

**THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO**

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**The Role of Rural Tourism in Addressing Gender Issues and Livelihoods through  
CSR: The Case of Malealea Development Trust, Lesotho**

**BY**

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare this work contains no copied section in whole or in part from any other source unless clearly identified in quotation marks and with detailed, complete and accurate referencing.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>BEE</b>	Black Economic Empowerment
<b>CSR:</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>GOL:</b>	Government of Lesotho
<b>LEC:</b>	Lesotho Electricity Company
<b>MDT:</b>	Malealea Development Trust
<b>NEAP:</b>	National Environmental Action Plan
<b>SLA</b>	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
<b>SME</b>	Small and Micro Enterprises
<b>WASCO:</b>	Water and Sewage Company
<b>VNR</b>	Voluntary National Review
<b>NGOs</b>	Non- Governmental Organisations



## **ABSTRACT**

Poverty remains an issue of concern in the African continent and the prevailing situation of COVID 19 Pandemic seems to have exacerbated it. This exploratory qualitative study investigated how rural tourist facilities can enhance the livelihoods of the rural communities considering that the rural communities constitute a higher number of poverty and gender inequalities in the world. The present study used qualitative approaches to investigate the problem at hand. It employed qualitative case study and using phenomenological research design, the study presented the findings using thematic analysis. The themes generated in this study suggest that Malealea Lodge in collaboration with Malealea Development Trust improved the livelihoods of the beneficiaries by creating employment opportunities, income-generating activities and empowering different categories of the beneficiaries. The findings revealed that CSR activities at Malealea have not improved gender relations though at individual and group levels, gender issues were addressed. The findings further revealed that the CSR initiatives were successful and there were several factors responsible for the success. Finally, the findings revealed that the advent of COVID 19 has introduced new challenges and opportunities.

# **Chapter 1: Introduction and background of the study**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The concept of CSR has been practised for over half a century now since the 1950s when the modern approaches to CSR were adopted in both the developed and developing world. Literature has shown that many types of businesses have engaged in CSR for various reasons. However, it has been clear that in Lesotho, the tourism sector has not been explored concerning its contribution to community livelihoods. This study aims to assess the contribution of one eco-tourism facility, Malealea Lodge's MDT contribution to rural communities with a special focus on gender issues. The chapter following this introduction presents the background to the study. It focuses on a brief introduction to the concepts to be discussed in the later chapters, the statement of the problem, research questions and their related objectives and provides a statement on the significance of this study concerning policy and contribution to current literature.

## **1.2 Background**

According to the World Business Council (1999), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a commitment of a business to contribute to sustainable economic development working with employees, their families, the local community and the society at large to improve their quality of life. Khoury (1999) accounts that CRS is the overall relationship of the corporation with all of its stakeholders including customers, employees, communities, investors, government, suppliers as well as its competitors. Khoury (1999) further indicates that it incorporates elements of social responsibilities including investment in community outreach, employee relations, creation and maintenance of employment, environmental stewardship and financial performance. Carroll (2008) indicates that CSR began in Great Britain during the industrial revolution and has since trickled down to other countries of the world over the years. CSR refers to the voluntary involvement, or investment, of companies in social projects that help advance the society or the community in which they operate in areas such as health care, housing, education, safety, and the environment (Business in South Africa 2021).

Mullerat (2010) avers that the interest in CSR today is intensified by the society's increased sensitivity and awareness of environmental and ethical issues, which in some countries has resulted in governments' regulations pertaining to the environment and social issues, which has led to the formulation of laws and policies that hold the firms and businesses responsible of issues like the destruction of the environment, unethical treatment of workers, and faulty production leading to customers' inconvenience or endangerment. For example, Mullerat (2010) indicates that the European Parliament voted for the legislation to require annual public reports from companies to disclose their social and environmental performances. Similarly, the South African policy documents; King I and King II Report indicate the need for corporations to recognize all its stakeholders and they comprise the guidelines for best practices in corporate governance paying particular attention to social, environmental and economic concerns (Business in South Africa 2021).

Likewise, the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) act of South Africa obliges South African-based companies to consider all stakeholders when performing their internal and external operations to get rid of social and economic inequalities inherited from the Apartheid era and to help previously discriminated groups to actively participate in the country's economy and failure to comply results in businesses obtaining negative ratings, therefore complicating their ability to operate in the country (Business in South Africa 2021). Masum (2020); Business in South Africa (2021) clarify that Initially, CSR was practised mainly by Multinational Corporations (MNCs) but local companies and small-scale businesses including rural tourists facilities have also begun to incorporate it in the daily running of their businesses because incorporating CSR results in efficiency gains.

Rural tourism is a tourism type located in rural areas (Lane 2009). Aref and Sarjit (2009) see rural tourism as a tourism product that gives to visitors a personalized contact, a taste of the physical and human environment of the countryside and as far as possible, allow them to participate in the activities, traditions and lifestