in community development initiatives.

2.4.3.11 Participation should encourage self-reliance

The goal of participation is often seen as self-reliance. The concept of self-reliance therefore becomes an integral part of participation, both as an outcome and as a process. Participation is in fact an act of self-reliance that is often accompanied by self-confidence. It is an important concept for development and for participatory communication, but it can be interpreted and operationalised from a number of different perspectives (White, 1994:25). Genuine participation is driven by human compassion, unselfish motives, sensitivity to the feelings and worth of others,

supportive communication, openness to change and the shifting of responsibility and power (White, 1994:30).

The concept of self-reliance in development gained popularity when user initiated activities at the local level were considered absolutely essential for successful development at the village level. People had to discuss together, identify their needs and problems, decide on a plan of action, and then use a specific medium of communication and information database most appropriate to their needs (Melkote, 1991:206).

It is also important to note that for people to be self reliant, the critical elements of this empowering process are, to enhance awareness, to strengthen local organisations, and to create pressures from below to bring about changes in existing arrangements (Cohen 1996:231-232). It is therefore important that projects that seek to promote participation must be clear as to the nature of the participation that they aim to promote. This is important because it would help to determine the appropriate methodology for mobilization (Cohen, 1996:232).

In dealing with participatory development communication, it is important to take into consideration the fact that there are aspects which may inhibit participatory development communication.

2.5 FACTORS THAT AFFECT PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

The following factors that are perceived in this study as obstacles to participatory development communication will be discussed: people's participation and power relations, participation and vested interests, self-depreciation and participation, the role of the state and participation.

2.5.1 People's participation and power relations

The extent and nature of people's participation in a development initiative to a large extent defines the power relations amongst the affected people. Therefore, the roles that participants play in any development project may demonstrate their status in society. For example, government employees plan for Imbizo activities with limited or no participation from the intended beneficiaries. The people's involvement is largely limited to asking questions during Imbizo meetings. This level of participation can therefore not be defined as authentic participation. This is because as Servaes (1999: 197) indicated, authentic participation directly addresses power and its distribution in society.

The implication is therefore that the beneficiaries of development communication should be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of an Imbizo campaign. The main challenge in this regard could be that development

practitioners, in this case government officials, who want the status quo to be retained, may resist efforts to share power with the people, and this could inhibit authentic participation.

The other limitation to authentic participation is that the dominant classes are in most instances not interested in the implementation of policies and plans that would substantially improve the conditions of the lower classes. This is largely because, as Servaes (1999:198) argues, every centre needs its periphery to sustain itself. This is a modernisation understanding, which as Melkote (1991:90) argues, conceptualises communication as a one-way process flowing from a powerful source to a passive receiver.

The implication of this approach for communication is that people are seen as objects that need to be influenced and changed. It is also a top-down approach, which implies that messages are developed by opinion makers and thereafter filtered down to the people. The problem with this approach is that it ignores the context within which development takes place and the needs of a particular community.

It therefore means that if these power relations are not addressed, they could compromise the authenticity of participatory development communication efforts. When dealing with the issue of participation, it is also important to note that the

issue of power has close relations with the affected parties protecting their vested interests in community development initiatives.

2.5.2 Participation and vested interests

There is no community that is homogenous in all respects. This is largely because communities are characterised by different interest groups with their varied aspirations; and this has implications on development initiatives. For example, the government, may want to use Imbizo as a platform, among other things, to explain its policies, its projects, programme of action and to explain progress in policy implementation, but also as a public relations exercise activity (a perception that is often attached to Imbizo).

The government's interests could therefore largely be political because it would want to be in contact with the people it is suppose to serve. Government would also like to create a positive perception in the community and among opinion makers. To this end, it can be argued that government has been using Imbizo as a public relations exercise.

On the other hand, the community representatives might have varied interests ranging from wanting to genuinely help the community, to gaining power for themselves and to advance their careers. These varied vested interests could have

an impact on the nature and level of community participation. Depending on how they are managed, they could inhibit or enhance genuine community participation in community development initiatives.

As articulated by Servaes (1999:201), more powerful community members take advantage of any available opportunity for influence, thus corrupting the purpose of the participatory approach and destroying the spirit of a co-operative effort. It is therefore important to note that in all communities there are sub-communities or factions, which have interests that they would want to protect. Any development initiative should therefore take into consideration the different interest groups in the community and develop strategies to effectively manage them.

The implication for Imbizo could be that its status as a genuinely participatory development communication strategy could be compromised if the varied vested interests are not addressed. It is therefore important for all affected parties to be extensively consulted with the view to harmonise their interests for the benefit of the community at large. It should be noted that although the vested interests could be harmonised, one of the challenges that remain is that of self-depreciation that exists in the community.

2.5.3 Self-depreciation and participation

Servaes (1999:202) defines self-depreciation as a process that stems from the background of dependency. In this regard, M'bayo (1995:79) states that the penetration of Third World countries by multinational corporations, the political objectives and foreign aid policies of developed countries in the international market and credit systems are all seen as aspects of the dependency phenomenon. This is largely because multinationals would want to make profits, and the assistance that they provide to Third World countries has conditions that are meant to benefit them (multinationals). As a result, the Third World countries are indebted to the multinationals, which leads to the continuation of the cycle of dependency, which often result in self-depreciation.

As a result of the influence of multinationals, people lose the power to take decisions that affect their lives. They therefore expect solutions to come from outside their community. In the South African context, the background of apartheid and disempowerment, has led to forced dependency to such an extent that even when people are given a chance participate in forums such as Imbizos, there is still reluctance to participate and to express their views. This has however led to the entitlement tendency where people for example, attend Imbizo meetings not to contribute constructively, but to complain and demand that government gives them handouts.

In this regard, (Melkote 2000: 42) argues that the reality of the social and political situation in most developing countries is such that urban and rural poor and other people at the grassroots level are trapped in a dependency situation where the social and economic structures are unequal. As a result, their ability to participate in decision-making is inhibited. In as far as Imbizo is concerned, the fact that the people are not given the chance to participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation disempowers them, further encouraging dependency.

The challenge for Imbizo is therefore that efforts should be made to ensure that the problem of self-depreciation and dependency in the communities is dealt with. This is important because it would help the people to actively participate in Imbizo, thus making the programme much more effective.

2.6 WHAT IS NEEDED FOR PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION TO SUCCEED

2.6.1 Research

According to Arnst (1996:116), while quantitatively oriented research methods seek insight through objectivity, detachment and exclusivity, more qualitative approaches pursue involvement. The basic tenet of participatory research is that the process must be accessible to those among whom the enquiry is conducted. Arnst (1996:119) further states that the most important questions that should be

addressed by the enquiry must focus on the immediate benefits to those involved rather than on a pre-formulated agenda established by the researcher.

According to Tandon (1985: 21), participatory research is partisan, ideologically biased and explicitly non-neutral. Arnst (1996:120), further states that as it possesses a grassroots bias, participatory research is akin to the process of empowerment and conscientisation. The premise in this regard is that people are not objects to be controlled by the researcher but they are individuals who control their own destiny in the research process.

Rather than agendas being set by an academic elite and programmes enacted by bureaucratic elite for the benefit of an economic elite, participatory research involves people themselves in analysing their situation as well as gaining the confidence and understanding to address such a situation. The researcher in this case is consciously committed to the cause of the community involved in the research. This approach challenges the traditional principle of scientific neutrality and rejects the position of the scientist as a social engineer (Arnst, 1996:123). In order for participatory research to play a more meaningful role in participatory development, it is important to consider the usage of language as it (language) has the potential to either enhance or inhibit community participation.

2.6.2 Language use and community participation

Another problem regarding participatory development communication in South Africa is the language factor. The language that is used in development communication plays an important role in the recipients' understanding of such communication. The present language situation is however a barrier to meaningful social, political and economic transformation. This issue should therefore be dealt with taking into consideration the fact that in most instances development messages are communicated through the medium of English, with insignificant efforts made to translate the information into indigenous languages.

The problem with the continuous use of English is that the majority of people to whom development is meant do not understand it. It also minimises the contribution that the recipients could make in the effectiveness of such communication. Therefore, in order for transformation to take place, there is a need for indigenous languages to play a far greater public role than before (in line with Constitutional provisions).

2.7 CONCLUSION

It is clear from the discussion in this chapter that the historical developments in political and economic terms had a major impact on the understanding of

development communication and the involvement of the beneficiaries of development initiatives. The First and Second World wars, the attainment of independence by Third World countries, and the political developments in the late 1970s and early 1980s all had an impact on the understanding of development communication.

It is also evident that participation is a contestable concept. It is therefore important to clearly define what participation means in the context within which it is used in order to prevent ambiguity.

Against the discussion in this chapter, this study has adopted the multiplicity paradigm to the interpretation of participatory development communication. This paradigm emphasises that there is no universal path to development, and that development is a multi-dimensional process that differs from one country to another. It also implies that the problem of development is relative and no part of the world can claim to be developed in all aspects. This means that both the poor and the rich need each other for their survival.

The basic assumption of the multiplicity paradigm is that no community functions completely autonomously and is completely self-sufficient, nor is there any community whose development is exclusively determined by external factors. This paradigm also defines development as a need-oriented, endogenous, self-reliant,

ecologically sound and based on participatory democracy and structural transformation (Servaes 1996: 32). Every community is in one way or another dependent on communities (Servaes 1996:86). It therefore encourages the participation of the recipients in the conception of development messages, and the implementation of development policies and projects.

As Jacobson (2002:67) indicates, this paradigm places an individual and social self-determination amongst its central goals, and in turn makes participation itself of central importance in the development process. The route to individual and social development is seen precisely as being the route to increased participation, to a great extent enabled through individual and group communication.

According to Gooch (1995:90), since independence, emerging African nations have viewed the adoption of modern communication technology as a vital development to social development.

The early efforts to develop media systems in newly independent African countries were widely based on the Western diffusionist, or modernisation model of development. The understanding was that communication technology could greatly enhance socio-economic development. This could largely be because of a long history of dependence, characterised by ignorance of local traditional approaches to development.

The problem with the diffusionist approach was that Western-based media strategies that disparage the very social institutions that strengthen traditional channels of communication have not yet yielded meaningful results for African development (Gooch, 1995:93). As a result of such limitations, calls have been made to place emphasis on the integration of diverse national development objectives and active participation of multi-sectoral groups in communication policy and planning (Gooch, 1996:96). The different groups in the community need to be enabled to participate in the communication policy and planning processes.

The multiplicity paradigm is relevant in this regard because it places emphasis on the importance of self-reliance, which is rooted at the local level. It also implies that there must be equitable access to resources by all the people and the use of relevant communication channels.

According to Servaes (1989:54), the multiplicity paradigm is more horizontal, participative, and recipient-oriented. It is fundamentally based on interactive, participatory, and two-way communication at all levels of society. Servaes (1989:57) states that the multiplicity paradigm rejects the necessity of uniform, centralised, expensive, professional, and institutionalised media. It argues for multidimensionality, horizontality and diachronic communication exchange. This approach implies a more dialectic and active participation by the public, which has

to take place in relation with overall societal emancipation processes at local, national as well as international levels.

According to Melkote (1991:194), this alternative approach to development places emphasis on the poorest people, active participation of the people at grassroots level. It also places emphasis on the independence of local communities to tailor development projects to their own needs. The integration of the old and new ideas, the traditional and modern systems, the endogenous and exogenous elements to constitute a unique blend suited to the needs of a particular community is also central to this paradigm.

The other important factor in this regard is that reliance on local human skills and material resources is considered to be of great importance. This would help to foster greater self-reliance on development and, importantly, leading to freedom from external dependence.

In as far as Imbizo is concerned, the challenge is to develop a framework within which participation should be understood. The nature of involvement by the different stakeholders should also be clearly defined in order for them to understand their roles and responsibilities.

CHAPTER 3

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION: THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM (GCIS)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept strategic management is often used without a thorough examination of what it means in a given context. As Puth (2002:182) indicates,

“The problem in many organisations is that strategy is seen as the elitist ambit of a few people at the top.

As such, the process of drafting strategy and the management of its implementation is done by senior people within an organisation. This often results in employees working with little or no understanding of the organisation’s strategic direction.

As Puth (2002:182) further indicates, it is important that a wide-ranging process for interpreting, contextualising, and local area implementation of strategy should be in place in every organisation in order for the strategy to become a living entity. It is against this background that the focus of this chapter is firstly, on the concept

strategic management. The purpose of this discussion is to provide a theoretical framework within which the role of the GCIS in strategic management of government communication should be understood. Secondly, the background to the establishment of the GCIS, its mandate, and its approach to strategic management of government communication will be discussed taking into consideration the theoretical framework that the literature provides.

3.2 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PROCESS

3.2.1 Definition of strategic management

Strategic management as Thompson and Strickland (1995:14) indicate is a process that involves the development of...

“...a mission, setting objectives, forming a strategy, implementing and executing the strategic plan, and evaluating performance...”.

David (1999:5) in this case argues that strategic management can also be defined as the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organisation to achieve its objectives. It can therefore be concluded that strategic management involves formulation, implementation and evaluation of the organisation's plans, taking into consideration the environment within which the organisation operates. That is why the strategic

management process is preceded by an analysis of an environment within which an organization operates.

Sanchez and Heene (2004:4) define strategic management as the process that is concerned with two major tasks, namely, defining the organisations' goals for value creation and distribution and designing the way the organisation will be composed, structured, and coordinated in pursuing its goals. In this regard, Osman (2004:3) indicates that the best way to determine the strategic intent of an organisation is to look at the tools that are often used, namely, vision, and mission and value statements of an organisation. Osman (2004: 3-4) further states that these tools have been around since military graduates started to join commercial organisations in key roles after World War Two and started to use military terminology in the business environment.

Strategic management in this regard should take into consideration that organisations operate in an environment that keeps on changing. The constant changes taking place in the world therefore make it necessary for organisations to conduct environmental analysis on a regular basis. Information technology and globalisation, for example, are some of the external changes that are transforming internal business dynamics in society today.

As a result, strategic management should be monitored regularly and should be seen as an ongoing process. This is because the environment within which an organisation operates is dynamic and keeps on changing.

This view was further explained by Thompson and Strickland (1995:14) who argue that strategic management requires constant evaluation and decisions have to be taken on whether to continue or to change a particular action.

The constant evaluation of strategic management is, as Thompson and Strickland (1995:14) argue, important because nothing about strategic management is final. This is largely because all prior actions are subject to modification as conditions in the surrounding environment change and ideas for improvement emerge. The strategic management process is therefore based on the belief that organisations should continually monitor internal and external events and trends so that timely changes can be made as the need arises (David, 1999:7).

Thompson and Strickland (1995:19) indicate that strategic management is important because it helps the managers to provide better guidance to the entire organisation. It also helps them to become aware of the changes in the environment, with regard to opportunities and threatening developments. As such, managers are provided with the rationale for evaluating competing budget

requests. It also helps to unify the numerous strategy-related decisions by managers across the organisation, and creating a more proactive approach to management.

In this regard, Formisano (2004: x) states that successful companies recognise that strategic management is a continuous process. It can therefore be concluded that a strategy is a selection of ideas and assets to meet long-term goals in an environment that keeps on changing. The strategic management process therefore takes place in different stages as indicated in the following discussions.

3.2.2 Stages in strategic management

3.2.2.1 Strategy formulation

Strategy formulation includes developing a business mission, identifying an organisation's external strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. At this stage, it is important to note that strategy and organisational objectives are intertwined. According to Stonich (1982:2), the strategy formulation process should be based on an environmental scanning and analysis, factually based and its implementation should be consensus based.

David (1999:5) further states that strategy formulation includes developing a business mission, identifying an organisation's external opportunities and threats, determining internal strengths and weaknesses, establishing long-term objectives, generating alternative strategies, and choosing particular strategies to pursue. Strategy formulation also deals with the allocation of resources within the organisation. It can therefore be concluded that strategy formulation seeks to ensure that an organisation has a long-term competitive advantage with the resources at its disposal.

As far as the GCIS is concerned, the departmental strategy is informed by the National Government Communication strategy, the State of the Nation address and the government programme of action. Once the departmental strategy is finalised, the programmes within the organisation are required to work on their business plans and cost them in line with the corporate strategy.

3.2.2.2 Strategy implementation

Strategy implementation deals with the establishment of annual objectives, devise policies, motivation of employees, and the allocation of resources so that the formulated strategies can be executed. According to Puth (2002: 184), it is important to note that, even a good strategy, if it lacks implementation, it means little to an organisation. In this regard, the business plans developed by the

different sections within the GCIS are reviewed annually. This is meant to monitor the strategy implementation process.

Heads of programmes are also required to review their budgets on a monthly basis. This is meant to monitor expenditure patterns, and to check if the expenditure is in line with the business plan and the departmental corporate strategy. The advantage of this process is that it enables management to intervene where deviations are identified with regard to strategy implementation.

David (1999:5) further states that strategy implementation requires an organisation to establish annual objectives, devise policies, motivate employees, and allocate resources so that the strategies can be implemented. Strategy implementation is often referred to as the action stage of the strategic management process. It is also seen as the most difficult stage as it requires discipline, commitment and sacrifice.

The success of strategy implementation to a large extent relies on the managers' ability to motivate employees. Interpersonal skills are therefore crucial for successful implementation of a strategy. In order to achieve this objective, the GCIS top management (Secretariat) meets every Friday to address organisational management issues. This is followed by meetings of the different programmes in which feedback from top management is discussed and implemented.

As this is the action stage of the strategy, it therefore becomes important to make sure that communication between and amongst the people who are affected by the implementation is effective. This is important because as Formisano (2004:21) indicates, studies have shown that there are three biggest barriers to strategic success, namely, failure to communicate the strategy clearly throughout the organisation, inconsistency between management talk and action, and a lack of top management support for strategic initiatives. Formisano (2004:22) further states that strategy implementation requires leadership and attention to detail because strategic ideas that flow through the entire organisation become real.

The communication systems within the organisation should therefore be monitored on an ongoing basis in order for the leadership to detect problems early, and make the necessary interventions on time. The other important aspect in strategy implementation is interpersonal communication. In this regard, David (1999:5) argues that strategy implementation activities affect all employees and stakeholders, thus interpersonal communication becomes central. It is also important because it enables the employees and managers to discuss the roles that they have to play in the implementation process. As David (1999:5) emphasised, strategies that are formulated but not implemented do not serve any purpose.

3. 2.2.3 Strategy monitoring and evaluation

Strategy evaluation is the final stage in strategic management. This stage involves the determination of whether a particular strategy is working or not. According to David, (1999:5-6), strategy evaluation is important because sometimes there is a need for strategic modification because external and internal factors might change. Stonich (1982:5) further states that the implementation requirements must be kept in mind when evaluating possible alternative strategies.

Strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation activities should be performed on a continual basis and not just at the end of the year or semiannually (David, 1999:13). The strategic management process should therefore be a dynamic and continuous process. The most fundamental stages of strategy evaluation are reviewing external and internal factors that are the basis for current strategies, measuring performance, and taking corrective actions (David, 1999:6).

Strategy evaluation is important because today's success cannot be a guarantee of tomorrow's success, but can only give an indication of what works and what does not work. This is also largely because of the constant changes in the environment within which business takes place. According to Steyn and Nunes (2001:43), strategy evaluation should be done periodically and must look at efficiency, relevance as well as impact in relation to the stated objectives, and also provides the project reports to the organisation.

It should however be noted that strategy evaluation also takes into consideration the nature and context of the project. It is in this context that Steyn and Nunes (2001:43) state that a participatory evaluation system is one that involves everyone responsible for or interested in the project. The ongoing self-evaluation in the development communication context should be a participatory learning process, continuing throughout the life of a project, not only at the beginning or at the end of the project.

The evaluation is therefore based on what the affected parties have decided is important to the project, and the milestones that have been set. In this regard, Formisano (2004:22) states that strategy evaluation is based on the measurement systems that have been put in place. Strategy evaluation at the GCIS attempts to involve all the people in the department. This is largely because each section is expected to evaluate its performance against the broad organisational objectives.

3.2.3 Importance of strategic management

3.2.3.1 Proactive abilities

Strategic management is important because it enables an organisation to be more proactive than reactive in shaping its own future and influence activities (David (1999:13). Strategic management also helps organisations to make better

strategies through the use of a more systematic, logical, and rational approach to strategic choices. In the communication environment within which the GCIS operates, it is important to be proactive in their activities because the communication environment is dynamic, and keeps on changing.

3.2.3.2 Informed workforce

Research shows that the process rather than the decision or document, is the most important contribution of strategic management in an organisation (David, 1999:15). This implies that the process of strategic planning and management should be inclusive of all employees in an organisation.

Fundamental to effective strategic management is also fully informed employees at all organizational levels. This could be seen as a process of empowering employees in an organization (David, 1999:16). The understanding of the organisation's strategic plans may be the most important benefit of strategic management, followed by commitment. This is mainly because once employees understand the organisation's plans, they will be in a better position to make a meaningful contribution to the attainment of its objectives. In as far as the GCIS is concerned, the process does not involve the employees right from the start, but rather the strategy is developed at top management level and later on people are requested to make input on the developed strategy.

3.2.3.3 Allocation of resources

According to Kroon (1990:138), strategic management helps to set priorities for products, which may serve as a guideline for the allocation of the limited resources. This is because strategic objectives determine the resources needed

for their attainment. The allocation of resources also has implications on the organisation's communication strategy, and therefore can enhance or inhibit its impact.

It is evident from the above discussion that strategic management is a process which takes into consideration the environment within which an organisation operates. It is against this background that the role of the GCIS in strategic management of government communication will be discussed.

3.3 GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM (GCIS)

The following discussion will focus on the historical background of the GCIS. Firstly, the focus will be on the South African Communication Services (SACS), which is the predecessor to the GCIS, and secondly, the focus will be on the

establishment of the Comtask leading to the establishment of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS). The purpose of this discussion is to place the role of the GCIS in a particular historical context to provide a better understanding of its mandate of strategically managing government communication.

3.3.1 South African Communication Services (SACS)

Government communication prior to 1998 was co-coordinated by the South African Communication Services (SACS). As Horwitz (2001: 287) indicates, the SACS began as the Department of Information after the National Party came to power in 1948.

The mandate of the SACS was to create a positive image of the apartheid government in the face of criticism by the local and international media. The SACS then emerged as the main distributor of government information and interpreter of events during the state of emergency. This was largely because it was one of the only entities legally permitted to report in areas of unrests. It is against this background that the government imposed restrictions on the press regarding the scope of their reporting. This has resulted in many newspapers that violated the imposed restrictions being banned.

The SACS was also required to communicate with South Africans on behalf of other government departments about their activities and to coordinate pronouncements coming out of various state agencies. It was what according to Horwitz (2001: 287) the “above ground” organisation of the State Security Council (SSC). Its main responsibility was the handling of government communications and information during the 1980s. This could be simply defined as the co-ordination of strategic management of government communication during the apartheid government era.

Some of the functions the State Security Council (SSC) as articulated by Horwitz (2001: 288), included the Strategic Communications branch, known as Stratkom. Stratkom established a network of agents in the mass media. Their responsibility was to influence public perception to ensure that it is favourable towards government. In order to achieve this objective, the SACS established a Communication Centre whose main responsibility was to monitor domestic and international news 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. The purpose of the monitoring was to identify communication problems and opportunities for government to enable government communicators to respond accordingly (Horwitz 2001: 288).

As the 1994 elections approached, the SACS tried to reinvent itself to become a neutral government agency seeking to build a two-way communication between

government and the people. Its operations shifted to professional services at the request of ministries and government departments (Horwitz (2001:288). After the 1994 democratic elections, the SACS was however found to be incompatible with the new democratic set up. This led to the formation of the Communications Task Group (Comtask) whose mandate was to review government communication and to make recommendations on possible improvements.

3.3.2 Communication Task Group (Comtask)

The following discussion of the Comtask will deal with its background, its mandate, its main findings and its main recommendations, which led to the establishment of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS).

3.3.2.1 Background of the Comtask

The period of transition provided the media with a new critical zeal in their reporting (Horwitz 2001:289). As a result, the media had more latitude and confidence in their reporting. This was because they no longer feared harassment by the government. The media were thus free to broadcast or write

stories that were critical of government. As a result, politicians began to raise concerns that government achievements were not receiving adequate media coverage. A perception also prevailed that the media seemed to enjoy highlighting stories of perceived black government's incompetence.

Arising from this concern, a meeting of government communicators and those in the media industry was called by Thabo Mbeki, who was then South Africa's Deputy President. This meeting was held at a Western Cape village called Arniston, in August 1995. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss government communications and to recommend improvements. The meeting recommended that a Communications Task Group (Comtask) be established. Mbeki was mandated to appoint a 10-member board of inquiry, following a public nomination process (Horwitz 2001:297).

3.3.2.2 Mandate of the COMTASK Group

The Comtask Group was mandated to examine government communications at the local, provincial, national and international levels. It was also expected to make recommendations on new policies, structures and budgets. A particular mention was made on the need to examine training and affirmative action policies, the way in which ownership of the media affects government communication and of South Africa's international information dissemination processes (Communications 2000

1996:10). The Comtask was also required to recommend policy choices on government communications.

3.3.2.3 Findings of the COMTASK Group

Generally, the Comtask inquiry found that most government functions, structures and personnel were largely uncoordinated and inefficient. The inquiry also found that government functions were characterised by a lack of strategic planning and co-ordination at all levels of government (Communications 2000: 1996: 50).

The findings of the Comtask could therefore be divided into the following main categories: government communications in general, relations between government and the media, and development communication. The following is a summary of the main findings as contained in the Comtask report (Communications 2000:20-22).

Regarding government communication in general, the Comtask had the following findings:

- There were no clear standards to measure communication capacity and costs.
- Communication staff suffered from poor morale and lack of mandate.

- The South African Communication Services (SACS) had low-level interaction with government departments and provinces and as a result it was not maximally meeting their needs.
- Overall, government communication lacked central co-ordination of its messages; adequate planning of information campaigns and communication was given a low priority.

With regard to the relationship between government and the media, the Comtask had the following findings:

- Government and media relations in a democracy are always sensitive, and occasionally acrimonious.
- Apartheid weakened the communication profession in South Africa; and there is an agreement that capacity building is needed to improve standards and to open the profession and media management to disadvantaged groups.
- The South African media, especially the press, lacks experienced journalists able to cover stories in depth and context.

Regarding development communication, the Comtask had the following findings:

- There is a fundamental need to reach out to most South Africans, especially the disadvantaged.
- There is inadequate public infrastructure in broadcasting and telecommunication to respond to development needs of the community.

- A closely co-ordinated strategy is required to extend the telecommunications and ICT infrastructure to needy communities.

It is against the above-mentioned findings that the Comtask recommended the establishment of a new policy and structural framework for South Africa's government communication and information system. The recommended system would be called the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), which will be located in The Presidency. The GCIS would replace the SACS. The head of the GCIS would be the head of government communications (Communications 2000:10). The GCIS was then established in May 1998.

3.3.3 Government Communication and Information System (GCIS)

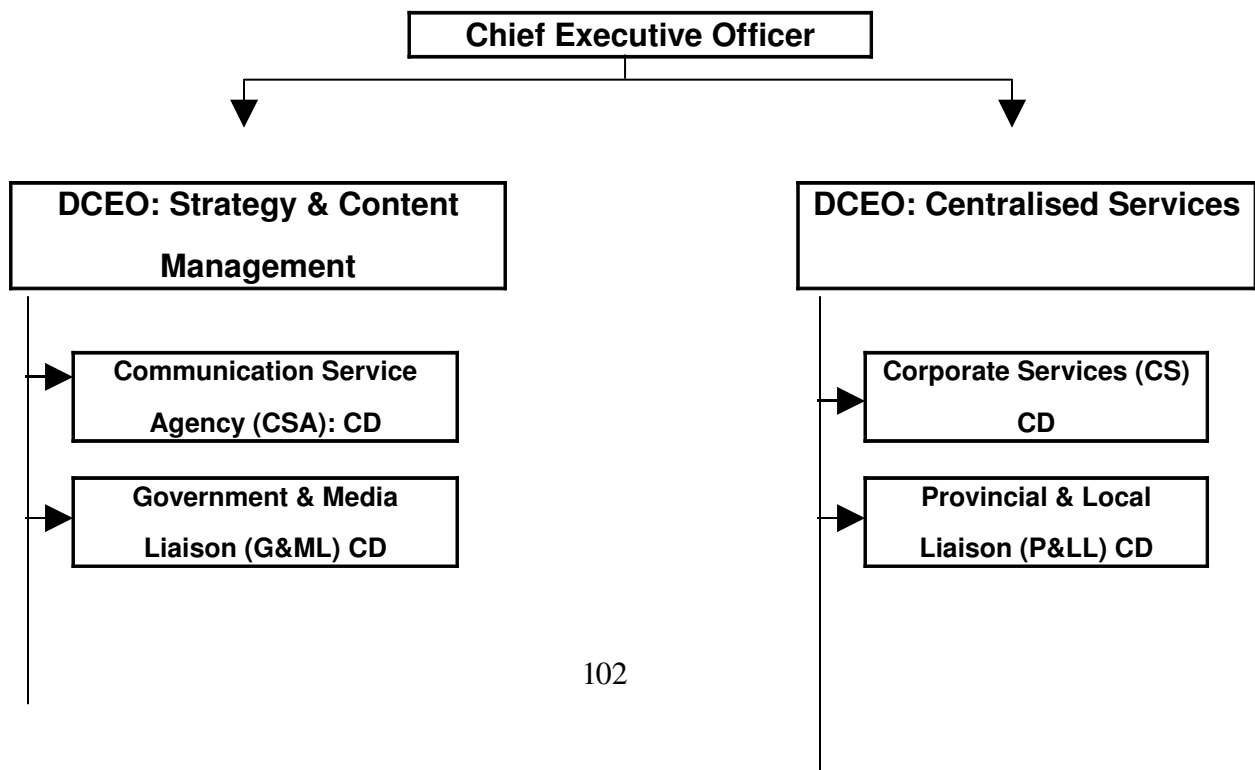
This section will outline the mandate of the GCIS and its approach to strategic management of government communication.

3.3.3.1 Mandate of the GCIS

The mandate of the GCIS is to develop infrastructure, which would ensure that there is co-ordination between the three tiers of government (national, provincial and local government), government bodies and parastatals. The GCIS has also been mandated to ensure that there is interaction between government and the people, and to increase people's access to government information, which would ultimately help them to make informed decisions about their lives.

The GCIS was also tasked with the strategic management of government communication. The organogram of the GCIS in Figure 3.1 provides an indication of how it has been structured to enable it to manage government communication.

Figure 3.1 Organogram of the GCIS





CD=Chief Directorate

It should be noted that the structure of an organisation determines the flow of communication and the role that each member of the organogram plays in organisational communication. As Smit and Cronje (1999:335) indicate, effective organisational communication gives organisations a competitive edge and such organisations are most likely to be more successful.

3.3.3.2 The GCIS approach to strategic management of government communication

3.3.3.2.1 GCIS corporate strategy

The GCIS approach to strategic management is guided by its corporate strategy. It should however be noted that this strategy is informed by the State of the Nation Address (SONA), government's programme of action, and the National Government Communication Strategy. This is meant to ensure that given that the GCIS is the custodian of government communication, its communication activities are in line with government's broader communication objectives.

In this regard, the GCIS has developed a corporate strategy framework which stretches from April 2004-March 2007. This framework simply provides a framework within which the GCIS must operate (See Appendix A for a full version of the GCIS corporate strategy).

Given that the communication environment keeps on changing, flexibility within the framework is allowed to accommodate such changes. The following is a summary of the GCIS corporate strategy (please refer to Appendix A for a detailed GCIS corporate strategy):

- Vision: To help meet the communication needs of government and information needs of the people, thereby ensure a better life for all.
- Mission: To provide leadership in government communication and ensure that the public is informed of government's implementation of its mandate.
- Strategic objective: To enhance the Government Communication System and its operations in ways that contribute to the process of further consolidating our democracy and taking the country onto a higher growth and development path.

It is evident from the corporate strategy that the ultimate objective of the GCIS is to make sure that government meets its communication objectives. The ultimate objective is to improve the lives of South African citizens. In line with its mandate, the GCIS is meant to co-ordinate government communication activities, and to provide leadership with regard to communication.

As indicated in the corporate strategy, the activities of the GCIS take into consideration that government departments are divided into five clusters, namely, governance and administration, international, economic, social and justice, crime prevention, and security cluster. The activities of these clusters are taken into consideration when the GCIS plans its activities.

The other aspect to be taken into consideration is that the GCIS corporate strategy takes into consideration the various government campaigns and projects. In order to manage these activities, the GCIS has adopted the project management approach to its management of government communication.

3.3.3.2.2 Project management at the GCIS

The GCIS has adopted the project management approach to strategic management in 1999. As a result of operational changes, the GCIS established a Directorate called the Project Desk. Its responsibilities include amongst other

things, co-ordination of the establishment of project teams and the provision of support to such teams. It is also expected to manage cross-cutting requests for assistance with project management from other government departments. The question in this case is how project management is defined in relation to how it is practiced at the GCIS.

Project management as defined by Black (2000:7) can be described...

... as the ability to create the impossible, with the unwilling, against insurmountable odds, under budget, on time...”.

Black (2000:10) further states that...

“project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to satisfy the expectations of the project stakeholders”.

The required skills in project management are project planning, definition of the scope, estimating and controlling time, estimating and controlling costs, quality assurance, human resource management, creation, collection, distribution of information, risk management, and procurement (Black, 2000: 10).

What is however generally common in project management is that the stakes are high and the visibility is high as there are set deadlines and milestones that must be met. The introduction of the project management approach at the GCIS necessitated changes in the daily operations. This was largely because people started to operate beyond the confines of their sections and work with colleagues in other sections, and in some instances with other government departments, and civil society stakeholders.

The other aspect to be considered is that the project management approach made it necessary for the GCIS to draw distinctions between the types of work that require input from one section of the GCIS (line function) and the type of work that requires expertise from more than one section of the GCIS (project) (Project management handbook 2003: 5).

The distinction of responsibilities that took place at the GCIS was well articulated by Lockyer and Gordon (1996:3) who stated that operations that proceed under conventional line management are involved in what is normally a substantially stable situation, whilst on the other hand project management is concerned with the introduction and management of change, which is likely to cross conventional functional boundaries.

In this application of project management principles, project teams are formed to deal with a specific project. People from different sections are selected to a project team on the basis of their skills, competencies, interests and the nature of the project. Depending on the nature of the project, people from other government departments may also form part of the project team. Imbizo for example, has the core project team which is mainly comprised of internal GCIS employees, and an extended team which includes representatives from other departments whose services and expertise are relevant to Imbizo.

The advantage of project management is that it assists in the allocation of resources, enables the organisation to involve people from different sections in projects. Project management also helps to keep employees informed about government projects and drawing from their skills. The other advantage is that it enables the GCIS to adapt to the ever-changing communication environment in which government communication takes place.

In as far as Imbizo is concerned; people are allocated responsibilities taking into consideration amongst other things, their skills, and relevance of their line function. Team members are therefore requested to provide feedback to the project team within an agreed time frame. This arrangement enables the project team leaders to make the necessary interventions.

3.4 CONCLUSION

It is evident from the discussion that strategic management is an ongoing process. It also requires that an organisation conducts environmental analysis to keep abreast with the developments in the environment within which it operates. The communication environment within which the GCIS operates keeps on changing, and as a result, its approach to strategic management must take this factor into account. This is largely because past successes do not necessarily guarantee future success.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE IMBIZO COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In his address during the State of the Nation address (SONA), President Mbeki said that:

“The tide has turned. The people's contract for a better tomorrow is taking shape. I trust that all of us will identify with this historic process. Given the great possibility we have to move forward, we dare not falter” (Mbeki 2003:21).

The contract referred to in the above quotation, from a government perspective, refers to the working relationship between government and the people in a participatory and consultative manner to improve the lives of all South Africans. It is with this understanding that the South African government has adopted Imbizo as a communication strategy that encourages the participation of the community on issues of governance.

Against this background, that this chapter will focus on the analysis of Imbizo as a strategy for participatory development communication and the importance of environmental scanning in the development of a communication strategy. In order

to achieve this objective, the analysis will draw from available literature on how to develop a communication strategy. Other frameworks that are used for the development of a communication strategy will also be discussed to provide a framework within which Imbizo communication strategy should be understood. The main idea behind the analysis is to identify possible gaps in the Imbizo communication strategy framework for possible improvement.

4.2 THE ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Environmental scanning is the first step in the development of a communication strategy. The process of environmental scanning deals with an analysis of the context within which the organisation operates or where a particular campaign is going to take place. The analysis of the communication environment deals with both the internal and external context of the organization.

The external environment on the one hand deals with the remote environment, social factors, economic factors, political factors, technological factors and ecological factors and the identification of relevant strategic stakeholders (Steyn and Puth 2000:57-58 & Gilbert et al 1998:28).

With regard to the internal environment, the focus is on the analysis of the infrastructure that the organisation possesses, what can be used in the

implementation of the strategy and the extent to which the organisation's employees understand the main objectives of the strategy, so that they know how they can contribute in the implementation process. As Steyn and Puth (2000:54-56) indicate, the internal environment also deals with the corporate profile, vision, mission, corporate values, corporate philosophy, corporate culture, and corporate policy.

In this regard Grunig (1992:473) suggests that organisations need to adapt to the environment within which they operate if they want to increase their effectiveness and to survive. The implication in this regard is that the communication strategies that are developed should take into consideration the environment within which communication will take place.

This would require the organisation to develop monitoring and feedback methods to continuously assess their environment. This is important largely because environmental scanning provides the organisation with a broader understanding of the context within which it operates, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, also known as SWOT analysis.

According to Thompson and Strickland (1995:92), a SWOT analysis provides a quick overview of the organisation's strategic situation. The strengths and weaknesses focus more on the internal capabilities of an organisation and its

external situation is reflected by its opportunities and threats. The environmental scan plays an important role in the development of the organisation's strategy and the communication strategy that has to be developed to communicate with both internal and external stakeholders.

The general rule is that managers should build their strategies around what the company does best and avoid strategies that place heavy demands on areas where the company is weakest or has an unproven ability. (Thompson & Strickland, 1995:93). The implication in this regard is that the communication strategy that an organisation develops should maximally use its strengths in order to ensure that it gets maximum impact.

4.3 IMPORTANCE OF A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

As Mersham and Skinner (2001:5) indicate, communication gives life to organisational structure because an organisation's structure tends to affect the communication processes. A communication strategy is important because it is a work tool through which individuals understand their roles in the organisation and how they should communicate with clients and other relevant stakeholders.

Moss and Warnaby (1998:133) argue that looking at the importance of the strategic leadership in organisations, both in terms of the rational analytical mode, and the

symbolic role of leaders, there is clearly a need to communicate the organisational leaders' strategic vision to external stakeholders. Strategy communication also helps to ensure broader understanding and acceptance of the leadership's strategic vision both internally and externally (Moss and Warnaby, 1998:135).

According to Puth (1994:73), organisational communication is a fundamental component of management when it comes to influencing the employees' understanding of business goals, employees' attitude and performance. It can therefore be argued that the communication strategy also serves to make sure that the relevant stakeholders understand and buy-into what the organisation seeks to achieve.

In some instances, depending on what the organisation seeks to achieve, it might be necessary to involve the stakeholders in taking decisions on what needs to be communicated and how this should be done. For example, in a development communication environment where the purpose of the communication would be to change the lives of the recipients of information for the better, it may be necessary to make sure that they actively participate in the decision making processes. This is important because they are in a position where they can assist in mobilizing local people to support the project or campaign.

It is therefore important to ensure that there is an organisational policy that ensures broad management participation and support. In developing the organisational policy on communication, it is important to make sure that the employees are involved in such a process. The importance of their involvement is that they will be in a position where they understand it and take ownership of the process and the final product. This could help to ensure that the employees feel valued and could also enable them to make a meaningful contribution in the implementation of the strategy.

Another aspect is that communicating strategy helps to build a climate of mutual trust and understanding between managers and stakeholders. According to Fischer (2002:11), the reality is that while it is good to enjoy high media profile, it is probably as important to keep staff informed about what is happening in a company. This is mainly because they are the ones who have the responsibility to make sure that the company makes a profit, which will in turn please the shareholders.

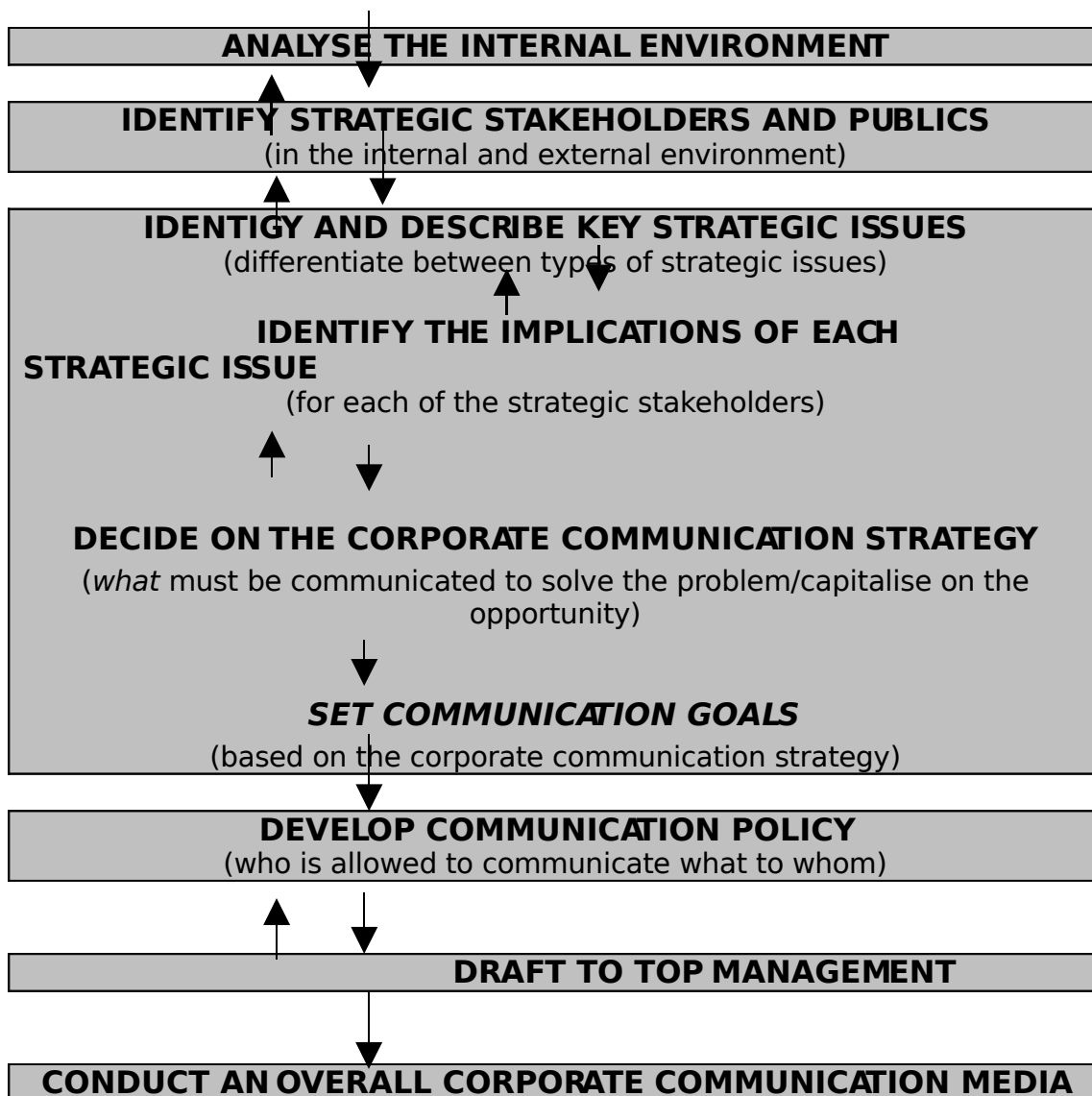
4.4 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FRAMEWORKS: EXAMPLES

The following discussion deals with the different frameworks that can be used in developing a communication strategy. The focus of the discussion will be on the framework developed by Steyn and Nunes (2001), the one developed by the

Economic and Social Research Council and the framework developed by the GCIS for all government communication strategies. The framework developed by the GCIS will be analysed looking at how it is used for the purposes of the Imbizo campaign.

4.4.1 Steyn and Nunes framework

Figure 4.1 Guidelines for the development of a corporate communication Strategy (Steyn and Puth, 2000:63)



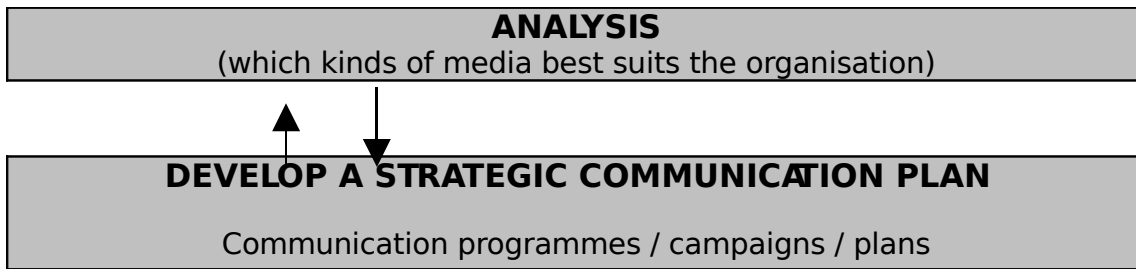
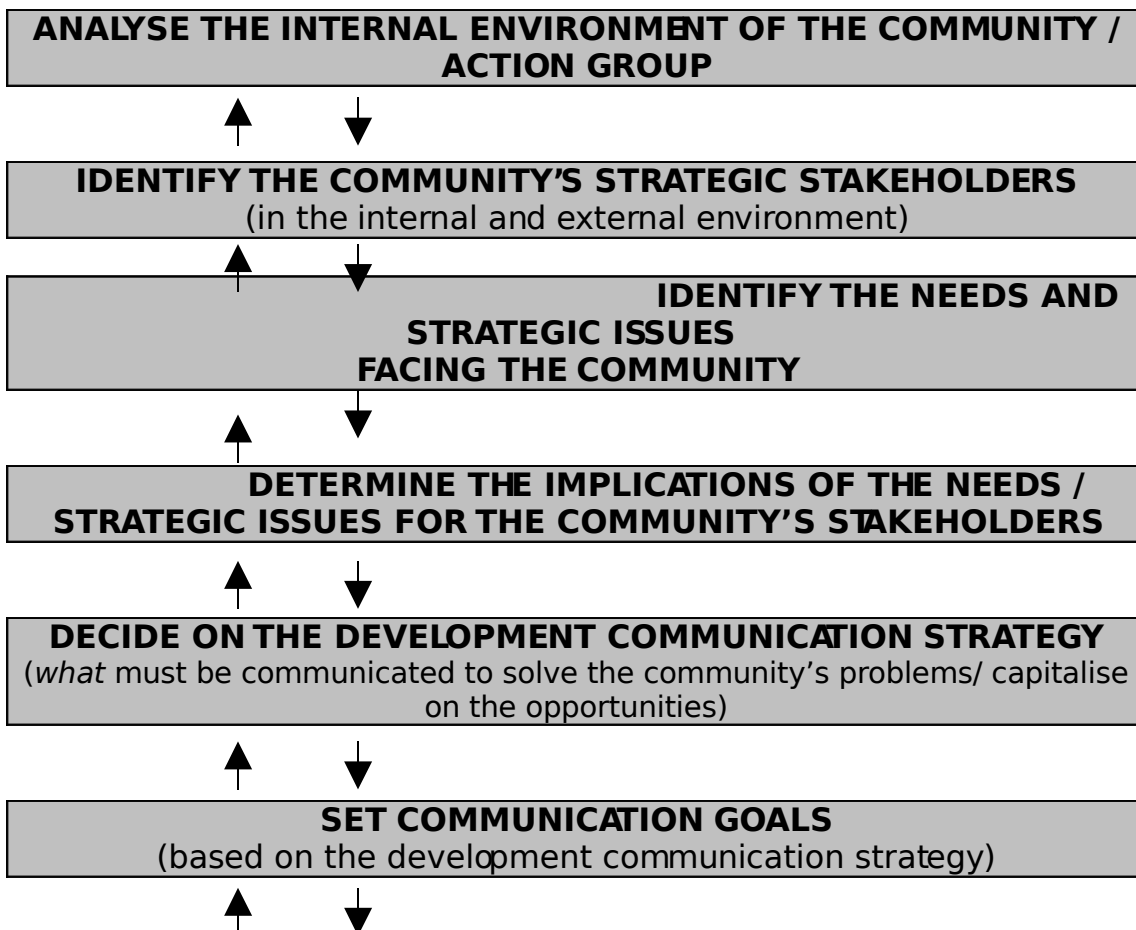


Figure 4.2

Guidelines for the development of a development communication strategy
(Steyn and Nunes, 2001:46)





The model outlined in Figure 4.1 has been developed focusing more on the development of corporate communication strategy. However, Steyn and Nunes (2001) adapted this framework to the development of a communication strategy which is meant for development communication purposes (Figure 4.2).

At the conclusion of their Heifer project: South Africa, Steyn and Nunes (2001:45) indicated that the model for the development of a corporate communication strategy (Figure 4.1) could also be used by development agencies for the purposes of their corporate communication strategy. This they argue will ensure the two-way communication with their range of strategic stakeholders, and a strategic role for development communication facilitators in policy-making and strategy formulation.

Steyn and Nunes (2001:46) further state that the adaptation of the corporate communication strategy framework would assist to ensure that the participatory approach to development, especially the participatory communication approach, be even more participatory. This is largely because the strategic information on issues and stakeholders will be provided by the community and its designated communicators.

In this case, Steyn and Nunes (2001:47) indicated that...

“...the philosophy of participation can only be strengthened by having the community involved in the identification of strategic issues (which would probably focus on developmental needs and problems), determining their implications for the community’s stakeholders, deciding *what* should be communicated to solve those problems (development communication *strategy*), and deciding *how* it should be communicated to stakeholders (communication plans)”.

It is with this understanding that they recommended that the corporate communication strategy framework be used as it is but with slight changes for use for development communication purposes. It can therefore be argued that the communication framework discussed in Figure 4.2 as Steyn and Nunes (2001:46) indicate seeks to ensure that there is maximum participation in the development of the communication strategy meant for development communication purposes. However, there are certain aspects in the framework that may compromise the extent and nature of community participation.

Firstly, consultation with the traditional leaders and other role players regarding the strategy for development communication is done almost towards the end of the process. At this stage, critical decisions have already been taken with regard to who should communicate, what should be communicated, the identification of community strategic issues and the analysis of the environment. The problem in this regard is that traditional leaders, for example, are influential in their communities and if they are not consulted at the beginning of the project, they may feel undermined or feel that decisions are imposed on them, and thus undermining their authority. This might have a detrimental effect on the participation of the local community.

Secondly, the beneficiaries of any development initiative understand their situation better, and are therefore well placed to articulate their needs. However, if they think that decisions are imposed on them, this may affect the extent to which they may want to participate in the project. It is therefore important for a framework like this to make sure that the community which is meant to benefit from this process is involved right from the beginning of the project.

Thirdly, although the framework seeks to ensure that there is community participation, the role of the community is not clearly defined. It is therefore important to define the responsibilities of the stakeholders because this would enable them to understand the project to which their commitment is sought. It can be argued that although the above concerns have been identified, this framework can assist greatly in the development of a communication strategy to be used for development purposes.

4.4.2 Economic and social research council framework

The Economic and Social Research Council framework was developed largely for the purpose of assisting students to market their research more effectively

(Economic and social research council, 2003:1). However, this framework provides an insight into the development of a communication strategy.

It has identified the following steps as the most important in the development of a communication strategy:

- Checking perceptions through environmental scanning.
- Setting measurable objectives.
- Agreeing on principles (what the strategy seeks to achieve).
- Developing messages and branding.
- Prioritising audiences.
- Choosing channels.
- Planning activities.
- Estimating time.
- Estimating budget.
- Evaluating success/failures.

This framework places emphasis on gaining an understanding of the environment of the audience as the basis for the development of the communication strategy.

This, it is hoped that will help in the achievement of some form of relevance and credibility on what needs to be communicated. It is on the basis of the

communication environment analysis that clear and measurable objectives of the communication strategy are developed.

It must be noted that communication processes for a particular project may not be able to communicate everything that is relevant to the project, because of amongst other things, limited financial and human resources. As a result, this framework stipulates that it is important to clearly indicate what the communication strategy will do and what it will not do.

This framework also places emphasis on the importance of the development of the messages and branding material and how such material can be used in different contexts. For example, a press release may be used in a particular context, whilst a newspaper article may be relevant to another context. There is therefore a need to make sure that the branding of Imbizo is in line with its overall objectives. Given that the project is meant to convey a message, a decision therefore needs to be taken to determine the target audience in advance. The audience should then be prioritised taking into consideration the objectives of the project. This would therefore require an investigation into the nature of the audience. Amongst other things, this would include their lifestyle, social conditions, economic status, expenditure and media usage patterns.

The selection of the channels of communication through which the audience may be reached is to large extent determined by the target audience that the campaign seeks to reach. It is therefore important for the strategy to use the relevant channels that the community prefers to ensure maximum reach and impact of the communication strategy.

All campaigns have activities through which the messages that they want to convey are communicated. It therefore becomes important to consolidate the communication activities into a workable project plan, with set deadlines and the people responsible for the implementation of specific activities.

The implementation of a communication strategy has budgetary implications. And as a result, the costing of the communication strategy must be done. This is important because even if a communication strategy is good, without the budget, it might be difficult to implement it.

The evaluation of the implementation of the communication strategy should be done taking into consideration the objectives which have been developed for the purposes of the communication strategy.

Although this framework provides some insights into the process of developing a communication strategy, there are some limitations that can be identified with regard to its applicability when used for development communication purposes.

Firstly, this framework looks at communication from a one-way perspective. The audiences are perceived to be passive recipients of the messages. This is largely because it does not accommodate the aspect of consultation between the audience and the communicators. Looking at this communication strategy framework from a participatory development communication perspective, the audiences should be actively involved right from the initial stages of the project. This is important because they are more familiar with the environment within which the communication will take place. The issue of consultation is important in order to avoid a situation where solutions are provided to what the communicators might see as problems, whilst on the other hand the beneficiaries do not think there is a problem, and as a result, irrelevant solutions are provided to the beneficiaries.

Secondly, it focuses mainly on the use of the mainstream media at the expense of unmediated communication, which is more suitable for participatory development communication. The mainstream media (especially the press) is important for development communication. However, if it is to be used, it cannot be used as the main channel of communication because of the inherent limitations. These include the high rate of illiteracy in the country and limited accessibility to newspapers. It

should therefore be used in conjunction with other popular channels such as radio, television, and interpersonal communication platforms.

It is also important though to note that a development communication strategy should seek to make use of all the available channels of communication to ensure that it gets maximum impact. However, this aspect seems to be missing in this framework.

Thirdly, framework also places emphasis on the importance of evaluation of communication to assess the successes and/or failures of the project. The focus in this case is on the evaluation largely from an internal organisational perspective. In this case, the focus is on the internal processes that have been put in place and the extent to which they have been implemented as planned. This means that it does not evaluate the communication from the perspective of the recipients; an aspect which could provide more insight into the impact a particular communication strategy.

In order for the communication strategy to be effective, this study contends that the intended beneficiaries should be involved right at the beginning of the project. This has several obvious benefits.

Firstly, their involvement from the beginning would help to create a sense of ownership among the beneficiaries. This would help to ensure that they actively participate in the project.

Secondly, every project team member is communicator for the project, and as such, every contact that they have in their environments is an opportunity to communicate about the project. Given that beneficiaries are familiar with their environments, they are in a better position to also mobilise fellow community members to support the project.

4.5 IMBIZO AS A STRATEGY FOR PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

4.5.1 Evolution of Imbizo

Imbizo refers to a traditional gathering convened by an Inkosi (a traditional leader). It is normally convened when there is an issue to be discussed or when an Inkosi wants to discuss a particular issue with his subjects, or to address problems within the community.

Traditionally, Imbizo serves as a platform where people discuss issues that affect them in the community such as, major crisis like drought, and a threat from outside and when there is a need for resources. Traditional leaders use Imbizo gatherings

to get suggestions from their subjects and possibly respond to the issues raised during the discussions.

As a result, community members are given the chance to participate in decision-making processes. The other advantage with the traditional approach to Imbizo is that people are able to express themselves in their own languages. This is made possible because this practice draws from the African cultural traditions, values and belief systems.

It is in this context that Mbigi (2004:8) argues that Africa needs a holistic developmental approach that is rooted in its cultural traditions, values, and belief systems. This, he argues, is important because cultural identity is a central problem which African intellectuals must address. It is therefore imperative for any adaptation of Imbizo to be seriously rooted in African traditions.

Mbigi (2004:8) in this regard further states that,

“... no society has ever met the challenge of development without harnessing the strong elements of their culture.”

This is largely because, as Mbigi (2004:8) further states, African culture places emphasis on the collective effort, and that a community is a cradle of the individual

and his achievements. As such, it becomes important for development and transformation efforts to take into consideration that change does not start with an individual but with the development of communities.

This is because, as Mbigi (2004:9) further states, the cultural paradigms that individuals carry are owned by particular communities. It therefore becomes important for any Imbizo campaign to take into consideration the cultural paradigms of a community within which communication is going to take place. This would involve conducting a needs analysis in a particular community in order to understand their needs and their cultural make-up. A needs analysis in this case would help to prevent situations in which irrelevant solutions are provided to a particular community, or solutions are provided where a community does not have any problems. It will also enable development practitioners to understand community dynamics and the role that each individual plays in the community.

In dealing with Imbizo and its role in community development in South Africa, it is important to note that its operation has been affected by political developments. For example, the emergence of the elected local government leaders was seen, and in some instances, is still seen, amongst traditional leaders as a threat, hence the friction that exist in some quarters. However, even in the midst of these challenges and developments, the role of an Imbizo approach as a strategy for participatory development communication was recognised and adopted by the South African government as a communication strategy for participatory governance.

The introduction of Imbizo as a government approach to interaction with the people can among other things be traced back to the African National Congress' (ANC) need to ensure that it interacts actively with the people. It is important to note that the ANC's position generally becomes government position because it is the ruling party. The need for increased interaction with the people has been clearly articulated in the following quotation:

“The empowerment of the people to participate in the process of governance, expressed in the concepts of a people-centred society and people-driven processes of transformation, indicates the centrality of the concept of popular and participatory democracy to the democratic movement's understanding of the functioning of a democratic state. It shows

the commitment of this movement to the proclamation in the Freedom Charter that “The People Shall Govern” (African National Congress 1996:7).

The challenge posed by the above quotation was for the ANC to come up with an approach which would help to ensure that its objective of actively interacting with the people is achieved. As a result, in October 2001, Cabinet decided that after the President’s State of the Nation Address (SONA) it would engage in Imbizo communication campaigns, which would use the same approach adopted in traditional Imbizos. The traditional approach was adopted because it was seen as the best practice regarding consultative governance.

In government circles, Imbizo has been acknowledged as an effective forum for enhancing interaction between government and the people. It is against this background that Imbizo is also aimed at building partnerships between government and the South African public and to enhance social change. In order to achieve this objective, the president has set aside time to be involved in the Imbizo programme, through visits to provinces (Government Communicators’

Handbook 2003: 36). Cabinet Ministers, Premiers, Mayors and MECs are also expected to engage in outreach programmes to give support to government’s development programme (Government Communicators’ Handbook 2003: 36).

The fact that Imbizo aims to interact with the people, requires that its planning involves extensive communication with the people in the area that is going to be visited. The leaders in the area should therefore be briefed on the impending visit by the president or other political leaders, service delivery reports are compiled, task teams are set up, sites to be visited are identified, and infrastructure for the meeting is set up. The planning also involves working on the logistics of the Imbizo meeting.

4.5.2 Analysis of the communication strategy framework for Imbizo

The GCIS as the custodian of government communication has developed a framework which is meant to guide government communicators throughout government in the development of the communication strategy for their various communication projects. The following are the steps that are followed in the development of a communication strategy in a government context (specific reference will be made to its usage in Imbizo):

- Background (why do we need to communicate).
- Objectives of the communication strategy (intended objectives of the communication strategy).
- Analysis of the communication environment.
- Communication challenges.

- Development of messages and themes.
- Deciding on the audience, channels and type of event.
- Phased communication programme.
- Structures and processes.
- Strategy document.
- Action plan.

This communication strategy framework raises some pertinent concerns when applied to projects which are meant to be participatory. In the government context, participatory development communication takes the form of Imbizo.

Firstly, the purpose of Imbizo is to provide a platform on which politicians interact with the people and discuss their needs with them. It also provides an opportunity for politicians to explain government policies and programmes to the people using the languages that they understand in a participatory manner.

However, the problem with Imbizo is that the decisions on the intended outcomes of the Imbizo communication strategy are taken with little or no input from the beneficiaries. This is largely because what is finally communicated is informed by the national communication strategy of government, government programme of action with little or no input from the beneficiaries from the beginning of the project.

Secondly, if the purpose of Imbizo is to enable the politicians to gain first hand information about the lives of the people they lead, it should be on the basis of their findings during the visits to the communities that they should devise forms of interventions to address the problems that they have identified. However, the fact that communication objectives and messages are developed before politicians meet with the people, suggests that they attend these meetings with preconceived ideas about the conditions, of the areas to be visited, what people are going to say and what they intend to communicate.

This framework therefore suggests that the communication is not about the partnership between government and the people, but about government and what it wants to communicate. This, therefore, creates a perception that government simply wants to communicate a particular message, irrespective of what the people might say during Imbizo.

Thirdly, amongst other things, Imbizo is supposed to be a fact-finding activity. This should therefore be reflected in the communication strategy. It could therefore be argued that once the fact-finding mission is completed, this is when most communication should take place. The purpose of this communication would be to then inform the people of what is going to be done with regard to the issues that were discussed with politicians during an Imbizo meeting.

However, what is happening at the moment is that there is an extensive pre-Imbizo publicity generating communication, but not much is communicated with regard to the issues that have been identified as needing attention from government. The other concern is that there is little or no communication around the implementation time frames. This study contends that even if there is little or no progress, it is still important to communicate the situation to the people as this would help to build a culture of trust.

Fourthly, the other concern is that the objectives of the communication strategy are informed by the analysis of the communication environment. This analysis takes various forms such as research and analysis of the media coverage of certain issues. The problem in this regard is that a researcher, for example, who does not know anything about the community concerned is given the responsibility to conduct an analysis of the environment in the community that will be visited. The lack of understanding of the material conditions on the ground could minimise the impact of Imbizo communication. It is therefore important for government to work closely with the local people because they understand their environment better.

Fifthly, the key messages that are developed for the purposes of the campaign are developed before the Imbizo meeting takes place. The problem with this approach is that it assumes that government communicators know beforehand what the

needs of the community are. The question that needs to be answered is what informs these messages? The other problem is that the messages might not be relevant to the needs of a particular community.

Sixthly, this communication strategy framework does not make provision for communicating the strategic objectives within the GCIS and throughout government. This is a problem because even though not all GCIS staff members and officials in other government departments are not directly involved in Imbizo, an understanding of how it works and its objectives could help them to explain the campaign to their family members and friends, thus generating more publicity. This study therefore contends that every government employee, if well informed, can be in a better position to help in publicising the Imbizo initiative.

Seventh, the other concern is that the branding material used for the purposes of generating publicity around Imbizo are developed at the GCIS, with no involvement of the stakeholders. These products, amongst other things include radio television and press adverts and billboards. Brochures are also developed providing an outline of government's achievements, and in some instances to generate publicity.

The relevance and impact of these products become a serious concern. Against this background, there is a need to develop community-specific information

products and thereby avoid developing generic information products which may not be relevant to some of the communities.

4.6 CONCLUSION

Imbizo is meant to provide both the politicians and the people an opportunity to interact and discuss issues that affect the people in general. However, the communication strategy framework used for the purposes of Imbizo does not explicitly make provision for people's participation in decision making. It has also become evident that there are no significant differences between the GCIS framework and that developed by Steyn and Nunes (2001) and that developed by the Economic and Social Research Council. The main gap that can be identified in these frameworks is that they look at communication as a one-way process. It can therefore be concluded that the development of any communication which is meant to be participatory, in this case Imbizo, must involve the people who are meant to be beneficiaries of such a process.

CHAPTER 5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research methodology used to collect data for this study. One of the aspects that will be dealt with is a brief discussion of the overview of the purpose of the study. The discussion will also provide an outline of the motivation for the choice of research methodology and the data collection tools used in this study. An outline of how the data will be analysed will also be provided.

5.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study will combine exploratory and descriptive aspects. Firstly, as Babbie (2001:91) indicates, exploratory studies occur when a researcher examines a new area of interest or when the subject of study is relatively new. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:41) further state that the purpose of exploratory research is to gain a broad understanding of a situation, phenomenon, community or person, and could arise from a lack of basic information in a new area of interest.

This study will be exploratory largely because as far as this researcher could determine, no academic research has been conducted on the role that traditional meetings such as Imbizo in general can be used as strategy for development communication. With regard to this study, the role of the GCIS in strategic management of Imbizo a development strategy has also not yet been academically examined.

Secondly, in descriptive studies, the researcher observes and then describes what was observed and as a result, most qualitative studies are descriptive (Babbie 2001:93). It should be noted that in most descriptive studies, the researchers proceed to go on and examine why the observed patterns exist and what these patterns imply, which is also the case in this study. As a result, it has become important to include the descriptive part of the research.

5.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE CHOICE OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative and quantitative, with field research and content analysis as the main research methodologies. The choice of two research methodologies was necessitated by the fact that using more than one methodology helps to ensure that the validity of the study is achieved. Field research was chosen because Imbizo is meant to ensure that government interacts with the people in their own contexts.

Field research is therefore an appropriate methodology because it seeks to investigate the subject of research in its natural setting. In this study, the focus was not on the beneficiaries of the government Imbizo campaign; but rather on the internal GCIS management processes of Imbizo and the extent to which they enhance or inhibit participation of the people. The implication in this regard is that the GCIS an organisation becomes the field where the research will be conducted.

According to Arnst (1996:116), while quantitatively oriented research methods seek insight through objectivity, detachment and exclusivity, more qualitative approaches pursue participation of the intended beneficiaries of the phenomenon that is being researched. The basic tenet of participatory research is that the planning process must be accessible to those among whom the Imbizo initiative is meant.

The limitation with Imbizo at the moment is that the beneficiaries are not actively involved in the pre-campaign research and planning. Their involvement is important because they understand their circumstances better. Therefore, they are in a better position to articulate their problems and needs. It is for this reason that a qualitative approach which seeks to ensure that the involvement of the beneficiaries of Imbizo in the planning process is attained, has been chosen for this study.

In this case Arnst (1996:119) further states that the focus of a qualitative research must be on the immediate benefits of research to those who are the beneficiaries; rather than on a pre-formulated agenda established by the researcher. Hence, the choice of field research for the purpose of this study.

The current arrangement with Imbizo is that the agenda is formulated before the actual Imbizo meeting. For example, an Imbizo brochure, which gives an outline of government achievements, is developed prior to an Imbizo meeting (See the Brochure in Appendix D). The brochure provides these achievements from the perspective of government and not the citizens.

According to Tandon (1985:21), participatory research is partisan, ideologically biased and explicitly non-neutral. This means that participatory research must be conducted by an independent organisation in consultation with the government and the intended beneficiaries. The implication for Imbizo is that organisations working

closely with the community must be requested to conduct research which can be used to enhance participatory development communication strategies.

Arnst (1996:120) further states that participatory research possesses a grassroots bias, and it is a process of empowerment and conscientisation. The premise in this regard is that people are not objects to be controlled by the researcher, but individuals who can control their own destiny in the research process. Therefore, rather than agendas being set by an academic elite and programmes enacted by bureaucratic elite for the benefit of an economic elite, participatory research involves beneficiaries in analysing their situation as well as gaining the confidence and understanding to address it. It therefore means that in order for Imbizo to be a genuine participatory approach, it must adopt a participatory research approach, in which the citizens will be empowered to solve the problems in their communities and to participate in taking decisions on issues that affect their lives.

The researcher in this case is consciously committed to the cause of the community that is involved in the research. This approach challenges the traditional principle of scientific neutrality and rejects the position of the scientist as a social engineer (Arnst, 1996:123). In order for participatory research to play a more meaningful role in participatory development, it is important to consider the use of language as it has the potential to either enhance or inhibit community

participation. The researcher must understand the language (s) used by the beneficiaries to enhance their participation.

5.4 CONTENT ANALYSIS

5.4.1 What is content analysis?

Content analysis is one of the unobtrusive research methods. According to Neuman (1997:271), content analysis involves analysing documents relevant to the subject of the investigation. Neuman (1997:272) further states that content analysis is a technique for gathering and analysing content of the text.

According to Wimmer and Dominick (1997:112), there are three concepts, which characterise content analysis. Firstly, content analysis is systematic. This means that the content, which will be analysed, should be selected according to explicit and consistently applied rules. For example, the selection must follow proper procedures, each item must have an equal chance of being included in the analysis and only one set of guidelines for evaluation is used throughout the study.

Secondly, content analysis is objective. This means that the researcher's biases should not form part of the findings. It also means that if another researcher replicates the analysis, the same results should be found.

Thirdly, the goal of content analysis is the accurate representation of a body of messages. Quantification gives the researcher additional statistical tools that can aid in the interpretation and analysis of the data (Wimmer & Dominick, 1997:112).

The content in this case refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas or any message that can be communicated. The text in this case is written, visual, or spoken word that serves as a medium for communication. As Babbie (2001: 304-305) indicates, the text includes books, newspapers, or magazine articles, advertisements, speeches, official documents, films or videotapes, musical lyrics, photographs, and articles of clothing or works of art. For the purposes of this

study, newspapers articles on the coverage of Imbizo, GCIS Corporate strategy, video recordings of Imbizo events, analysis of the toll-free number register and the communication strategy framework will be analysed.

5.4.2 Why content analysis was chosen?

Content analysis was chosen because although Imbizo deals with unmediated communication, there is a tendency to place emphasis on generating extensive media coverage for Imbizo. It has therefore become important to conduct a content

analysis of the press coverage of Imbizo to determine the extent and nature of the coverage of Imbizo.

The content analysis of video recordings of Imbizo meetings has also become important as this would help to determine the nature and extent of people's participation in the discussions. Given that the focus is on the management processes of people's participation, an analysis of the Imbizo communication strategy framework, the GCIS corporate strategy, Imbizo toll-free number record, will be done. The following is a breakdown of the steps used in the content analysis conducted for this study:

5.4.2.1 Research question

As Wimmer and Dominick (1983:143) indicate, a research question or hypothesis provides guidance to content analysis. They further argue that it is possible to generate a research question based on existing theory, prior research, practical problems or as a response to changing social conditions. The other important aspect is that a well-defined research question simplifies the process of developing accurate and sensitive categories; which helps to produce more valuable data (Wimmer and Dominick 1983:143).

The focus of content analysis in this study will be on newspaper articles, videotapes, communication strategy framework, Imbizo toll-free line register and the GCIS Corporate strategy. All these documents will be analysed in relation to Imbizo. It should be taken into consideration that the purpose of analysing these documents is to assist in determining the role of the GCIS in strategic management of participatory development communication. The analysis also seeks to determine the extent to which the management of all Imbizo processes enhances or inhibits the participation of the people on issues of governance.

5.4.2.2 Population

According to Wimmer and Dominick (1997:116), a population specifies the boundaries of the body of the content to be considered which requires an appropriate definition of the relevant population. For the purposes of this study, the population is all documents that make reference to government's Imbizo programme.

5.4.2.3 Sample

A sample is a subset of the population that is representative of the whole population. The sample for this content analysis is all documents that make reference to government's Imbizo programme from 2000 to 2004.

5.4.2.4 Unit of analysis

A unit of analysis is the smallest element of a content analysis which must be counted or measured (Wimmer and Dominick, 1997:119). In a written content, the unit of analysis might be a single word or symbol, a theme or an entire article or story. The unit of analysis identified for this study is the words, articles, and themes that are identifiable in the documents that have been analysed (Wimmer and Dominick, 1983:146).

5.4.2.5 Categories

According to Wimmer and Dominick, (1983:147), at the heart of any content analysis is the category that is used to analyse and to classify media content. A category system must also be exclusive (when a unit of analysis can be placed in one category), exhaustive (when a unit of analysis must be placed into an existing slot) and reliable (different coders must agree in the greater majority of instances about the proper category for each unit of analysis) (Wimmer and Dominick, 1983:147-148).

The following categories have been identified from the purposes of this content analysis: newspaper articles, videotapes, communication strategy framework, Imbizo toll free line register and GCIS Corporate strategy. These categories have been dealt with in more detail in the following discussion:

5.4.2.5.1 Press coverage

For the purposes of this study, newspaper articles on the coverage of Imbizo events will be analysed. As Neuman (1997:277) indicates, this will be done to determine the amount of coverage, the prominence of the coverage, and whether the coverage was positive or negative. The analysis will also seek to gain an understanding of the issues that have been covered in the newspapers. The focus will largely be on the Presidential Imbizos which took place in Gauteng, North West and Western Cape Provinces in October 2002-August 2003.

5.4.2.5.2 Videotapes

In as far as videotapes are concerned; the focus will be on the video recordings of all Presidential Imbizos which took place in Gauteng, and North West Provinces.

These Imbizos took place between October 2002 and August 2003. The focus of the analysis will be on the nature of the interaction and the extent to which the interaction is participatory, issues that have been discussed and the undertakings that have been made. The other aspect that will be dealt with is the set –up at the venues. This will be done to determine whether the environment is conducive enough for active participation and interaction or not.

5.4.2.5.3 Communication strategy framework

The GCIS has developed a generic communication strategy framework which is used in all government communication campaigns. This is the same framework which is used for communication around Imbizo. For the purposes of this study, this framework will be discussed. The focus will be on the extent to which this communication strategy framework enhances or inhibits participation of the people in the Imbizo activities. In order to achieve this objective, the different steps that are followed in this framework will be discussed.

5.4.2.5.4 Imbizo toll-free line register

During Imbizo campaigns, the GCIS hosts a toll-free line. The purpose of this toll-free line is to provide the people, especially those who may not be able to attend the Imbizo events, with a platform on which they can raise issues that are of concern to them. A record of all the issues that people have raised is kept. This is meant to facilitate follow-up after Imbizo events. It is often argued that this toll-free line is participatory and interactive because people are able to raise issues that concern them. This study will analyse this record to look at the issues that the people have raised. In this regard it will be interesting to check whether the issues that have been raised are similar to those that have been covered in the newspaper clippings that have been analysed.

5.4.2.5.5 GCIS corporate strategy

A brief analysis of the GCIS corporate strategy will be done to provide an understanding of how and where Imbizo fits in within the broader government communication context. This analysis will also provide an overview of GCIS priority issues.

5.4.2.6 Coding and quantification of the data

The content analysis in this study will make use of both manifest and latent coding. In this case, the units of analysis will be given the same attention from both methods.

According to Neuman (1997:275), manifest coding deals with the visible, surface content in a text. In this regard, Berg (1998:225) argues that manifest coding deals with elements that are physically present and countable. This involves, for example, counting the number of times a phrase or a word appears in a written text or a recording. Neuman (1997:275) further states that although manifest coding is highly reliable, it does not take into consideration the connotations of words or phrases. This is important because one word might mean different things depending on the context in which it is being used.

It is because of these limitations that latent coding which according to Neuman (1997:276) looks at the underlying implicit meaning in the content of the text will also be utilised. Berg (1998:225) further states that latent coding deals with the interpretive reading of the symbolism underlying the physically presented data. At the latent level, the article heading can also be latent, containing an underlying ideological meaning.

5.4.2.7 Data analysis

Data analysis requires the researcher to work with a wealth of data collected through methods such as content analysis, participant observation, in-depth interviews and document analysis (Mouton 1996:169). As a result, the focus is on the individual case in a specific context of meanings and significance. The methods of data analysis that are often used in this regard are more holistic, synthetic and interpretive (Mouton 1996:169).

As Mouton and Marais (1990:104) indicate, the final interpretation of data is based upon two issues, namely, the reliability of the data and whether the data provides adequate support for the conclusion.

With specific reference to content analysis, Neuman (1997: 279) indicates that it is that important to note that it describes what exists. It should however be noted that content analysis cannot measure the impact of the message that has been communicated. However, content analysis can reveal the intentions of those who created the text. This is because it can reveal the underlying ideology of the communicator. Content analysis can therefore help in media effects and to determine categories and themes to structure in-depth interviews and focus groups when conducting an audience study.

5.4.2.8 Reliability of content analysis

Reliability refers to the repeated measurement of the same material which produces results similar in decisions or conclusions (Wimmer & Dominick (1997:126). An acceptable level of reliability largely depends on the research context and the type of information that has been coded. According to Wimmer and Dominick (1997:130), if a certain amount of interpretation is involved, reliability estimates are typically lower.

Intracoder reliability was established for this content analysis. After the initial coding was completed, a sub sample of the data of 20 percent was selected and re-analysed by the same researcher after the elapse of a period of a week, thus intracoder reliability was achieved.

Although content analysis provides useful information, the following are some of the problems that have been identified.

- Content analysis does not take into account the occurrence of some coder agreement strictly by chance.
- Intracoder reliability could be exposed to subjective analysis which could result in a much lower reliability index. However, the use of more than one research method in this study has helped to minimise this limitation.

- As Berg (1998:244) indicates, content analysis is limited to examining already recorded messages. The difficulty is in locating the unobtrusive messages relevant to a particular research question. In this study, this was not a major challenge as most of the required could be easily acquired.
- Content analysis is ineffective for testing casual relationships between variables. It therefore becomes important for researchers to resist the temptation to infer such relationships (Berg (1998:244)).

5.5 FIELD RESEARCH

5.5.1 What is field research?

According to Wimmer and Dominick (1983:95), field observation is a research methodology which is useful when collecting data as well as generating hypothesis and theories. It is more concerned with the description and explanation than with measurement and quantification, as it is the case with quantitative research.

Neuman (1997:348) also states that field research is based on naturalism, which places emphasis on observing ordinary events in their natural setting. The importance of observing events in the natural setting is that field research contends that the generation of meaning has to take into consideration the context of the subjects of the observation.

5.5.2 Selecting a site

As indicated by Neuman (1997:351), a research site is defined as a context in which events or activities occur. It is also seen as a socially defined territory with shifting boundaries because the researcher may arbitrarily select the boundary of where field research will take place. Neuman (1997:351) mentions the following three factors, which are relevant when selecting the research site: richness of the data, unfamiliarity and suitability. Although this researcher is familiar with the main research site of this study (the GCIS), this site was selected because of its potential to provide rich data, and accessibility, given that the researcher works at the GCIS.

5.5.3 Accessing the research site

When conducting field observation, it is important to take into consideration that there are gatekeepers who have some form of authority, formal or not, on the access that the researcher might have to the research site or a particular community. As Neuman (1997: 351) indicates, the researcher needs to negotiate for access with gatekeepers. However, it is important for the researcher to set non-negotiable limits in order to protect the integrity of the research.

Once the researcher has been granted the permission to conduct the research, it is important to build rapport with the respondents in order to secure their co-

operation. In this regard, Neuman (1997:355) states that establishing rapport is a step towards obtaining an understanding of the respondents, which ultimately enables the researcher to see events from their perspective. This will ultimately help to ensure that the researcher gains a better understanding of the subjects of the investigation.

With regard to this study, the researcher works for the GCIS, department that plans, implement and evaluate the subject under investigation (Imbizo). The researcher notified, the employer about the research and permission was granted to this effect. Part of the study fees for this research was provided for by the researcher's employer (GCIS). It is also important to note that the employer did not impose any conditions on what, where and how the research should be conducted.

The fact that the researcher is employed by the GCIS provides an opportunity to interact with the people involved in the subject under investigation, to gain insight into the subject, gain access to some relevant documents and enables the researcher to observe certain organisational practices without being actively involved in the phenomena under investigation.

The following discussion of field observation provides an outline of how the research was conducted and how the data will be collected and analysed.

5.5.4 Field observation

The following discussion will deal with total observation, field research interviews as techniques for data collection and data collection tools in field observation.

5.5.4.1 Total observation

As described by Wimmer and Dominick (1983:96), total observation takes place when the observer does not take part in the phenomenon that is being observed. In the observation of Imbizo, total observation will be used as one of the methods of data collection. This is largely because the researcher is not directly involved in the Imbizo project team's activities.

Total observation in this case has been adopted because as explained by Wimmer and Dominick (1983:96), it helps the researcher to define basic background information needed for the study and in developing a hypothesis. It also enables the researcher to have access to a group that would otherwise be difficult to access using other intrusive methods.

This is often the case in instances where a sensitive issue is the subject of the research. Total observation is important in this regard because in interviews, there is a possibility that respondents might provide socially desirable answers.

Therefore, total observation would help to deal with the challenge of socially desirable answers provided by the respondents.

As Wimmer and Dominick (1983:96) indicates, the other advantage of total observation in field research is that it takes place at the natural setting of the subject under investigation. In this case, most of the activities around Imbizo take place at the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), where the researcher is an employee. This provides the researcher with an opportunity to interact with people who are directly involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of Imbizo. This helps to provide insight into the phenomenon under investigation.

The researcher has also chosen total observation having considered the fact that as Wimmer and Dominick (1983:97) have indicated, it relies heavily on the perceptions, judgements and preconceived ideas and bias of the researcher. However, this study will also use field research interviews for data collection, which should effectively address these limitations. In this regard, informal discussions with colleagues who are involved in Imbizo have been held to gain insight into the processes involved in the planning and implementation of Imbizo programme.

5.5.4.2 Field research interviews

Field research interviews are given different names by scholars. For example, Babbie (2001:291) calls them qualitative interviews, whilst Neuman (1997:370) calls them field research interviews. For the purposes of this study, they will be referred to as field research interviews.

A field research interview is described by Babbie (2001:291) as an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent where the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry. It is generally perceived to be a conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction of the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the respondent. According to Neuman (1997:371), field research interviews are a joint production of the researcher and the interviewee. The interviewees are active participants whose insights, feelings, and co-operation are essential parts of the discussion process that reveals subjective meanings.

However, as Mouton and Marais (1990: 76) indicate, depending on the nature of the source of data, and the way in which it is being collected, when people participate in the research, they become more conscious of the situation and tend to react to it; a phenomenon known as reactivity. Mouton and Marais (1990:78) further states that reactivity is the main threat to the validity of the research findings when human beings are the source of data. However, in this study, this limitation to

field research interviews has been countered by the use of other methods such as content analysis of relevant documents and total observation of the subject under investigation. This is because they provide an alternative approach to data collection.

5.5.4.3 Data collection tools in field observation

Wimmer and Dominick (1983:98) indicate that traditional tools of data collection such as the notebook and pen have given way to radically new equipment, in many cases due to advances in electronics. However, data collection in this study will be done through the use of the notebook and pen to minimise the intrusive nature of video and audiotapes.

The other reason is that the researcher in this instance would like to observe the subject of investigation from an outsider's perspective to counter-balance the possibility of receiving "socially desirable answers" from the field research interviews. The other aspect that has been considered is that certain parts of field observation will be to some extent covert.

According to Neuman (1997:363), full field notes can contain maps, diagrams, photographs, interviews, tape recordings, videotapes, memos, objects from the

field, notes jotted in the field, and detailed notes written away from the field. The researcher will record not only what happened and what was said, but also personal impressions, feelings and interpretations of what was observed.

5.5.5 Data analysis in field observation

According to Neuman (1997:427), in general, data analysis means a search for patterns in data, recurrent behaviour, objects, or a body of knowledge. In the same vein, according to De Vos (2002:339) data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the collected data. The data collected in this study will be given structure because data comes in a variety of forms, such as notes made while observing in the field, interview notes, documents, newspaper cuttings, and videotapes..

As Leedy (1997:160) argues, throughout data analysis, the researcher organises, arranges, and chronologically orders the data, searching for recurring themes or patterns that represent the participant's perspectives. Each piece of information will then be coded to identify the source. Wimmer and Dominick (1997:87-88) further explain that all the results of the foregoing analysis are integrated into some coherent explanation of the phenomenon. The researcher in this study will then search for relationships and common patterns across categories and look for meaningful connections.

De Vos (2002:341) further states that data analysis in qualitative research involves a twofold approach. Firstly, it involves data analysis at the research site, during data collection. The second aspect involves data analysis away from the site, following a period of data collection. This aspect is conducted between site visits, prior to, as well as after, completion of data collection.

Traditionally, research separates data collection and data analysis. However, a qualitative study involves an inseparable relationship between data collection and data analysis (De Vos, 2002:341). This is largely due to the assumption that a human instrument should be subjected to ongoing fine-tuning to generate an array of data.

This means that data are analysed as they are collected. In conducting data analysis during data collection, the researcher utilises some of the methodological tools such as triangulation to ensure the study's trustworthiness. (De Vos, 2002:342) Triangulation occurs when a researcher uses multiple theoretical perspectives. In this study, analysis has been done on a regular basis. This means that there is a thin line between data collection and data analysis.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter was on the aspects which are central to the collection of data such as the site of the research, data collection techniques and procedures and data analysis. The chapter also discussed the research methodologies that will be used in this study, namely, field research and content analysis. The rationale behind using the two methodologies was to enhance the validity of the study.

CHAPTER 6 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of this study. The results will focus mainly on the role of the GCIS in strategic management of government communication, with specific reference to Imbizo. It should be borne in mind that the focus is largely on the internal organisational processes and the extent to which they enhance or inhibit the effectiveness of Imbizo. An analysis of the processes used in the strategic management of government communication- project management- will be discussed in this chapter.

An analysis of the communication strategy framework that is used for Imbizo together with the issue of language usage in Imbizo (and extent to which they impact on Imbizo processes) also forms part of this chapter. An analysis of the newspaper cuttings on the coverage of Imbizo will also be presented in this chapter. An analysis of the videotapes of an Imbizo event will be presented as it helped to determine the extent to which people's participation is encouraged.

6.2 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The GCIS has adopted the project management approach to government communication. In this regard, people are nominated to form part of the Imbizo project team on the basis of their skills, interests and organisational needs. A determination is made on the extent to which an individual's involvement in a project such as Imbizo will benefit the project in general.

Ideally, all government departments and the civil society partners are suppose to take part in the decision making processes. This is meant to ensure that all government departments are able to deal with service delivery concerns coming from Imbizo. At the same time, civil society organisations are suppose to be actively involved on the basis that they understand the social conditions of the environment within which they live, which would help the to ensure that Imbizo campaigns are able to address the needs of the people.

It has become evident from the analysis of the project management approach that the involvement of government departments and civil society structures is not as effective as intended. The other aspect is that the process seems more centralised at the GCIS, and as a result the role of other government departments and civil

organisations is minimised. This study therefore contends that this state of affairs minimises the impact of Imbizo in the targeted communities.

This study has found that although there is a project team that has been established to deal with Imbizo issues, their role is confined largely to implementation of decisions already taken at top management level. Project meetings tend to be forums where project team members are given project related tasks which are meant to achieve broader project objectives and not where project team members discuss project related issues and take decisions. It can therefore be concluded that project team members do not have decision making powers.

The other concern is that there is a lack of proper succession planning with regard to project management. This is because although officials are sent for project management training, there are limited avenues for implementation of the newly acquired skills. This impacts on some project, especially where a key player in the project leaves the organisation.

6.3 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

6.3.1 The development of the Imbizo communication strategy

The communication strategy for Imbizo is developed at the GCIS. Although there is a project team selected specifically for Imbizo, the team is not completely involved in the process of developing the communication strategy. The process is highly centralised at the senior management level of the GCIS. As a result, the project team members do not get the opportunity to give input into the process but only implement decisions.

The other concern is that the service delivery departments are also not actively involved in the process. In cases where some of them become involved, their input is either minimal or insignificant. This is a challenge given that they are government's service delivery points. This study therefore contends that the lack of their input in the process minimises the impact of Imbizo.

It has also become apparent that there is little or no representation of the civic organisations and local government in the process to which they are meant to be partners. The local government is meant to be represented by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA). However, their involvement is also minimal. Civic organisations that are also meant to be partners in the process do not feature in this part of the planning for Imbizo.

It should be noted that once the main communication strategy has been developed, the distribution strategy and media plan are developed in line with the

main objectives of Imbizo. The distribution strategy is meant to assist in the process of distributing material that has been developed to generate publicity for the campaign.

The problem in this regard is that the strategy is developed without the involvement of the people who are meant to benefit from the campaign. This is a problem largely because these people understand their environment better, and are therefore in a better position to assist in determining the best possible ways to distribute campaign material.

The media plan on the other hand is developed to inform the media on the various activities of the campaign and subsequently to generate extensive media coverage for Imbizo. The problem in this regard is that most of the people that Imbizo is meant to reach cannot be reached using the mainstream media, but through unmediated communication. This practice raises questions around the effectiveness of publicity generating activities if channels that are not relevant to a particular community are used to reach them.

The other aspect that the study has observed is that the process of developing the communication strategy is highly centralised. As a result, it can be argued that the centralisation of the development of the communication strategy contradicts the very essence of Imbizo; which is the development of partnership with all affected

stakeholders. The question that needs to be asked is how Imbizo could be said to be a participatory approach when its planning does not involve the intended beneficiaries and role players?

This study has also observed that the communication strategy framework does not make provision for communicating the Imbizo strategy within the GCIS or even internal communication within government departments. Communicating the communication strategy within government is important because even though not all government employees are directly involved in Imbizo, an understanding of how it works could help them to explain the campaign to their family members and friends. In this way, this will help in generating more publicity and understanding of government programme of action. This is also important because an understanding of the organisations' strategic communication objectives could enable the employees to determine the way they can best contribute to the attainment of the organisations' communication objectives.

The other concern is that the branding material used for the purposes of generating publicity around Imbizo is developed at the GCIS, with no involvement of the stakeholders. These products, amongst other things, include radio television and press adverts and billboards. The problem in this regard is that branding material that does not address the needs of a particular community could be developed.

Although Imbizo is meant to encourage unmediated communication between government and the people, there is an over-emphasis on the need to generate extensive media coverage. The problem with the need to generate extensive media coverage is that the media provides little or no platforms from for interaction between the people and government as compared to the face-to-face interaction.

The other concern in this regard is that generating extensive media coverage is costly when one considers that television and newspaper advertorials are more costly as compared to unmediated communication. In this regard, this study contends that emphasis should be placed on dealing and profiling issues affecting the people and the impact of Imbizo on the community. As a result, the Imbizo campaign will in turn be able to generate extensive media coverage without spending huge sums of money in buying the airtime in radio and television and space in the newspapers.

A communication strategy developed for any project is meant to communicate a particular message. However, with regard to Imbizo, this study has found that what is communicated before an Imbizo campaign is not so much about what needs to be done but about what government is doing, and what it plans to do, and logistics around a particular Imbizo meeting. Not much is said about the community where

the meeting is going to take place, why it is going to take place at such a community and the possible benefits to that particular community.

6.3.2 Key messages

As part of the Imbizo communication strategy, key messages are developed by the project team. The purpose of these messages is to provide a framework within which government communicators should communicate on Imbizo related issues. They are also meant to ensure that communicators do not send conflicting messages around Imbizo and to ensure that the core messages that government wants to communicate are communicated to the people. Consistency in government communication is therefore central to the development of key communication messages.

It is worth noting that the key messages are developed prior to Imbizo events. Given that these messages are developed before the Imbizo takes place, it can therefore be argued that they do not take into consideration the local context and the needs of the people in a particular community. This becomes a top-down approach to communication. This study contends that because Imbizo by its nature is supposed to be interactive, key messages should also be developed after an Imbizo event has taken place. This is important to ensure that they reflect the

views of the people and to communicate the way forward, that is, possible deadlines and the people who will execute certain responsibilities. This usage of key messages would ensure that the commitments made by government and other relevant stakeholders are clearly understood by all the affected people.

The problem with this approach is that although Imbizo is publicised as a partnership between government the community and other stakeholders, the process of developing such messages does not involve the community. It can therefore be argued that in this process, the government's communication objectives are communicated in a manner that does not give prominence to the local issues. It also gives an impression that Imbizo focuses more on government communicating its achievements and to a lesser extent on the interaction with the people.

6.4 LANGUAGE USAGE

Language usage is one of the determining factors for the success or failure of a particular communication project or campaign. In the pre-1994 South Africa, government communication was largely conducted in either English or Afrikaans, at the expense of other African languages. The dawn of democracy necessitated a paradigm shift from the exclusive use of English and Afrikaans to the recognition

and use African languages. Although the South African Constitution recognises the previously marginalised African languages there is still a bias towards the use of English in government communication.

6.4.1 Constitutional language provisions

Languages carry with them the pride of their speakers and their usage reflects their speakers' position in society. They do not only evoke political, ideological and social debates, but also emotional debates, mainly because they are carriers of the cultural values and pride of their speakers. Theoretically speaking, all languages in South Africa are equal, but socially and politically some languages are more equal than others in terms of symbolic, material and the communicative resources allocated to them.

The early 1990s marked the beginning of a new political dispensation in South Africa. These changes also witnessed the drafting of a new Constitution that recognises eleven official languages as stipulated in section 6(1), which states that:

“The official languages of the Republic of South Africa are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, isiSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu”.

In this way, the Constitution commits the country to the promotion of multilingualism. Thus, the focus now in South Africa is no longer on the question of whether multilingualism is right or wrong, good or bad, but rather how to use the linguistic reality to achieve the nation-building which at the moment is at the top of the political agenda in the country (Madiba, 1999: 62).

Its is against this background that the use of language in government communication campaigns such as Imbizo should take into consideration the fact that languages carry with them the pride of their speakers because they are able to best articulate their feelings and needs using their languages. It is therefore important to note that in order to reach the all the people, it becomes necessary to communicate with them using the language (s) that they understand.

6.4.2 Language usage in Imbizo brochures and the press

The language used in the articles and advertisements on Imbizo is largely English. This is largely because the newspapers in which they are published are mainly English newspapers. This is a major concern when taking into consideration the fact that most of the people targeted by Imbizo activities have limited or no access to newspapers and have limited comprehension of English. This, therefore, has serious implications on the extent, nature and impact of Imbizo.

The other concern with regard to language is the fact that government communicators write in highly academic and abstract English which is difficult to understand, even by people who are literate, let alone those who are illiterate. For example, most of the writings around Imbizo and government communication in general, are preceded by the phrase “Building a people’s contract...” (a phrase which was the theme for President Mbeki’s 2004 State of the Nation Address). This has become one of the most commonly used phrases in government communication. However, little or nothing is done to have it simplified in a way that its meaning could be understood by all the people.

Another example is that of brochures developed providing an outline of government’s achievements, and in some instances to generate publicity. These documents are written in English. For example, during the October 2003 Presidential Imbizo, a brochure was developed. The purpose of the brochure was to give an outline of the opportunities that government provides, to talk about issues around service delivery and to illustrate progress in government’s service delivery (See Appendix D).

The problem with this tabloid is that it was written in English, which could be difficult for some people to understand. Even if it was to be translated, the main problem could be that some of the words may not have their vernacular

equivalents. For example the main heading is “Building a people’s contract for growth and development”. If, for example, this phrase was to be translated to Venda or any other African languages, it would require the translator to write a long story to ensure that its meaning is not lost in the translation process.

The other concern with the use of the word “contract” is that in some instances contracts are often associated with negatives because some people might have had bad experiences with their contracts to which they might have committed themselves. As a result, the use of such a concept could cause misunderstanding and resentment to the campaign and ultimately to what it seeks to achieve.

6.4.3 Language used in the electronic media

In order to generate publicity around Imbizo, one of the forms of communication that is used is the development of advertisements for radio. These advertisements are developed in English and thereafter translated into all official languages. There are inherent problems with this approach because the fact that they are developed in English and then later translated is a problem in the sense that some of the

English words that are used may not have their equivalent in vernacular. As a result there is a risk that the intended meaning could be lost in the translation process.

The risk with this approach is that the documents might lose the message that the campaign intends to convey. This study also contends that if writers in all official languages are properly briefed and the documents are written originally in the different official African languages, with strict supervision, this could ensure that the messages that the campaign intends to convey is not lost in the process.

Television advertisements are also developed to help generate publicity around Imbizo. However, the problem is that given the cost implications with regard to television advertisements, they cannot be developed in all official languages. This, therefore, could limit the impact of such advertisements.

6.5 SUMMARY OF IMBIZO VIDEOTAPES

This section provides a summary of the recorded proceedings of presidential Imbizo meetings which were held in the North West and the Gauteng provinces. These recordings were selected to give an indication of the manner in which the meetings are conducted, issues that have been dealt with during those meetings, language usage and the environment of the meeting venue. The focus will also be

on the undertakings that the president made, and those that he made on behalf of premiers and mayors in the areas that he had visited.

6.5.1 North West Presidential Imbizo

The following are the commitments that the president made during the North West leg of the Imbizo campaign:

- The president indicated that together with the premier they have agreed that there is a need to have a complete picture of the situation in order to determine the needs in the various areas that he visited.
- The premiers, MECs, councillors and national ministers have noted the concerns which were raised by the people and the need for community halls, libraries, multipurpose community centres, grounds, roads, electricity, water, houses and sanitation in the greater Taung area.
- The president also indicated that “we will come back to respond to your concerns and to indicate what all of us at the national government, councillors and provincial government will do”.
- The president also expressed support for Mafikeng Industrial Development Zones (IDZ) and for small business people in the area. He committed to

report to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) the concerns raised in the meeting to see what the department can do to help the IDZ .

- The president said that the phasing out of commandos would not be done in such a way that it reduces the capacity to fight crime.

6.5.2 Gauteng Presidential Imbizo

The following are the commitments that the president made during the Gauteng leg of the Imbizo campaign. The areas that were visited are Rosslyn, Greenfields and Garankuwa.

- The president undertook to discuss the issue of the need for inspectors whose purpose is to oversee the implementation of Employment Equity and Affirmative action together with the Minister of Labour.
- The president undertook to talk to the Minister of Justice to consider the establishment of a civil and criminal court in the neighbourhood.
- The president undertook to talk to the Minister of Home Affairs to consider the possibility of building a Home Affairs office.
- The president undertook to talk to the Minister of Safety and Security to consider the possibility of increasing the number of police officials in the area.

- The president undertook to talk to the Minister of Communications to consider the possibility of establishing a post office in the area.
- A commitment was made for the need for more classes. A commitment was made for the announcement on the school expansion programme as soon as possible.

6.5.3 Analysis of Imbizo meetings

Although the purpose of these meetings is to provide an opportunity for all the people to speak, the set-up during these Imbizo meetings is not conducive for interactive discussions with the community. This is largely because many people attend these meetings. As a result, this makes it difficult to thoroughly discuss the issues that have been raised. Infact, it becomes difficult for most of the people to get the chance to raise the issues that concern them. As a result, lists of questions are drawn up. And one person from the community would present them to the president so that he can then respond to them.

There are several drawbacks that can be identified in this approach. Firstly, if people ask questions, there is no indication of whether they are representative of all the people or whether they are just individual specific questions. The risk is that some of the issues may not be addressed because they could be censored before they are brought to the attention of the president.

Secondly, practically the venues that are available in the communities are not big enough to accommodate all the people who may want to raise issues with the president. Even if all the people are accommodated, it would be impractical to exhaust all the issues in an interactive manner.

It is against this background that it becomes important to make sure that a mechanism is put in place to ensure that the questions that are asked are representative of all the people in the community.

In order to enhance the interactive nature of Imbizo, where necessary, an interpretation service is provided to make sure that the local people understand and are able to participate in the discussions. This is a positive aspect because it recognises the diverse nature of the South African community. It also acknowledges the fact that people are better able to express themselves competently when they use their mother tongue.

The other concern with Imbizo is that there is limited time within which the interaction takes place. As a result, Imbizo meetings lack the kind of interaction that characterises the traditional Imbizo. The problem in this regard is that people are not able to extensively discuss the issues that have been raised.

During the meetings, the president committed to address the issues that people had raised. However, a notable omission was that even though the president made commitments and also committed premiers and mayors to address the problems that the people raised during the meeting, no timeframes were set on when these issues will be addressed. It may be argued that it is not possible to provide timeframes during the meetings as some government procedures need to be taken into consideration in taking implementation decisions.

However, this study contends that a rough indication, subject to conformation could be provided to the people. This is largely because these meetings take place in an environment where people are sometimes sceptical of government's ability to deliver on its promises. The other concern is that a perception exists that *Imbizo* is a public relations exercise from which issues raised could not be implemented.

It should be taken into consideration that the proceedings of an *Imbizo* meeting are recorded by government officials who attend the meeting. The purpose of this is to ensure that a record of all the concerns that people have raised is kept. At the end of the campaign, a report detailing all the issues raised during *Imbizo* is then compiled. The issues are then sent to the relevant departments for their attention. In order to ensure effective follow-up, a database of all the issues has been developed.

6.6 NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

This section provides an overview of newspaper coverage of the North West, Gauteng and the Western Cape Imbizos. The articles which were analysed were carried by both the national and provincial newspapers (See Appendix B).

6.6.1 An overview of the press coverage of the Presidential Imbizos

A total of 56 articles were analysed for the purposes of this study. Forty-nine (49) of these articles were more factual in their reporting of these Presidential Imbizos.

The following are the newspapers that carried the stories on the three Presidential Imbizos, which are the focus of this study: Beeld, Sunday Times, Saturday Star, Weekend Pretoria News, City Press, Daily Sun, Sunday Independent The Citizen, Sowetan, Mail and Guardian, Weekend Pretoria News, The Star, Pretoria News, and the Sunday World, Saturday Star, Hermanus

Times, Daily Dispatch, Rapport, The Mercury, Business Day, Sunday Tribune, and Independent online.

Seven of the articles were opinion pieces which were carried by the Sowetan, The Citizen, The Star, Pretoria News, Business Day and the City Press.

The main issues that were dealt with in the media coverage included amongst others, the president issuing title deeds to residents, visiting clinics, discussing labour issues, government's position on HIV/AIDS, controversy around Jacob Zuma, relationship between the ANC and the NNP and the visit to the Dutch Reformed Church In Cape Town at these different sites.

The writers from government praised Imbizo as a progressive approach to governance, and argue that it provides the people with an opportunity to interact with the president. Imbizo is also presented as a positive approach to governance. In this case, one would have expected people writing from a government perspective to provide more information about the rationale of Imbizo, how areas are selected for the Imbizo meetings, and the impact that previous Imbizo's have had on the community. The importance of this is that it could help to ensure that people understand what Imbizo is all about.

In general, the newspaper coverage of Imbizo was positive with a few negative and critical articles (refer to Appendix B for details). The other aspect that should be considered is that the reporting style used in these articles was largely factual. This is because they dealt with questions such as, where, why, what, who when and

how? There was little or no provision of background information with regard to the purpose of Imbizo, information about the areas where Imbizo meetings were taking place. An aspect which could provide an educational angle of Imbizo could have been the profiling of Imbizo's success stories.

Given that Imbizo is supposed to be people driven, it is striking to note that people writing from a government perspective do not highlight the human interest aspect of Imbizo, that is, the extent to which Imbizo has improved the lives of the people. If done, this could highlight the impact of Imbizo in the community. As a way of informing people about what Imbizo is all about, and the processes involved, it could have been more helpful to have articles which provide details around these processes.

The other aspect to be considered is that the articles do not make reference to the issue of deadlines for the implementation of promises made to the people during Imbizo meetings. The fact that there is no reference to deadlines has been highlighted in the press coverage as an area of concern by the people. This is largely because people become sceptical as a perception exists that the promises will not be met as this is a public relations exercise.

On the other hand, some journalists and political analysts presented a more critical view to the whole Imbizo concept. The fact that Imbizo meetings (Western Cape) were scheduled just a few months before the 2004 general elections, raised

concerns among some political commentators. They perceived the timing as part of electioneering by the majority party (ANC).

This was largely because it was during this time that the relationship between the African National Congress (ANC) and the New National Party (NNP) became more prominent. The assumption was that the relationship between the ANC and the NNP was necessitated by the ANC's desire to win the elections in the Western Cape.

The other aspect that came up in the opinion pieces was the acknowledgement that Imbizo could play an important role in strengthening democracy at grassroots level. However, the fact that one Imbizo meeting cannot accommodate a lot of people at once proved to be a limiting factor in terms of giving most of the people the chance to express their views. It therefore becomes important to make sure that a system which would be able to address these limitations is developed.

One of the concerns that the newspaper articles raised was that people complained that in the Gauteng leg of the president's Imbizo, local councillors pre-selected people who should ask questions. The rationale for this tendency it is alleged is to make sure that people do not ask questions that might embarrass the local councillors in the presence of the president.

6.6.2 People's participation as reflected in the newspaper coverage of Imbizo

The rationale behind Imbizo is to ensure that there is participative interaction between the government and political leaders. In this context, political leaders and the people meet on a face-to-face encounter to discuss issues that affect the community and as a result work on a mechanism to make sure that such issues are addressed.

In general, the press coverage indicates that Imbizo as practiced in government is an interactive process. However, there are instances where one could argue that the manner in which some of the issues were handled reflects a degree of resistance to interaction. For example, during the Western Cape leg of the Presidential Imbizo, one of the people in attendance (referring to the New National Party) said that:

“They are the people who oppressed us, who threw us in jail. I say to hell with the National Party”.

I response the president said that:

“That’s fine. The rest of us will work with the NNP”

(Merten, 2003 Mail and Guardian).

Given that this interaction took place during Imbizo, the perception created by the newspapers is that the president missed an opportunity to explain the processes involved with regard to Imbizo and what it seeks to achieve. This is because Imbizo by its very nature should accommodate all the questions that people may ask during the meeting.

However, the other aspect that this incident highlights is the thin line between government and the ruling party. Imbizo is a government communication initiative, and technically not an ANC programme.

The issue of the working relationship between the ANC and the NNP is therefore technically not a government issue, and therefore irrelevant to an Imbizo meeting. This is an aspect which could have been clarified as it is evidently not often well understood.

The concern around the time issue was also raised by Wyndham writing for the Business Day (18 September 2003) when he said that:

“More than an hour of questions, some aggressive, others full of praise, were answered in less than 15 minutes and then it was back to the motorcade”.

The implication in this regard is that not enough time was given to answering the questions that the people had asked. The limited time given to questions and answer session compromises the ability of those in attendance to thoroughly discuss the issues that they may want to raise with the president.

This could largely be because the communication messages are finalised before Imbizo meetings take place. The problem is that this provides no room for issues that are beyond the designed scope to be considered, as was the case in the above interaction between the president and the individual who attended the meeting.

The other aspect is that assumptions are made on what the people in a given community would want to talk about. Although this is informed by the pre-campaign site visit, given that consultation is largely done with the leaders in the community, the possibility is that some of the aspects which might be important o a particular

community might be missed in the process. The other aspect is that most of the people at the local government level would not want a negative picture to be presented to the president on how they run the local affairs.

As a result, during the consultation they may try to paint a positive picture of their environment, hence the need to provide people with an opportunity to ask questions without restrictions. This would therefore require that more time be given for people to ask questions, and for the president to respond to such questions.

6.6.3 Analysis of press coverage of Imbizo

It can therefore be concluded that in general, Presidential Imbizos received extensive positive coverage in the print media. This is largely because efforts were made to ensure that journalists are present at the Imbizo events. The question that this raises is whether this coverage has been generated because of the interest that Imbizo attracts or can this be seen as “arranged” publicity. If the later is the case, it could then be argued that this reinforces the perception that it is a public relations exercise.

The other question that this raises is whether extensive press coverage could be equated with a better understanding of what Imbizo is all about, improved access to government communication and information services. This becomes a concern

when one considers the fact that most of the people that Imbizo wants to reach have limited access to the newspapers and that they have little or no understanding of the English language.

Imbizo is promoted as a participatory approach to issues of governance, which encourages partnership between government and the people. However, this partnership is not reflected in the opinion pieces which have been written. For example, it would have been interesting if there were articles which were written from a civil society perspective, in order to give a perspective of Imbizo from the recipients' point of view.

The other aspect that needs to be taken into consideration is that none of the press articles that have been selected for the purposes of this study provides an explanation of the concept Imbizo. In this regard this study contends that there is an assumption people in general understand what Imbizo is all about. That some people do not understand what Imbizo is all about is evidenced by the fact that some of the people interviewed in the newspaper articles, especially non speakers of Zulu did not understand what the word Imbizo itself means. In some instances, some people have heard about Imbizo but could not attend Imbizo meetings because they did not understand what it is all about.

What can be concluded from the press coverage of Imbizo is that there seem to be some interest on Imbizo from the press. This provides a platform to strengthen relations between government and the press to ensure that there is maximum reach.

6.7 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

This section presents an analysis of the extent and nature of community participation in Imbizo. The focus will be on the processes involved and the extent to which they encourage or inhibit the creation of an environment conducive for community participation.

6.7.1 Nature of community participation

Theoretically, Imbizo is meant to be a participatory form of governance, however in actual practice, this does not seem to be the case. This study has found that at the planning level, there is little or no consultation with the beneficiaries of a particular Imbizo campaign. Although it could be justified that practically it is not possible to consult all the people in a particular community, efforts should be made to ensure that the views of all the people, over and above the feedback provided by the local leaders are received.

This study has also observed that the only form of visible participation is that of people attending meetings, listen to the president's address and in some cases be able to ask questions. However, this does not extend to decision-making and in the implementation of the decisions that have been taken.

The other aspect that this study has observed is that the process seems to have predetermined communication objectives. This is largely because the key messages that need to be communicated are developed prior to Imbizo meetings. This approach has a negative impact on the course of the interaction, because instead of having the interaction being led and determined by the issues raised by the local people during the meeting issues are defined before the meeting.

Although Imbizo is meant to provide an opportunity for all the people to interact with the political leaders, there is no way of ensuring that the issues raised during the meeting are representative of all the people in the community. Although some consultation can be done with the community leaders, the question that comes up is on the extent to which those consulted represent all the interests in a particular community. The other aspect that seems to compromise representativity is that that the venues that are used might not be able to accommodate all the people in the community. As a result, the extent to which people can participate in the discussions become limited. The set-up of the meetings, sometimes under a tent, is not conducive for frank and exhaustive discussions.

6.7.2 Participation through the Imbizo toll-free number

The other form of people's participation during Imbizo is through the toll-free number. This toll free number is managed by the GCIS. The purpose of this number is to provide the people with an opportunity to report issues that need government attention. It is also meant to provide answers on Imbizo-related queries that people might have. These calls are recorded and therefore form part of the overall Imbizo project team report (please refer to Appendix C for the record of issues raised through the toll-free number). The main purpose of this exercise is to enable government to have an idea of the concerns and needs that people have, and where possible to assist in the follow-up process that might take place during the campaign or after the campaign.

The challenge with the toll-free number is that the fact that somebody keeps a record of all the issues, contact details and physical addresses of callers in itself raises people's expectations. The implication is that efforts should be made to ensure that issues that people have raised are addressed. Otherwise, if they are not addressed, in the long run people might become disillusioned with the Imbizo process, and ultimately with government in general.

Further investigation of this process revealed that there is little or no follow-up on issues raised through the toll-free number. As a result, during the next Imbizos people call and complain about issues raised during the previous Imbizos to which no follow-up was made.

The other aspect is that the toll-free number provides an opportunity for people to raise a variety of issues that affect their lives, and in some instances, they need urgent responses. The problem in this regard is that the number is managed by one person who is not trained to deal with complex issues that people raise. As a result, the official is forced to refer these cases to relevant departments, or in some instances offer advice.

Another observation that this study has made is that that this toll-free number has brought forth the fact that people need more avenues to communicate with government. The implication is that the existing avenues are not as effective as they should be.

Amongst others, people who called the toll-free number raised the following questions:

- What is Imbizo?
- What is Imbizo all about?

- When is Imbizo coming to my place?
- How does Imbizo process work?
- What must we do when we want leaders to come to our areas?
- Do we pay to participate in Imbizo ?
- Who is allowed to speak during Imbizo ?
- Will the leaders listen given the number of people in attendance?
- Will the leaders come back to give us feedback on the issues that we raised with them?

It is evident from the above questions that people have limited understanding of what Imbizo is all about and the processes involved in this campaign. This could be accounted for by the fact that an assumption is made by government communicators that all the people understand what the concept of Imbizo is all about. This could also be accounted for by the fact that Imbizo is a Zulu word, which non-Zulu speakers might not be able to understand. As a result, publicity materials which do not seek to explain what Imbizo is all about are developed. As a result, an opportunity to provide clarity on what Imbizo is all about, or what the word Imbizo itself, mean is missed.

The fact that people want to know if they have to pay to take part in Imbizo is a clear indication that there is limited understanding of what this campaign is all

about. Given that even though Imbizo is meant to give all people an opportunity to ask questions to politicians, but still have people who want to know as to who is allowed to speak during Imbizo makes it clear that this process and what it seeks to achieve is not well understood by the people it is meant to reach.

The question that relates to whether the leaders are going to listen given that many people attend Imbizo meetings is at the core of logistics around the nature and ability of people to actively participate in the discussions. It is with this understanding that a mechanism must be developed to make sure that those in attendance are given the chance express their views.

The issue of lack of set deadlines on the implementation of the promises, and that the leaders do not come back to provide feedback raises questions about whether government takes their concerns seriously or not, and as a result, this may lead to people becoming sceptical about Imbizo. It is therefore important to note that feedback does not necessarily mean progress on issues raised during Imbizo. This means that even though there are problems, people still want to know that at least somebody is dealing with their concerns. This could help to ensure that there is transparency in the whole exercise. As a result, this could enhance the level of trust between government and the people.

One of the criticisms levelled against government communication in general is that the language that is used is often very difficult to understand. For example, one of the callers wanted to know what “the concept of the people’s contract” is all about. The problem with the use of difficult language is that some of the people who may have interest in Imbizo for example, may not understand what is being communicated.

The challenge in this regard is for government communicators to communicate in a manner that makes it possible for the people to understand the issues under discussion. The other aspect in this regard is that the concept of the people’s contract could have conflicting interpretations in the communities. It is therefore important for government communicators to make use of the language which is not ambiguous.

Although the toll-free line record does not necessarily represent the majority of the people in the country, it can however be argued that it provides an indication of the nature of issues that concern the people in the community and their views towards Imbizo. The other concern with the toll-free line is that there is no follow-up on these issues although they have been put on record for the purposes of follow-up. The problem in this regard is that during the next Imbizos, people who previously raised issues through the toll-free line and such issues were not addressed call to complain about the promises which have not been fulfilled. Can be concluded that

if this pattern continues, in the long run people might lose interest and become disillusioned with the Imbizo process.

6.8 CONCLUSION

The concept of Imbizo is an ideal, which seeks to encourage people to participate in the issues of governance in South Africa. However, it has become evident from this study that although it is a positive approach, it has some limitations which need to be addressed for it to be truly participative. This study contends that a multi-media approach with emphasis on face-to-face interaction should be developed to ensure the effectiveness of Imbizo and to maximise people's participation.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the conclusions and recommendations of this study. In this regard, a brief outline of research problem, aims of the study and the research methods used in this study will be provided. This will be followed by the presentation of the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

7.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

As Horwitz (2001:318) indicated,

“...the Comtask Report conceptualised the communications tasks of government as providing information quickly, transparently, and with accountability to the people and the media, and enacting policies to spur the

growth of communications structures so as to enable people to function as active citizens in a democratic environment”.

It is evident from the above quotation that communication in this context is at the core of government’s interaction with the people. This is because if people do not have access to government information, they will not be able participate in government initiated activities. In a democratic society such as South Africa, communication should therefore be seen and practiced as a dialogue between government and the people. The role of the people is seen as more important than simply being voters during the elections. This clearly indicates that as part of the democratic processes in the country, the people should be involved in decision making processes.

In this regard, Mtaka (2002:2) indicates that, participation at community level is necessitated by the fact that there is a need to move from building to consolidating democracy, hence the need for people’s participation. It is therefore through building an enabling environment at community level that democracy can be consolidated in the broader community.

However, looking at Imbizo as adopted by government, it is evident that the people are generally not involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the

campaign. In this regard, this study contends that lack of effective public participation compromises the democratic principles that underline democracy.

It is in this regard that Mtaka (2002:3) further argues that to sustain democracy, efforts should be made to ensure that all citizens understand the nature of their participation, and what it is in which they have to participate.

Access to information is therefore central to participation as it could help citizens to understand government programmes and therefore remain committed to such programmes. It also shows that there is a need to ensure that all stakeholders are involved in planning for Imbizo so that they can understand their roles and responsibilities to ensure its success. The importance of participation is that it could help to ensure that the citizens take ownership of the whole process; an important democratic principle.

This approach could also help to ensure that there is a buy-in by all affected parties to ensure the consolidation of democracy. However, the other concern with government's adaptation of Imbizo is that such meetings can only reach a small fraction of the people in a particular community. This is largely because of logistical limitations such as, amongst others, the size of the venues and limited access to the venues. The other concern is the apparent lack of a mechanism to ensure that

the views and opinions expressed at these meetings are representative of the majority views in the community.

7.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The following were the aims of this research:

- To analyse the role of the GCIS in strategic management of government communication, with specific reference to Imbizo.
- To determine the extent to which the strategic management approach adopted for government communication, project management, enhances or limits the GCIS' ability to execute its mandate.
- To determine the extent to which strategic management of Imbizo enhances or inhibits participation of the people.
- To analyse the communication strategy framework used for the purposes of Imbizo, and the extent to which it enhances or inhibits people's participation.
- To analyse the nature and extent of media coverage received by the Imbizo campaign.
- To develop a communication strategy framework that can be used for participatory development communication purposes.
- To determine the extent and nature of people's participation during an Imbizo meeting through the analysis of Imbizo videotapes.

7.4 RESEARCH METHODS USED IN THE STUDY

The research methods used in this study were, content analysis of video recordings of the actual Imbizo meetings, documents containing information about Imbizo, analysis of the print media coverage of Imbizo, and field research, the field being the (GCIS).

7.5 SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

7.5.1 Understanding of the concept participation

As shown in this study, issues around participation and interaction are interpreted differently, and sometimes depending on the context in which the participative

activities are taking place. Imbizo as a participative approach to governance is also perceived in the media, community, and business from different perspectives. The interpretations of its objectives also vary amongst others, from a genuine need to uplift the community, public relations, and to legitimising government activities.

However, it is evident that overall, although there are aspects that may need to be improved, Imbizo is a positive approach to governance, as it provides reassurance that government listens and cares for the people. It can therefore be argued that even if the promises that government makes might not be met at the expected

time, the fact that people are given the platform to express their views creates the sense that the people are involved in the planning and implementation of government programmes.

It is also interesting to note that there seem to be a general acceptance of Imbizo as a positive step towards the consolidation of democracy in South Africa. This is also because even soccer clubs call their meetings with their supporters Imbizo (a practice which became even more popular after government had adopted the Imbizo concept). Even in soccer clubs' supporters' structures Imbizo is used to underline the democratic nature of such interaction.

7.5.2 Generation of extensive media coverage

The Imbizo concept as applied in government places emphasis on the generation of extensive media coverage. This emphasis is inherently faulty as it defeats the main objective. This study has noted that most of the publicity is generated before and during the Imbizo campaigns. But little or nothing is done to generate post Imbizo publicity. Imbizo is meant to be an unmediated form of communication between government and the people. This is largely because it gives politicians and the people an opportunity to talk to each other face-to-face about issues that affect their lives.

7.5.3 Implementation of government promises

It has also become evident that there is little or no follow-up on issues that the people raise during Imbizo meetings. This is evidenced by the fact that in the analysis of the press coverage of Imbizo, people who have been interviewed often raised concerns about the lack of delivery on promises that government has made in previous Imbizo meetings. It was for this reason that several people who have been interviewed by the press indicated that they see no reason why they should attend Imbizo meetings.

The other concern is that there is no indication of the time frames within which the identified issues will have been addressed. This limitation has also been identified in the video recordings of the Presidential Imbizo meetings analysed for the study. The problem in this regard is that this has resulted in people becoming sceptical of government's messages and its commitment to address their problems.

7.5.4 Key messages

As part of the planning for Imbizo, key messages are developed by the GCIS. It is worth noting that the key messages are developed prior to Imbizo meetings. The

purpose of these messages is to provide a framework within which government communicators should communicate on Imbizo related issues. This is meant to ensure that they do not send out contradictory messages, but stick to what has been prescribed.

An analysis of the key messages that have been developed to guide communication around Imbizo reveal that the messages are often not localised. This means that they do not take into consideration the interests of the target audience and the issues that concern them. They rather focus on the broader government objectives. The other aspect is that there is no involvement of the local people in the development of such messages.

The problem with this approach is that although Imbizo is publicised as a partnership between government the community and other stakeholders, the process of developing such messages does not involve such stakeholders.

The problem in this regard is that given that Imbizo seeks to build partnerships with civil organisations, there is a danger that government and civic organisations might not communicate from the same premise. This might at the end confuse the local community. Against this background, it can therefore be argued that in this process, the government's key ideological objectives are communicated in a manner that does not give prominence to the local issues.

7.5.5 Role of the partners in the planning of Imbizo activities

The planning of Imbizo activities is highly centralised, with decisions taken at the GCIS, with limited or no involvement of the stakeholders who are meant to be the beneficiaries of this process (the people who supposedly have a better understanding of their circumstances and needs). The question in this regard is that if the people who are supposed to benefit from the campaign are not actively involved in the planning and implementation of the campaign activities, how is that a partnership?

It has also become evident in this study that the development of the communication strategy, which is a guiding document for Imbizo communication does not reflect the partnership with the community that it is meant to reach. This situation has to some extent perpetuated the perception that Imbizo is a public relations exercise than an attempt at uplifting the communities.

7.5.6 Imbizo as an ideological approach to governance

It can be concluded that Imbizo is more of an ideological approach to governance than the much-publicised need for interaction between government and the people. The creation of extensive media coverage seem to be the main objective. It also appears as if it is the measure of Imbizo campaign's success and/or failure. But given that in its communication emphasis is placed on the poor communities, the question that needs to be answered is how extensive media coverage could help to reach South Africa's poor people, most of whom are illiterate?

The other concern is that most newspapers from whom publicity for Imbizo is sought are national newspapers whose coverage of issues is not localised, but provide provincial and national perspectives on issues. This tendency therefore does not benefit the local people in their efforts to improve their lives.

7.5.7 Language usage

One of the limitations with the use of mainstream media is the language issue. English is the main language that is used. The problem in this regard is that the type of English used in, for example, brochures and articles written by government communicators is highly abstract, which makes it difficult to understand.

7.5.8 Branding of Imbizo

The Imbizo initiative is not well branded. This is clearly indicated by the fact that in some of the articles that have been analysed, the press covered some of the Imbizo activities without any reference being made to Imbizo. This could be accounted for partly by the fact that some of the journalists might not have the background information on what Imbizo is all about.

The problem caused by poor branding is that if a person does not know anything about Imbizo, and does not understand what the word Imbizo means, they may not know that that particular story is part of a broader government communication programme.

There is also a limited understanding of the concept Imbizo amongst the people. This may ultimately affect the extent to which they participate in Imbizo activities. It has also become evident from the analysis of the toll free line register that there is a need to explain what Imbizo is all about in a way that is understandable to all South Africans. The problem in this case is that not all the people understand Zulu.

7.5.9 Accessibility of Imbizo meeting venues

The other issue that need to be taken into consideration is the issue of accessibility of Imbizo meeting venues. This becomes a problem because most people have to

travel long distances to get to Imbizo meeting venues. This means that because of the distance, some people who may want to talk to the president may not be able to attend such meetings. It therefore becomes important for leaders at the local level to devise strategies that will ensure that the concerns of all the people are raised with the president even though some of the affected people may not necessarily be able to attend the meeting.

7.5.10 Venue constraints

Imbizo meeting venues cannot realistically accommodate all the people and address all the issues in that particular community. It therefore becomes important to devise strategies that will make sure that although the people could not all be reached at once, their issues are taken into consideration. This would require co-operation of a cross-section of structures at the local level.

7.6 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has concluded that the adaptation of Imbizo for use in government has become a highly politicised phenomenon and its main objectives highly contestable. Looking at the press coverage of Imbizo, it has become evident that in some instances people perceive it to be an electioneering mechanism for the African National Congress (ANC). This has brought to the fore the fact that there is a thin line between the ruling party, in this case the ANC, and government. In this

regard, this study contends that this is a criticism that is unavoidable. All ruling parties are most likely to be accused of using campaigns of this nature partly to reach their own political goals.

In trying to clarify government's understanding of the role of Imbizo, Mbeki (2004:5) stated that:

“The KZN Imbizo, our last one before the elections, has confirmed the need for ongoing interaction between government and people. It emphasised the correctness of our view that we should not relate to the people by visiting them for a few hours by merely going to launch projects and thereafter go back to Pretoria or our provincial and local capitals”

This clearly demonstrates government's aims with regard to Imbizo. However, there are concerns in some quarters of society where people are sceptical about the “real” reasons behind Imbizo campaigns. People have often raised concerns about the lack of delivery on promises made during Imbizo meetings.

Writing in ANC Today Mbeki (2004:5) further stated that:

“It produces measurable results both for the people and the government, expands the possibility for the people to determine their destiny and further

entrenches our democratic system, building on the Imbizo traditions of our pre-colonial societies”.

The fact that Mbeki wrote the above quotation in his capacity as ANC president further illustrates the thin line between government and the political party. This is because he was commenting on a government programme using a political party platform. However, the understanding of the role of Imbizo as shown in the above quotation contradicts some of the findings of this study. For example, it is not clear how the impact of Imbizo is measured. This study contends that the most viable measurement of such campaign would be the implementation of promises made during Imbizo meetings. However, as this study has observed, there is a general concern that the issues raised during these meetings are not implemented, and no feedback is provided in this regard.

The other aspect is that the people who are meant to benefit from Imbizo are not involved in decision making processes on Imbizo related issues. For example, they are not involved in the development of the communication strategy and on when and how issues that have been raised will be implemented. In this regard, this study has concluded that although Imbizo is branded as a participatory process, it is not completely participatory in practice. This study contends that Imbizo is largely meant to create the impression that the government is still in touch with

people at grassroots level. With this understanding, it can therefore be concluded that this is more of a public relations exercise.

This study has also observed from the planning and implementation that there is over-emphasis on the generation of extensive mainstream media coverage before and during the Imbizo campaign. It can therefore be concluded that government's bias toward the mainstream media contradicts the very essence of Imbizo; which is to interact with the people in a face-to-face encounter. The role of the mainstream media cannot be seen as an attempt to reach the main beneficiaries of Imbizo, the poor people. It is meant to reach mainly the intellectuals, business people and opinion makers. This is meant to mainly inform them of the programme of government so that they can in some way garner support for Imbizo.

This study however contends that informing opinion makers is part of what government communication is all about. However, this aspect of government communication should be clearly spelt out. This would require that the Imbizo programme targets different audiences, which would require that their preferred channels of communication should be used in order for Imbizo to have maximum impact.

It can also be concluded that although Imbizo is meant to reach all the people, all factors considered, it cannot be all-inclusive in terms of planning and

implementation. However, strategies that would help to ensure that the views and interests of all interest groups are taken into consideration should be developed. This is important because if this aspect is undermined, in the long run Imbizo might lose its credibility in the communities that it is meant to reach.

The other aspect to be considered is that where government has made promises to deliver on certain things, such undertakings must be honoured. In cases where there are delays, such delays should be communicated to the relevant communities through relevant channels of communication. This will help to ensure that a relationship of trust is maintained, and Imbizos credibility as a channel of communication between government and the people is strengthened.

The analysis of the videotapes of Imbizo meetings clearly demonstrates that all aspects considered, an Imbizo meeting cannot realistically accommodate all the people in a particular community, and address all the issues in a particular community at once. It therefore becomes important to devise strategies that will make sure that although the people could not all be reached at once, their issues are taken into consideration. This would require a largely representative local structure which would deal with such issues.

It has also become evident that although Imbizo is gaining in terms of popularity, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done in this regard. This is largely

because the toll-free line has revealed that there are still many people who do not understand what Imbizo is all about and how it could benefit their communities (refer to Appendix C).

The issue of language usage in government communication, and in this case, with regard to Imbizo raises some concerns. This is largely because of the obvious bias towards the use of English in the publicity material developed for the purposes of Imbizo. Given the low literacy levels in the country, this could minimise the impact of Imbizo.

Finally, this study contends that as an ideal, Imbizo is a progressive approach to governance. This is because it strives to ensure that people participate in the discussions about issues that affect their lives. However, in practice, there is a limited scope for people to be equal role players with regard to planning and in decision making in general. The other aspect that should be noted is that the president and political leaders come from a position of power. This automatically gives them an upper hand in the discussions and in decision making. This study therefore contends that in as far as Imbizo is concerned, there can never be equal participation between the people and the president or any political leaders. The challenge is therefore for government to conduct the campaign in such a way that the views of all the people represented during the Imbizo meetings are considered.

7.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been made on the basis of the results of the study:

- The local government should be actively involved in Imbizo as they are the first contact that people have with government. This is also because they are the ones responsible for implementation of government policies and programmes. Their active involvement will help to ensure that the issues raised during an Imbizo meeting are representative of all the people in their municipalities.
- There is a need for a shift in the mindset of government communicators; from the need to generate extensive media coverage to effective use of existing communication structures in the communities to publicise Imbizo meetings.
- Undertakings made during Imbizo meetings should be honoured. In cases where there are delays, such delays should be communicated to the affected people through the existing communication structures in the affected community. In this regard, a checklist of issues that need attention,

indicating the time frames and the responsible people must be developed.

This will help to ensure that Imbizo builds and retains its credibility.

- Prior to an Imbizo meeting, the different groups in the community should draw a list of concerns and comments which their leaders should present to the president. This would help to ensure that the needs and concerns presented during an Imbizo meeting are representative of all the views in the community.
- An intersectoral team comprising of civic organisations, non-governmental organisations, government and all relevant stakeholders should be formed. The purpose of this team would be to ensure implementation of agreements and undertakings made during the Imbizo meeting.
- All government interaction with the people at national, provincial and local level should be clearly branded as Imbizo to ensure that people become well informed when such events take place.
- The content of the Imbizo brochures should be customised to the local communities which are to be visited to ensure their relevance.

- A structure that deals solely with Imbizo activities should be established. The purpose of this structure will be to co-ordinate, plan, evaluate, and work on implementation of issues raised during an Imbizo meetings. The structure will have to work closely with the GCIS and liaise with government departments at all levels. The establishment of such a structure will also help to ensure that the issues raised during an Imbizo meeting are addressed.
- There is a need for feedback mechanisms to be established to keep people informed about the developments on the issues raised during an Imbizo meeting. This aspect is important because as indicated in the research, people would want to know about progress, even if there are challenges in the implementation process.
- Given that South Africa is a multilingual country, it is important that efforts are made to explain what the concept Imbizo is all about. This is important because it has become evident that some people could not attend Imbizo activities because they did not understand what Imbizo is all about.
- A team which includes professionals should be set up to manage the toll free number during the campaign. This is because as this study has noted, the toll-free line could be effective in addressing issues that cannot be

postponed to a later date. The report from the toll-free line should also be used in the development of the communication strategy for the next campaign as it provides an indication of the issues that need attention.

- A two-phased communication strategy must be developed. The first part of the communication strategy should focus on communication before and during the campaign. The purpose of this communication will be to generate publicity and awareness about the imminent visit by the president or political leaders and to sustain awareness during the campaign. The second phase should focus on post campaign communication. In this case, after the president and political leaders have visited the selected areas, extensive communication should be embarked upon. The purpose of the communication strategy should be to communicate the findings from the visit, what will be done, how they will done, who will do it, and when they will be done. This is more important because after visit communication will address the problem of people not knowing when and how the issues will be addressed. It will also be a way to hold all the stakeholders accountable for all the undertakings that they had made.
- The following framework, which is a modification of Steyn and Puth's (2000) (refer to Figure 4.1) framework on the development of a corporate communication strategy should be used for Imbizo:

Figure 7.1: Proposed communication strategy framework for government's participatory development communication initiative.



This adapted framework moves from the premise that instead of developing a generic communication strategy which is then implemented even at the local community, the broader national communication strategy must be further subdivided in community specific communication strategies. In developing the localised communication strategies, the following aspects which are aligned to the main headings in Figure 7.1 should be taken into consideration:

- **Consultation with community leaders**

Community leaders in this case include amongst others, traditional, civic, religious and business leaders. These leaders serve the interests of diverse groups in their communities. The fact that they deal with the people that they lead on a regular basis provides them with a better understanding of their needs. It can therefore be concluded that in order for any communication campaign such as Imbizo to succeed, efforts should be made to ensure that community leaders are involved in the planning and implementation stages of the campaign. The other important aspect in this regard is that these leaders should be involved earlier on in the campaign. This must be done to ensure that there is buy-in by the community leaders and the community in general.

The other aspect is that community leaders have a certain degree of influence on the community. This places them in a position where if they are not involved in the

planning and implementation, they might influence the community not support the campaign. This is something which might adversely affect the impact of any communication campaign, and must therefore be avoided.

- **Identify community strategic stakeholders (internal and external environment)**

The internal stakeholders in this regard refer to the people who are the beneficiaries of the campaign, that is, the local community. The external stakeholders are people whose services may be required to address the needs of a particular community. The roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders should therefore be clearly outlined earlier on in the planning to simplify the monitoring of the implementation processes.

- **Identify needs and strategic issues facing the community (community representatives should identify their needs)**

The community representatives are in a better position to identify strategic issues facing the community. As a result, they should be placed in a position where they can identify community issues that need attention. This is important because if they are involved, a sense of ownership develops. As a result, they will be able to

commit and mobilise the community to work together with government to find solutions to the issues that have been identified.

- **Prioritise the needs**

It should be noted that given the financial and human resources constraints, it may not be possible to give attention to all the issues affecting the community. As a result, it is important to prioritise the issues. This should be done in consultation with the community. At this stage, it is important to ensure that there is effective communication between all the affected stakeholders.

- **Set communication goals (decide whether the purpose of communication is to inform, influence or educate)**

At this level, it becomes important to take decisions on the purpose of communication. If for example, the purpose of the communication is to educate, the communication messages should be communicated as such. Once the purpose has been identified, it should be communicated and clarified with all the stake holders to ensure that they all understand what is going on. It is also important to identify channels of communication that are suited to communicate educational messages. In this case, given that emphasis is placed on face-to-face communication, community based unmediated communication channels must be

used. At this stage, it also becomes important to make sure that provision is made for the interaction to be done using the language (s) that the local people will understand.

- **Formulate communication policy (who should communicate with whom)**

One of the challenges with regard to communication is the co-ordination of communication processes. Co-ordination is important to ensure that communicators do not send contradictory messages to the community. In this regard, it also becomes important to clarify the channels of communication. At this phase, a person who should speak on behalf of the campaign should be identified by all the stakeholders. It is also important to make sure that the selected communicator understands the local community dynamics as this might help to ensure that communication is effective.

- **Develop a media plan (place emphasis on unmediated/face-to-face communication)**

Given that the communication strategy is meant to generate publicity and to effectively communicate a specific message, it is important to draw up a communication plan to achieve this objective. Communication platforms which are

used by the targeted community must be identified. In this case, emphasis should be placed on face-to-face communication because Imbizo by its nature takes and interactive and unmediated communication approach.

- **Impact assessment of the communication strategy (consider the main goals of the communication strategy)**

One of the main aspects once a communication strategy has been implemented is to ensure that its impact is assessed. This assessment should be done against the objectives which were initially set when the communication strategy was developed. In this assessment emphasis should be placed on the role of the recipients of such communication. The importance of the assessment is to identify the challenges that might be avoided in future campaigns.

7.8 CONCLUSION

This study has observed that in principle, Imbizo as a strategy for participatory development communication is a progressive strategy because it provides an opportunity for government to interact with people and get first hand information on their needs and the possible nature of government intervention. However, in practice Imbizo is not participatory, especially when it comes to the planning process, and in taking decisions in general.

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APPENDIX A: GCIS CORPORATE STRATEGY-APRIL 2004 - MARCH 2007

Vision

Helping to meet the communication and information needs of government and the people, to ensure a better life for all.

Mission

GCIS' mission is to provide leadership in government communications and ensure that the public is informed of government's implementation of its mandate.

Strategic objectives

The overarching strategic objective of GCIS is to enhance the government communication system and its operations in ways that contribute to the process of further consolidating our democracy and taking the country onto a higher growth and development path.

GCIS approach

This objective will be achieved by having the following elements in our strategic approach:

- 1. Providing leadership in Government Communications and ensuring better performance by the communication system**

GCIS must take responsibility for ensuring government is communicating interactively with the public and for the communication of government's vision and approaches to broad areas. GCIS needs to be at the forefront of analysis of the communication environment so that it can identify initiatives to be taken in enhancing the work of government and is also able to respond effectively when required.

2. Building a framework of communication partnerships informed by an encompassing vision around common development objectives

GCIS must take overall responsibility for promoting partnership amongst all communicators, inside and outside of government, in articulating a shared vision and value system for a caring society and in broadening access to the means of receiving and imparting information and ideas. This includes improving relations with the media and with communicators in parastatal bodies and the private sector, including in international marketing efforts.

3. Promoting awareness of the opportunities that democracy has brought and how to access them

GCIS will need to intensify the provision of basic information to the public about the rights of citizens and how to take advantage of government's socio-economic programmes as well as about the general process of policy development and implementation. Attention will be needed to improving the quality of information products and the effectiveness of distribution strategy in reaching all citizens, in every sector of society and every part of the country.

4. Promoting awareness of the institutions and programmes of continental and regional integration and development

Given the critical role of the regional environment and the development of our continent, GCIS should encourage and lead campaigns across government and society to enhance public awareness of developments in the region and the continent and promote engagement with regional and continental institutions and programmes.

5. Communication research and information

The government communication system as a whole needs to base its work on soundly researched approaches. GCIS will play a key role in identifying areas of communications research as well as receiving relevant research reports from other sectors. Furthermore,

intimate knowledge of government's policies, programmes and implementation is essential to further enhance communication. There is therefore a need to package information on government's programme of action.

Key Issues

In pursuing the elements of this approach, while giving ongoing attention to a range of actions, GCIS will pay special attention to certain critical communication initiatives which should catalyse a general enhancement of the communication system and its operation.

1. Providing leadership to government communication and better communication performance by the state.

Special attention to:

- Strengthening and integrating the government communication system. This will take the form of Head of Communications being part of the pool for project leaders, taking greater responsibility for transversal campaigns
- Maintaining a clearly understood cycle beginning with end-of-year evaluations, development of Government Communication Strategy and Communication Programme, finalisation of departmental and cluster plans/strategies
- Improving across government the system of monitoring, and responsive and proactive communication around public discourse, along with partnership of GCIS with others in and outside government in building a value system for social cohesion in a caring society

Ongoing attention to:

Better integration across government in communication, budgeting for communication, and understanding of policies and programme of action

- Developing capacity of provincial and local government communication
- More effective internal communication in government including communication to enhance understanding of policies

- More effective tools of interaction with the public; improving the quality of our products; enhancing existing platforms and introducing new ones; and improving relations with the media
- Ensuring that the Imbizo approach of interactive governance takes root throughout government
- Better assessment of the impact of our communication, including peer assessment by communicators and the public
- Sustaining the GCIS Peer Review Process to ensure that in the medium term a uniform standard of excellence is achieved amongst Heads of Communications
- An active GCIS role in advising communication components on their development requirements and in ensuring that government communication capacity matches the needs
- Encouraging communicators to acquire the Professional Certificate in Government Communication and Marketing
- GCIS assistance in content development, branding and quality control over critical information products, including government websites
- Working with the International Marketing Council, GCIS must continue working to play a greater role in coordinating government's efforts and enhancing the communication capacity of critical South African Missions and including them in the government communication system
- Recognising excellence in government communications through the Government Communicators Awards
- Ensuring wider use of Bua News

2. Building a framework of communication partnerships

Special attention to:

- Working towards an active partnership among the country's communicators

Ongoing attention to:

- Better interaction with communication practitioners in parastatals and the private sector, and a new mindset and paradigm in government to relate to sectoral partners in both policy and communication processes
- Articulating and communicating a shared and unifying vision for the decade to 2014, informed by the new five-year mandate of government and with a common understanding of challenges and achievements
- Consolidating partnerships in Multi-Purpose Community Centres, (MPCCs), publications, Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), International Marketing Council (IMC), training of communicators and other projects
- Ensuring that all of government communications, across departments and spheres, work in partnership informed by the common vision
- Helping to transform the media and advertising industry and through the MDDA helping establish and sustain community and small commercial media
- Developing closer relations with agenda setters
- Building partnership with the media, in particular key partners like the public broadcaster; implementing recommendations of the Cabinet/SANEF Indaba and sustaining such ministerial interaction
- Encouraging the replication of communication partnerships at provincial and local level

3. Promoting awareness of the opportunities that democracy has brought and how to access them

Special attention to:

- A sustained government -wide campaign on opportunities that have emerged with democracy, (across all clusters, not just economic), building on the campaign on economic opportunities

Ongoing attention to:

- Ensuring awareness amongst intended beneficiaries of the opportunities for socio-economic development that government programmes offer and how to access them
- Effective assessment of the reach of our communication and the quality of products, including attention to accessibility and language
- Strengthening unmediated communication including through radio; imbizo; development communication and a government publication
- Integrated communication through Community Development Workers; MPCCs and Gateway
- Better research into public information needs
- Combining communication in support of Second Economy interventions with communication to promote job-creating growth of the First Economy
- Enhancing relations between GCIS and the Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Services unit (PCAS) in The Presidency to achieve better understanding of the implementation and impact of government's programme of action, and of information and communication needs, so that GCIS is better able to communicate government's implementation of its mandate.

4. Promoting awareness of the institutions and programmes of continental and regional integration and development

Special attention to:

- Sustained profiling of the benefits of African development to South Africa and the rest of the continent

Ongoing attention to:

- Better government communication structures, working with NEPAD Secretariat
- Mobilising society to become active participants Promoting popular/stakeholder participation in continental/regional institutions
- Popularising the vision of a shared destiny for country, region and continent and linking national interest to mutual development

5. A more effective, efficient and well-informed GCIS

Special attention to:

- Improving application of research in the work of GCIS and government communication as a whole, and continued institutionalisation of project management in GCIS, both in service delivery and in the development of the organisation, through the Enterprise Project Management Initiative which must help ensure continuous alignment of GCIS to the needs

Ongoing attention to:

- Various forms of research to identify public communication needs, impact of government communication among the public and within the media
- Ensuring adoption of same methodologies across government, and improve integration of the research agenda
- Developing a set of core competencies which its communicators must possess
- Better and fuller use by GCIS of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), both in the management of the organisation as well as in communication
- Using all measures, including development plans and clear target setting to enhance the performance of staff and the attainment of excellence
- Greater integration of work by the different components
- Instilling in GCIS the culture of learning from our experiences

Key campaigns for 2004-05

**Theme one: A People's Contract for more efficient, people centred government
(Governance and Administration cluster)**

Focus issues:

- Batho Pele Gateway and Community Development Workers
- MPPCs
- Fighting Corruption in the Public Service

Theme two: A people's contract for Africa's renewal in a better world (International Cluster)

Focus issues:

- NEPAD/African Union
- SADC
- International Marketing Campaign

Theme three: A people's contract for growth and development (Economic Cluster)

Focus issues:

- Learnerships
- Implementation of GDS Agreements
- Expanded Public Works Programme
- Mass campaign on economic opportunities
- Black Economic Empowerment

Theme four: A people's contract for a safer and more secure South Africa (Justice, Crime prevention and Security Cluster)

Focus issues:

- Reduction of crime against women and children
- Release of Crime Statistics
- Implementation of TRC recommendations

- 16 Days of Activism - No violence against women and children
- Review of the Criminal Justice System

Theme five: A people's contract for a caring society (Social Cluster)

Focus issues:

- Social cohesion
- Expanding access to social grants
- Food Security Programme
- Free Basic Services
- Moral Renewal

Theme six: Transversal Campaigns

- Imbizo
- Implementation of HIV and AIDS Comprehensive Programme
- Celebrations of 10-Years of Freedom through national days
- Rural development and Urban Renewal
- Expanded Public Works Programme
- Preparations for 2010 Soccer World Cup

Theme seven: GCIS Projects

- GCIS Budget Vote
- Transformation of the advertising industry
- Post Mid-Year Cabinet Lekgotla communication

APPENDIX B: MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL IMBIZOS

GAUTENG PRESIDENTIAL IMBIZO

Positive: Explicitly praising Imbizo

Neutral: Factual reporting

Negative: explicit criticism of Imbizo

Newspaper	Date	Issue	Number of articles	Positive/Negative
Beeld	18/10/2003	Mbeki hands out 3000 title	1	Positive/more factual reporting

		deeds to residents of Orange Farm		
Sunday Times	20/10/2003	Mbeki visits clinic that uses AIDS drugs. Handed 300 title deeds in Orange Farm. Also helped with registration of children for state social grants	1	Positive/more factual reporting
Saturday Star	19/10/2003	Mbeki discusses labour issues at Pretoria workplace Imbizo	1	Positive/more factual reporting
Weekend Pretoria News	19/10/2003	Mbeki answered questions on the contribution that the WSSD would contribute to job creation	1	Positive/more factual reporting
City Press		Impact of contact that	1	Positive/more factual reporting

	20/10/2003	the president has with the people through Imbizo Mbeki criticise Cosatu strike action		
Daily Sun	18/10/2003	Mbeki to hand title deeds to residents of Orange Farm	1	Positive/more factual reporting
Sunday Independent	20/10/2003	Mbeki hands over title deeds to people in Gauteng and took part in the registration of parents for child support grants	1	Positive/more factual reporting
Sunday World	20/10/2003	Mbeki hands over title to residents in Orange Groove	1	Positive/more factual reporting

NORTH WEST PRESIDENTIAL IMBIZO

Newspaper	Date	Issue	Number of articles	Positive/Negative
Sowetan	29/04/2003	Mbeki visits a village where government assist to rebuilt houses	1	Positive/more factual reporting
		Youth complained that they do not have a bright future as government does not take care of them	1	
	24/04/2003	Imbizo is an ethos of democracy, accountability and transparency		
City Press		Mbeki encourages partnership between government, community and business	1	Positive/more factual reporting
		Speedy delivery on		

		promises promised		
Citizen	14/10/2004	Expanded public works programme/socio-economic activities	1	Positive/more factual reporting
Sunday Times	04/04/2003	People express their views using Setswana Mbeki promised to follow-up on issues which were raised People felt that that this visit is motivated by elections, and promises will not be fulfilled	1	Positive/more factual reporting
The Star	28/04/2003	Imbizo a strategy for election	1	Negative
Pretoria News	29/04/2003	Imbizo seen as election strategy Bikes handed to school children who have transport problem to school Mbeki visited a small clinic Provincial government purchased shoes to	1	Negative

		be distributed to schools		
Sunday World	27/04/2003	Public servants accused by people for being aloof	1	Negative

WESTERN CAPE

Newspaper	Date	Issue	Number of articles	Positive/Negative
Sowetan	01/09/2003	Mbeki criticised in Cape Town for his stance on HIV/AIDS and the relationship with the NNP	1	Negative
Mail and Guardian	05/09/2003	Relationship between NNP questioned and criticised. The relationship seen as electioneering	1	Negative
Business Day	01/09/2003	Mbeki refuses to back away from ANC/NNP relationship	1	Negative
The Citizen	05/09/2003	Relationship between NNP questioned and criticised	1	Negative
Sunday Times	31/08/2003	Problems experienced by farmers and a visit to a land reform programme site	1	Neutral

The Star	01/09/2003	President visited the Dutch Reformed Church in Cape Town (a reconciliatory gesture)	1	Positive
Beeld	04/09/2003	Mbeki visits the Dutch Reformed church	1	Positive
Pretoria News	01/09/2003	Mbeki visits the Dutch Reformed Church	1	Positive
Weekend Pretoria News	30/08/2003	Mbeki refuses to comment on Zuma's alleged corruption	1	Negative
	06/09/2003	Mbeki criticise media for alleging that he was grilled during the	1	Neutral

		Western Cape Imbizo		
Saturday Star	06/09/2003	Media criticised for focusing on the negative, ignoring the positive outcomes	1	Neutral
Hermanus Times	31/08/2003	ANC/NNP relation questioned and criticised	1	Negative
	29/08/2003	Visit to farmers to listen to their concerns and a visit to local schools	1	Positive
Sunday Argus	31/08/2003	Visiting a community health centre and a retail business	1	Positive
Daily Dispatch	01/09/2003	ANC/NNP coalition questioned/Questions were raised around government's stance on HIV/AIDS	1	Negative
Rapport	31/08/2003	Mbeki refused to answer questions about	1	Neutral

		Zuma's alleged corruption		
The Mercury	01/09/2003	The president visited the Dutch Reformed Church	1	Positive
Business Day		The relationship between the ANC and the NNP prior to the elections questioned and criticised	1	Negative
Sunday World	31/08/2003	Mbeki refused to answer questions about Zuma's alleged corruption	1	Neutral
Sunday Tribune	31/08/2003	Mbeki refused to answer questions about Zuma's alleged corruption	1	Neutral
City Press	24/08/2003	Mbeki refused to answer questions about Zuma's alleged corruption	1	Neutral
The Citizen	16/11/2002	Mbeki criticises ANC leaders for not meeting with the people, and doing so only during the election or when they are forced to do so.	1	Positive
Weekend Pretoria News	16/11/2002		1	
Sunday Independent		Mbeki refused to answer questions about	1	Neutral

		Zuma's alleged corruption		
Independent online	29/08/2003	Unveiling of CCTV cameras in Khayelitsha	1	Positive

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Newspaper	Date	Issue	Number of articles	Positive/Negative
Sowetan	24/04/2003	<p>Imbizo is the ethos of democracy, transparency and accountability</p> <p>Issues raised during Imbizo are followed-up if they cannot be dealt with immediately</p> <p>Provides the president with an opportunity to listen to people's views and concerns</p> <p>Imbizo encourages</p>	1	Positive

		people's participation in issues of governance		
Citizen	23/09/2003	Imbizo outlines what government is doing and its achievements	1	Positive
The Star	14/10/2004	Response to an n article which attacked the president. The article defended Imbizo stating that the people recognise government's performance as shown during Imbizo meetings	1	Positive
	28/10/2004	Mbeki attacks civil servants who fail to serve the people	1	Positive
Pretoria News	30/10/2002	Imbizo seen as a positive approach to governance	1	Positive
Business Day	18/09/2003	Critical that Imbizo is meant	1	Negative

	23/07/2003	for elections. Rels. between ANC and NNP criticised Grassroots democracy is the foundation of delivery		Positive but raising concerns that need to be dealt with
City Press	14/09/2004	Chikane. Praised Imbizo as democracy in action.	1	Positive

APENDIX C: IMBIZO TOLL-FREE LINE REGISTER

Location	Province	Issue
Ga-Mphahlele	Limpopo	He was checking whether what the radio adverts are saying is true. He also wanted to know what the Imbizo is about.
Johannesburg	Gauteng	He wanted to know when the Imbizo would be coming to his home village of Msinga.
Brakpan	Gauteng	He wanted to know when the Imbizo would come to his area.
Setshabelo Centre Bloemfontein	FS	He wanted to know what the Imbizo is about and when it will be coming to his area.
Nouport (Northern Cape)	NC	What is the Imbizo?
Empangeni (KZN)	KZN	When is the Imbizo coming to my area?

Location	Province	Issue
Ramobola (Moleji)	Limpopo	<p>What is this “people’s contract”?</p> <p>He also said that they have a water problem in hi area.</p>
Ebony Park (Midrand)	Gauteng	<p>When is the Imbizo coming to Ebony Park?</p> <p>He says he wants to talk to leaders about unemployment.</p>
Orange Farm	Gauteng	<p>How does the Imbizo process work?</p> <p>Will the leaders come back to areas they have visited?</p>
Mmakaunyane (near Pretoria)	NW	<p>What is the Imbizo?</p> <p>He complained that the councillor is not doing anything about their complaints. He refuses to invite the mayor to give the community an opportunity to voice their concerns.</p> <p>He says his community suffers from water shortages. He says they have</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>also requested streetlights for enhanced community safety.</p> <p>He says the Mmakaunyane local council does not have an office where the community can raise their concerns.</p> <p>He has requested that we call the president to come see their problems.</p>
Standeton (Likwa Municipality)	MP	When is the Imbizo coming to my area?
Ejozini Municipality	MP	When is the Imbizo coming to my area?
Hlabisa (near Mtubatuba)	KZN	What do we do when we want leaders to visit our area?

Location	Province	Issue
<p>14 Station Str, De Aar, 7 000.</p>	<p>NC</p>	<p>He complains that the government is guilty of enriching itself one-sidedly, not the President or Ministers, but their "helpers". His complaint is that he has been jobless since 1997, when he was retrenched by Transnet. A number of his former colleagues are now employed by the Municipality of Empangeni, De Aar, among them the Speaker and the Municipal Manager.</p> <p>He has tried several times to get government employment, but was told that he has had his chance and that he must stand back for the younger generation. He is only 55 years old and feels he can still work. He feels he is being discriminated against in comparison to his former colleagues who have been employed again after retrenchment, and that those colleagues are taking the food out of the mouths of the younger people. He also feels that he is being discriminated against because he is a member of the coloured community.</p> <p>He claims he has written several letters to the President, but has never received an answer.</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>He can be reached at the Nehawu office in De Aar, 053-631 2717, or by the above street address.</p>
Mdantsane Zone 13	EC	<p>She would like to know about the <i>Imbizo</i>.</p> <p>She would like to know when the <i>Imbizo</i> will come to Mdantsane.</p> <p>She says things are decided “up there” and the community is not involved in decision making.</p> <p>She complained that there are no report back sessions, and the community ends up relying on the media for information.</p>
Kimberly	NC	When the <i>Imbizo</i> is coming?
Berkville	KZN	When is the <i>Imbizo</i> coming to my area?
Umlazi		She wants to partner government in clean-up campaigns on the beach.

Location	Province	Issue
East London	EC	Is there going to be an <i>Imbizo</i> near my area?
Mzumbe	KZN	When is the <i>Imbizo</i> coming to my area?
Langley	FS	<p>The Mayor (Mr Makhoba) only focuses attention to the area where he comes from.</p> <p>There has never been any interaction with the people of Langley since the <i>Imbizo</i> started.</p> <p>There is a lot of corruption here in Langley and we need a meeting with the Local Government Minister?</p>
Durban	KZN	When is the <i>Imbizo</i> going to be in Durban?
Bradford	FS	When is the <i>Imbizo</i> going to be in the Masilonyana area?
Pampierstad	NW	What is the <i>Imbizo</i> ?

Location	Province	Issue
Balfour	MP	<p>The houses built in 1997 were not properly constructed. They were not divided inside. Most of them are cracking.</p> <p>The builders used 6 bag of cement for the foundation, instead of the required 25.</p> <p>The tar road that was constructed in 1997 in Zone 7 was not completed.</p> <p>I want government to give us statements of how much was spent on these projects and where did the money go.</p> <p>We want a university and a technickon in Balfour.</p>
<p>Zone 2 Thaba Nchu</p> <p>Ward 42</p>	FS	<p>There are no posters about events that happen in my area. They only put the posters in town.</p> <p>I want copies of the faces of</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>government.</p> <p>The Premier will launch the EPWP in Qwaqwa soon. Now it seems all the development is focused in that area.</p> <p>We also want our area to be included in the EPWP.</p>
Meadowlands	Gauteng	We want to build an MPCC
Bloemfontein (Bochabelo)	FS	When is the Imbizo in my area?
King Williams Town	EC	When is the Imbizo coming to my area?
Mkondo (Pietretief)	MP	Is it true that the President is coming to my area?
Hertzogville		<p>I am a welder. I have no money and I hope the Imbizo can help me with things like materials. I want to produce things like door and window frames.</p> <p>I hope to sell them to contractors who build RDP houses</p>

Location	Province	Issue
Mdantsane	EC	<p>When is the Minister of Safety and Security coming to Mdantsane?</p> <p>My group assisting in the Police Reservists in 1998.</p> <p>Most of us are unemployed and we have been promised positions in the SAPS for a long time now.</p> <p>We want to discuss this issue with the Minister.</p>
Matjhabeng (Welkom)	FS	<p>When is the Imbizo coming to Welkom?</p>
Barkley West	MP	<p>I want to start a chicken-farming project. I need government assistance.</p>
Hlalanikahle (Witbank)	MP	<p>I am a qualified security officer working for Coin Security.</p> <p>I want to start a security training college in the Kriel community.</p> <p>I have been trying to secure a loan with Khula for the past six months with no success. I have ten percent of the</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>money I need to start the company.</p> <p>I have wasted a lot of money on unsuccessful application.</p> <p>I want government to help me get the funding to start the college.</p>
Thabo Mofutsanyane	FS	<p>When is the Imbizo coming to my area?</p> <p>Izimbizo usually do not reach the people who are most affected by poverty.</p> <p>I want government to consider even rural villages for future <i>Izimbizo</i> Most places that politicians visit during the <i>Imbizo</i> are already developed.</p> <p>There needs to be more timely publicity around the events happening in our areas.</p>
Rustenburg	NW	<p>What is the Imbizo?</p> <p>I am originally from Litchtenburg.</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>I want to government install flushing toilets in my area.</p> <p>I want government to install streetlights in my area to help reduce crime.</p> <p>The water we use is unclean and I ask government to help solve this problem.</p> <p>The stadium is next to a sewerage plant and the smell comes to the stadium during games.</p>
Soweto (Ndofaya)	Gauteng	Is there going to be an Imbizo in Soweto?
National Department of Health	Gauteng	Can we please have Imbizo branding material?
Petsena Location	FS	<p>I left school at grade ten last year because of poverty. I could not afford to buy uniforms and school fees.</p> <p>My father is deceased, and I now stay with my grandmother and we depend on her old age pension grant.</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		I would like government to sponsor my studies to enable me to become someone in life.
King Williams Town (Chaka)	EC	I made a child grant application for my disabled child in September last year, but I have not been helped up to now.
PE (Zwide)	EC	<p>What do I do when I want a learner ship?</p> <p>I only have matric. I did Maths, Biology and Geography at school.</p>
Bethal (Mpumalanga) Peace Village	MP	<p>I have been staying here at the Peace Village for 12 years (1993). We do not have basic services like water, electricity, and sewerage systems.</p> <p>Government has been promising to deliver these services to us.</p> <p>All neighbouring areas have all these essential services and we do not understand why we are left out.</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		We are tired of being excluded by fellow black people.
Mmamotla (Taung)	NW	Our secondary school only goes up to grade ten (MJ Mothibi Middle School). This results in our children dropping of school after they finish grade ten. We request government to extend the school to grade 12
Ngovuma	KZN	Do we have to invite the president over?
Qomfimbvaba	EC	Is the Imbizo coming to Qomfimbvaba?
Khayelitsha	WC	I want government to give an amount of R130 per month to unemployed people. The reason is that many children mess up their lives by getting involved with older people because of money. Girls

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>end up dying of diseases like Aids because of their wish to get out of poverty.</p>
Cape Town	WC	<p>I am refrigeration and air-conditioning, and domestic appliances technician.</p> <p>I work for a private company, handling government contracts.</p> <p>I want to register a company, and I want government to give me contracts.</p>
Mdantsane	EC	<p>There is a big tree outside my house. We found it here when move into the house in 1966. We have previously written numerous letters requesting the government to remove the tree.</p> <p>The tree is now damaging houses, causing them to crack and damaging the roofs. My house is now leaking from the roof because of the tree.</p> <p>We request government to remove the tree before it destroys our houses completely.</p>

Location	Province	Issue
Dobsonville (Soweto)	Gauteng	<p>I have a problem with departments; Safety and Security and Social Development.</p> <p>My mother was a foster parent (Maud Mabuya) to two other children. Their names are Jean Paul and Nomsa Mabuya.</p> <p>In the year 2002, 07 May, social worker Millicent Khosa from Roodeport came and took the children away illegally.</p> <p>I would like government to help me get the children back.</p> <p>They now live in Doornkop with Monica Ngcobo.</p>
Vaal (Evaton North)	Gauteng	<p>We arrived here in Evaton in 1988. We have been living in shacks for 17 years now. I want to know why</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>government is not building RDP houses for us.</p> <p>Government has built houses for neighbouring areas who settled here later than we did.</p> <p>We want an Imbizo so government can come and tell us why they are not building houses.</p>
<p>Highflats (KZN)</p> <p>Emhlabashane</p>	<p>KZN</p>	<p>Why did we have so few Imbizos in KwaZulu-Natal?</p>
<p>Northingham Road</p> <p>Forty</p>	<p>KZN</p>	<p>My family and me stay on a farm here in Forty. The farmer is trying to evict us.</p>
<p>Sterloos (Sekhukhune)</p>	<p>Limpopo</p>	<p>When is the Imbizo coming to my area?</p>
<p>Sasolburg</p>	<p>FS</p>	<p>When are we going to have an Imbizo in Sasolburg?</p> <p>Municipal councillors should be paid from the central government budget?</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>The reason is councillors give themselves high salaries.</p> <p>The high salaries compromise service delivery.</p> <p>We need sports administrators in all districts.</p> <p>I feel the Umsobomvu Youth Fund is unfair in demanding that all applicants have ten percent of the money that they need to start a business.</p> <p>I want to congratulate government on the retail bond investment launched.</p>
Katlehong	Gauteng	When and where are learnership forms obtainable?
Phalaborwa	Limpopo	What is the Imbizo?
Freedefort (Northern Free State)	FS	There is a squatter settlement here in Freedefort. There is no budget allocated to them. I think government should give them a budget so that they

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>can have municipal services.</p> <p>They have a bucket toilet system and there is no one to collect the excretion - and this poses a health hazard.</p> <p>The electricity cables in the area are not safe. Three children have suffered injury from electrocution.</p> <p>The Orange Road here in Vredefort is not safe for pedestrians. Statistics indicate that 97 people have died on that road.</p>
Nzhelele	Limpopo	What is the Imbizo?
Mandini	KZN	When is the Imbizo coming to Mandini?
Colin	NW	<p>What is Imbizo and when is it coming to my area?</p> <p>The police in my area are corrupt (Thabologang Police Station). They use prisoners to go out and do robberies at night.</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>The courts are not helping because the officers are back at work within a week of a court appearance.</p> <p>We are afraid to go report issues to the police because of the abusive treatment we receive when we go to the station.</p> <p>Our clinic only operates until 12H00 on Thursdays and we don't know where to take our children when they are sick afterwards.</p>
Willowvale - Bikani	EC	<p>What is the Imbizo?</p> <p>There are no basic services like water, electricity, telephones, police stations and clinics.</p> <p>The crime level is very high because the nearest police station is very far.</p> <p>People have to walk distances of up to 20 kilometres to nearby villages to get a mode of transport.</p>

Location	Province	Issue
Masilonyana (Theunissen)	FS	Who is coming to our Imbizo here in Masilonyana?
Clewer Witbank	MP	We were fired from Eland Fontein Coal Mine here in Witbank. And we are no satisfied with the reasons for our dismissal. We request that the Labour Department should intervene.
KaMahlathi Municipality Ward 16	EC	Government has given us land and promised to build us houses last year. But the houses have not been built up until now.
Uitenhage	EC	I made a land claim for my deceased father's land at the Melisizwe Land Claim Office (041 363 0099). I was told that someone else has already made for the land.

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>The money was given to my stepmother's daughter, who is not even my father's child.</p> <p>I did not even get a cent from the money.</p>
<p>Bethal</p> <p>Peace Village</p>	<p>Mpumalanga</p>	<p>We have been staying here for 12 years but we don't receive any basic services.</p> <p>The Municipality told us that government has allocated no budget for our area.</p> <p>Areas that started after ours have all the services.</p> <p>We keep on voting for the ANC government but we don't get any development.</p>
<p>Durban</p>	<p>KZN</p>	<p>Can I get the number to Premier Ndebele's office?</p>
<p>Sekhukhune District</p>	<p>Limpopo</p>	<p>The people in my area suffer a lot and</p>

Location	Province	Issue
<p>Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality</p> <p>Tshehlwaneng</p>		<p>we don't even get government information.</p> <p>We want an Imbizo to come to our area.</p> <p>We don't have water.</p> <p>The Tshehlwaneng Youth Organisation runs a home-based care programme for HIV/Aids patients, but we don't any facilities.</p> <p>Rains have damaged our roads, and no action is taken to fix them. We have requested the municipality to fix them on a number of occasions.</p> <p>Crime in our area is very high. I think programmes to keep the youth busy can reduce it</p> <p>There is corruption in the municipality. In the 2003/2004 financial year, there was four million allocated to water installation –but nothing is happening so far.</p> <p>Another water project, that was supposed to have started on the 12</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		March this year, has not started. The amount allocated for this project was two million and fifty thousand.
Mpumalanga	MP	When is the president coming?
Phutadichaba Qwaqwa	FS	<p>Me and five other young people have a plan to start a car wash that will wash government cars.</p> <p>We want to have a meeting with government to discuss the possibility of a tender.</p>
Ezingolweni (KZN south coast)	KZN	Could you please give me contacts to the ANCYL
Mmamethlake	NW	<p>I have reported a case of stolen cattle on 27 June 2003 at the Mmamethlake Police Station.</p> <p>Case number 17.</p> <p>We have not heard anything of the case since then.</p>

Location	Province	Issue
Standerton	MP	Is there going to be an Imbizo in Standerton?
Moria	Limpopo	We don't have water and electricity.
Delporthoop	NC	<p>In June this year 200 Auxiliary Nursing positions were advertised in the Northern Cape.</p> <p>I have applied, but I have not received any information about what happened to the positions.</p>
Witbank (Zamokuhle)	KZN	I would like the Imbizo come to Zamokuhle to assess the development.
Dobsonville (Soweto)	Gauteng	I have a problem with my legs. The clinics in my area are not able to help deal with my problem. The pills that they prescribe to me only stop the pain for a few hours.
Kgapane	Limpopo	When is the Imbizo in my area?

Location	Province	Issue
Greater Letaba Municipality		
Limpopo	Limpopo	Can I go attend the Mpumalanga Imbizo?
Stellenbosch	WC	Where are the remaining Izimbizo in the Western Cape?
Schoeman's Dal (Nkomazi area)	MP	<p>Government services do not reach our areas. Sometimes the spread of development is politicised.</p> <p>I have started a tourism project and it within the IDP of our local municipality. The Department Environmental Affairs and Tourism said they would prioritise my project. However, I have not heard anything from them since July.</p> <p>I have secured 20 hectares of land and I am concerned that I may lose it because of the delays in funding.</p> <p>Minister Erwin took my proposal and promised to do something about it during the October Imbizo last. I have not heard anything from his office since.</p>

Location	Province	Issue
Gandlanani (Giyani)	Limpopo	I need help obtaining a bursary.
Orkney	NW	What is the Imbizo?
Witbank (Clewer)	MP	I was fired from by Elandsfontein Coal Mine (we worked for Sisonke Mining company. We want the Labour Department to intervene.
Nqutu	KZN	What is the Imbizo?
Braamfischer Ville Johannesburg	Gauteng	I am concerned about projects and programmes that government introduces which at the end do not seem to be meeting what they are there for. I want government to consider the blind for future Izimbizo. This is because the blind feel neglected by the government.
Amsterdam (Kwa-Thandeka)	MP	Where will the President be visiting in Mpumalanga?

Location	Province	Issue
Nqutu	KZN	<p>Why is the Imbizo coming to our part of Nqutu?</p> <p>In our area, a person has to travel 3 kilometres on foot to reach a mode of transport.</p> <p>We could not attend the Nqutu/Roukesdrift Izimbizo because there was no transport arranged.</p> <p>Government should bring Izimbizo to the rural parts that need development.</p>
Amsterdam	MP	When is the President coming to Mpumalang?
Ficksburg	FS	What is the Imbizo about?
KwaZakhela – Port Elizabeth	EC	I request that the scorpions should come and conduct an investigation in KwaZakhele. They should come

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>investigate the New Brighton police.</p> <p>The police are extremely anti-government in conducting their affairs.</p>
Empangeni – Entambanana	KZN	We request an Imbizo visit in our village.
Ngwelezane	KZN	<p>When is the Imbizo coming to Ngwelezane?</p> <p>I am partly disabled.</p> <p>I want to start an agricultural project. But Umsobomvu says they ten percent – which I do not have.</p> <p>Most of the people in my area live below the poverty line.</p>
<p>Emalahleni</p> <p>Ward 9</p>	MP	We request an Imbizo here at Emalahleni.

Location	Province	Issue
Jozi FM	Gauteng	I want to know more about the Imbizo.
Mokgopong (Naboomspruit)	Gauteng	There is a lot of racism in my area and we request an Imbizo to come resolve this.
George	WC	<p>We want Minister Mdladlana to come to our area.</p> <p>Whites and coloureds practice discriminatory employment practices. Black people in my area are excluded, and those who are employed are underpaid.</p>
Tladi (Soweto)	Gauteng	I request that Imbizos should come to Soweto township.
Thabanchu	FS	There is a shebeen house here in Selosecha (Mobane Street). There is a lot of noise and violence every night, and our children and we cannot study or sleep.

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>We have written letters to the Bloemfontein Police Area Commissioner President, the Tourism Minister and the Premier complaining about the house. However, nothing has been done about the house.</p> <p>We want government to close down this tavern.</p> <p>The name of the tavern is Jazz Pub.</p>
(Harrismith) Ndabazwe	FS	<p>My associates and me have a plan to open an agriculture related business here in Harrismith.</p> <p>We have a business plan in place.</p> <p>I want to know if government cannot assist me with funding.</p>
Taung)	NW	<p>When Premier Molewa was here, not the whole community was invited. She only attended a Heritage day function.</p> <p>We want to know when the Imbizo is</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		going to come to our area.
Rustenburg	NW	<p>I have worked for a construction company for ten years.</p> <p>I was fired in December last year. The owner of the company only gave me R6594. When I enquired about the little amount I received, the owner told me to go get my money from Mandela and Thabo Mbeki.</p> <p>The name of the company is Structural Applications, based here in Rustenburg.</p> <p>The directors of the company are Davie Howard and Greg Howard.</p> <p>I want the Labour Department to assist us. The owner has told that the CCMA here in Rustenburg would not be of any use to us since he has was of getting to them.</p>
Warbeurton	MP	We have no water and electricity in my

Location	Province	Issue
		area.
Maqumu	KZN	I need counselling
Roovaal – Taung	NW	<p>What is the Imbizo?</p> <p>We do not have transport in my area. We have no buses or taxis.</p> <p>It is a thirty-minute walk to the highway where we get transport. We have to walk through a dense veld, and women are raped in the veld.</p> <p>Our children have no places where they can play.</p>
Witbank	MP	<p>The meter-reading tenders have been given to the same company since 1994. I think there is corruption going on, and I want government to investigate the tender procedures.</p> <p>A company (Mesuli Cleaning Services) was hired by the local council last to do cleaning day. However, they were</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>paid double the amount that was that was due to them.</p> <p>I am also worried about the delays in response by the police when there are called to crime scenes. They sometimes take up to two weeks to respond to tip-offs from members of the public, particularly with regard to drug-related crimes.</p>
<p>Matsulu – Mbombela Municipality</p>	<p>MP</p>	<p>Our councillors told us that in 1999 the President signed an agreement with a company for a pilot project to provide water and sanitation services in the Mbombela Municipality – Matsula, Nelspruit and Kanyamazane.</p> <p>My concern is that from 1999 to date, even though the President signed the agreement, there are still people in the Mbombela Municipality who are still struggling to access clean water and sanitation.</p> <p>There is a gate to the Kruger National Park in Matsulu. This gate has the potential to benefit the community from tourist who are on their way to the</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>Kruger Park. However, since there is only one entrance to Matsulu, the tourists cannot use this gate. I believe that the creation of a second entrance would contribute towards job creation and the elimination of poverty.</p> <p>Tourists will be able to come into Matsulu and buy things from the community on their way to the Kruger Park.</p> <p>For the sake of convenience we request that there be an integration of the service billing system.</p>
Hlajakhe – Lukwatini	Mpumalanga	We do not have water, electricity and housing in my area.
<p>Louis Tritchardt</p> <p>Makhado</p>	Limpopo	<p>When is the Imbizo coming to Makhado?</p> <p>There are people who have illegally occupied RDP houses that were meant for others.</p> <p>We have reported the matter to the local council but they have not done</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		anything about it.
Amandasoek – Burgerfort District	MP	<p>I hear that the President is coming to my area on the Imbizo.</p> <p>What is the Imbizo?</p>
Tweespruit - near Thabanchu	FS	<p>I want to know why Thabo Mbeki only goes to big developed areas while we in the small rural areas are suffering.</p> <p>Our local authorities are always squabbling and there is no development. There are always claims that someone misappropriated funds that were meant for our development.</p>
<p>Boeshoek Farm Number 1312</p> <p>This is the land that I want returned to my people.</p>	KZN	<p>We have voted twice already but our land has not yet been brought back to us.</p> <p>I have written to former Premier Lionel Mtshali and Land Affairs Minister Thoko Didiza. The Minister promised to return to Kaizer what belongs to Kaizer, but nothing has happened up to now.</p>

Location	Province	Issue
Port Elizabeth	EC	<p>Eight families, including my own, live on Otinaqua Place Street. We are renting the houses from Transnet and they want to evict us. They refuse to sell the houses to us, but they have sold 68 houses to other people. They want to sell our houses to a developer who used work for Transnet.</p> <p>We want government to help us retain these houses that we have lived in for a long time.</p>
Vredefort	FS	<p>I want to start a construction company. I want to know how I can help government create jobs.</p>
Mamelodi	Gauteng	<p>Information on how to start my own business. I would like to start a nursery and be involved in tourism projects.</p> <p>I have already registered my own CC.</p>

Location	Province	Issue
Khayelitsha	WC	What is the Imbizo?
Nhlazakhe	MP	Please tell the President to come to Nhlazake. We want to see him.
Malokela	Limpopo	<p>I am reading the government Imbizo poster. I see they promise to reduce unemployment and poverty by half in the next ten years. I want to know whether that is going to really happen.</p> <p>The government only build RDP houses for a few people in my area. I want to know why they are not doing for everyone.</p> <p>We do not have water and electricity in my area. We fetch water from a river and it is very unsafe.</p>
Tubatse	NW	Will government organise transport to

Location	Province	Issue
		the President's Imbizo?
Malokela	NW	<p>The roads in my area have always been in a terrible state.</p> <p>We do not have water and electricity. We fetch water in a river that is 20kilometres away.</p>
Heilbron	FS	<p>There were no Izimbizo in Northern Free State. They only held around Qwaqwa.</p> <p>We wish government future Izimbizo to Heilbron.</p>
Dobsonville	Gauteng	<p>Is this Imbizo toll-free number permanent?</p> <p>I ask this question because the councillors who should help us are not useful.</p>
Dennilton	MP	<p>The crime rate is very high in my area. I want to know what can be done to improve this situation.</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>I think government should scrap police volunteers. Most of these people join the volunteers to gain information on how the police operate, and then return to their criminal ways. This is mainly because these people are not paid.</p> <p>I request that Dennilton be considered when more police officers are hired, as written in the government programme of action.</p> <p>I request that we have satellite police stations in all sections of Dennilton. This is because the one police station that we have cannot cope with the number of crimes.</p>
Zakheni (Ladysmith)	KZN	<p>I would like our leaders to come visit my area. We have a lot of suggestions that could with our development.</p> <p>We have a non-profit organisation (Upoa), and we plant to assist government in creating jobs in our community.</p>

Location	Province	Issue
Theunissen	FS	I want to know about the government Extended Public Works Programme.
Worcester	WC	<p>I have gone up to N2 in electrical engineering. I had to stop schooling because of financial problems. I have applied to the Worcester Municipality for a learnership, but they say their programme is only going to start next year.</p> <p>My problem is that I am currently unemployed. I also fear that I will forget the little that I know about my field.</p> <p>I request government to please expedite the learnerships and give me an opportunity.</p> <p>Coloured and white people who applied later than me have already been placed.</p>
Alexandria	EC	When is the Imbizo coming to my area?

Location	Province	Issue
Bushbuckridge	Limpopo	When is the Imbizo coming to my area?
Qwaqwa	FS	I want to know about the EPWP?
Comfimbvaba	EC	<p>I am from a village called Hoyita, about 50 kilometres from Comfimbvaba.</p> <p>We have no water and electricity in my section –</p> <p>Ethafini. We still fetch water from a river, at the risk of catching illness like cholera.</p> <p>But government has installed these services in a neighbouring section called Kwantshintshi more than a year ago.</p>
Atlantis	NC	<p>He is blind and complains about his disability grant that was stopped in August because apparently his condition must be revised and this could take up to six months. He is totally reliable on this grant for survival</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>so this means that he is not receiving any money at the moment. He says he has been blind for 30 years, why do they want to revise his condition, He is never going to see again. Apparently this is a overall problem in Atlantis all the disabled people's grants have been stopped.</p>
Azaadville (Krugersdorp)	Gauteng	<p>I work at the Azaadville Recreation Centre. I think the place is not fit for people to exercise in.</p> <p>I think that the Mogale City Council should do something to improve the situation.</p>
Johannesburg	Gauteng	<p>My parents are deceased and I could not afford to go back to school this year. I would like government to help get me back to school next year.</p>
Kroonstad	FS	<p>What is the Imbizo?</p>
Kwambonambi	KZN	<p>Complaining about the shortage of water and electricity in his area.</p>

Location	Province	Issue
Mdantsane	EC	He was complaining about the road in Mdantsane.
Mdudundube area	KZN	He wants the Ministers or President to come to his area.
Mokgopong – Naboomspruit (LP)	Limpopo	<p>We request that the Imbizo comes to Naboomspruit.</p> <p>Tenders are only given to white people in my area.</p> <p>There is no consultation between the councillors and the community. There is also a lot of infighting in the council.</p> <p>Municipal officers do not pay for water, but they close water supply to black people, and sell off their properties for failing to pay.</p> <p>There are four housing projects in my area. They started in 1995, 1997 1998 and 1999, but none them have been completed.</p> <p>We have been told that some of the housing money has been</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		misappropriated.
Mpumalanga	MP	He wanted to know where Imbizo is going to be?
Nelspruit	MP	I think we need to upgrade our border controls. This will minimise cross-border crimes like drug trafficking.
Piet Retief	MP	He wanted to know when is the President coming to Mpumalanga?
Witbank	MP	The Elandsfontein Coal Mine handles us badly and fires people at will.
Mdantsane	EC	His father has a Social Development problem and he wanted the DSD number in the province.
East London	EC	What is the Imbizo and when is it coming to my place?

Location	Province	Issue
Whittlesa (Near Queenstown)\ Lukhanji Municipality	EC	There has never an Imbizo near his area. And the local authorities have never held a public gathering with the people.
Port Elizabeth	EC	Are there going to be Imbizo events in my area?
Port Shepston	EC	I had the ad on the radio and I want to know what the Imbizo is about.
Port Elizabeth	EC	What is the Imbizo?
Bizana Mangweni Village	EC	When is government going to reach out to rural communities? There are no government services in my area. We do not have any water and electricity. We do not have a municipal office where we can table our complaints. We do not even have a community hall.
Queenstown	EC	When is the Imbizo coming to Queenstown?

Location	Province	Issue
Cradock	EC	<p>When is the Imbizo coming to my area?</p> <p>We still use the bucket toilet system here in Cradock. We are tired of the flies and horrible smell coming from the buckets.</p> <p>Whenever you to our local clinic, for whatever illness, they give you panados. There are no medicines in our clinic.</p>
Qwaqwa	FS	What is the Imbizo?
Qwaqwa	FS	What is the Imbizo?
Makwathu	FS	Is there going to be transport to the Imbizo events?
Bethlehem	FS	<p>What is the Imbizo?</p> <p>Where the Imbizo going to be?</p>
Botshabelo	FS	He wanted to know when is Imbizo coming to his area?

Location	Province	Issue
Dobsonville (Soweto)	Gauteng	She wanted to know when the Imbizo is coming to her area.
Emfuleni (Van der bijl Park)	Gauteng	What is the Imbizo?
Diepkloof	Gauteng	What is the Imbizo?
Greenvillage (Dobsonville)	Gauteng	Where is the imbizo going to be?
Crosby (Johannesburg)	Gauteng	<p>He complains that he does not have any access to government.</p> <p>When is the Imbizo coming to my area?</p>
Pretoria (Mabopane)	Gauteng	Do we pay to participate in the Imbizo?
Thembisa	Gauteng	<p>Women have more rights than men and government does not consider this.</p> <p>For example, you catch your wife in bed with another man. When you got to the courts, they give the house to</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>her – regardless of who is wrong.</p> <p>You, as a man go, on paying for the wife and her lover to continue living in the house.</p> <p>My request is that government should reduce some of the women rights, so that are equal to men.</p> <p>I have realised that these excessive rights have changed the attitudes of women towards their husbands.</p>
Sebokeng Crime Prevention Youth Desk.	Gauteng	When is the Imbizo coming to Sebokeng?
Vaal Triangle	Gauteng	When is the Imbizo in the Vaal?
Ntuzuma	KZN	She wanted to know when the Imbizo would be coming to her area.
Zondi (Mtubatuba)	KZN	What is the imbizo?
Mondlo (KZN)	KZN	When is the Imbizo coming to her area?
Ehluhlwe (KZN)	KZN	What is the Imbizo?

Location	Province	Issue
Piet Retief (KZN)	KZN	What is the Imbizo?
Mondlo (KwaZulu)	KZN	What is the Imbizo about?
Ethekwini	KZN	Is there going to be an Imbizo event in my area?
Bekville	KZN	When is the Imbizo coming to our area?
KwaMaphumulo	KZN	<p>When is the Imbizo coming to my area?</p> <p>Who is allowed to speak during the Imbizo?</p> <p>Will the leader(s) listen to everyone at the Imbizo – given the large numbers of people who attend these events?</p>
Mandini	KZN	When is the Imbizo coming to my area?
Newcastle	KZN	Is there an Imbizo event in my area?
Empangeni	KZN	<p>What is the Imbizo?</p> <p>When is the Imbizo coming to my</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>area?</p> <p>Does government have ways of helping students from disadvantaged backgrounds?</p>
Nqutu	KZN	When is the Imbizo in my area?
Empangeni	KZN	I heard an Imbizo ad on the radio; what is this Imbizo about?
Ulundi	KZN	What is the Imbizo?
Pinetown	KZN	When are we going to get an opportunity to have our own imbizo in Pinetown?
Swayimana (Pietermaritzburg)	KZN	Could you please ask people from the Health Department to come visit us?
Maritzburg (Ashdown)	KZN	There has never been an Imbizo in the Maritzburg area.
KwaNongoma	KZN	I want people from provincial and national government to come visit

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>Nongoma. I want Mr Meshack Radebe, who chairs the Portfolio Committee on Public Works.</p> <p>Our national leaders should stop to only visit people in urban areas. We in rural areas need them to come to us as we are the neediest.</p> <p>We want a community hall.</p> <p>Our school are too far. The one that is there goes up only to grade Seven. We need more schools.</p>
Newcastle	KZN	What is the imbizo?
Palkoane (Halley Farm)	KZN	<p>What is the Imbizo?</p> <p>The farmer wants to evict our family and offer too little compensation. We will not be able to build a proper house.</p> <p>I want government to come talk to the farmer and ask him to build us a proper house.</p>
Umhlaba uya lingana (Mangozi)	KZN	<p>When is the Imbizo coming to our area?</p> <p>We voted for the President and we</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		want to him.
Malizayo	KZN	<p>I had to travel 20kilometres on foot to come and make this call.</p> <p>We need government to come and hold an Imbizo with us to discuss our problems.</p> <p>We have no development at all in our area.</p> <p>We have no tap water. We fetch our water from the river and this water results in a lot of illnesses.</p> <p>We have no councillors or indunas in our area.</p> <p>We are hungry and we have no food.</p> <p>We cannot afford to pay school fees and uniforms for our children, as we have no money.</p> <p>We cannot afford the cost of visiting private doctors and there is no clinic in the village.</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>While we have land, we have no tools or seeds to practice farming.</p> <p>People are always dying in my area. We cannot afford to keep the dead in mortuaries, so we bury them after only one day. This does not give us enough time inform distant relatives. We are tired of burying our people like dogs and we request government help.</p> <p>We are tired of talking to politicians we want them to come. Because talking does not solve any problems.</p>
Washbank (near Dundee)	KZN	He wanted to know when the Imbizo would be coming to his area.
Ehluhlwe	KZN	What is the Imbizo? Where is going to be near my area.
Nkuzana	Limpopo	<p>What is the Imbizo?</p> <p>He also said there is a child who is entitled to receive the Child Support Grant in his family, but he doesn't</p>

Location	Province	Issue
		<p>know where to go.</p> <p>I referred him to the DSD call centre – 0800 60 1011</p>
Sekhukhune	Limpopo	<p>When is the Imbizo coming to Sekhukhune land?</p>
Phalaborwa	Limpopo	<p>Is it possible for me to speak to Minister Zola Skweyiya?</p> <p>There is a lot of corruption in the Child Support Grant payment process.</p> <p>Monies are paid to deceased people.</p> <p>Parents misuse the money by spending it on alcohol.</p>
Tshianda –Venda	Limpopo	<p>Government should come and tell us how we can find jobs.</p>
<p>Greater Tubatse Municipality</p> <p>Crossborder municipality between Mpumalanga and Limpopo</p>	MP	<p>He asks us to assist him organise an Imbizo for his community.</p>

Location	Province	Issue
Tweefontein	MP	Where is the Imbizo going to be?
Mkhuhlu	MP	Is there going to be an Imbizo near my area?
Piet Retief	MP	Is there going to be an Imbizo in my area?
Daveyton	MP	When will the Imbizo be in my area? How to participate in IDPs?
Highlands Municipality (Sunberry farm)	MP	Government does not pay any attention to rural farm villages.
White River	MP	What is the Imbizo?
Springbok	NC	He is disabled and he survives through his disability grant. He has a patent that he would like to register, but he does not know what the procedures are. He also does not have money to register the patent.

Location	Province	Issue
Namaqua Land	NC	I am disabled, but I aspire to join the paralympic swimmers.
Groot Mariko (Near Zeerust)	NW	<p>The toilets in our RDP houses have leakages and constantly flood our houses. This happens at about 20 houses.</p> <p>The sewerage system is broken and this results in a terrible stink. The smell is so bad you can't even eat. The situation is a health hazard.</p> <p>The mayor and councillors do not consult with the people.</p> <p>We no longer want Mayor Moloantwa.</p> <p>We want the Premier and DPLG Minister to come talk to them about the problems.</p>
Atamelang Location	NW	I have a government action plan in my hand and I see government is

Location	Province	Issue
Kgama Nonyane		promising to do a number of things. I request that these developments should reach my area.
Hartiesriver (Cape Town, near Langa)	WC	Chris is a person with disability. He complained that the local councillors are not supportive of job-creation ventures that he initiates in his area.
Wynberg (Cape Town)	WC	<p>Davie is blind and the only way he can partake in the Imbizo is through the telephone.</p> <p>He wanted to know whether there would be radio phone-in programmes in Cape Town during this year's Imbizo.</p>
Cape Town (Mitchell's Plain)	WC	Where is the Imbizo going to be near my area?

**APPENDIX D: IMBIZO BROCHURE (Please turn over for a copy of the
brochure)**

APPENDIX E: GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR FIELD RESEARCH

(Please note that these questions served as a guideline when collecting data and making observations during field research)

1. What are government's expectations from Imbizo?
2. How is Imbizo project managed?
3. To what extent are the local people consulted in the planning, implementation and evaluation of Imbizo?
4. What are the steps followed in the planning of Imbizo?
5. How is the awareness of Imbizo created in the community?
6. To what extent do people participate during an Imbizo meeting?
7. Are there mechanisms in place to ensure that the views expressed by the people are representative of all the people in the community?
8. Is there a follow-up mechanism to make sure that issues identified during Imbizo meetings are implemented?
9. What would you say are Imbizos achievements to date?
10. What are the challenges that Imbizo faces today?
11. Would you say that Imbizo is participatory?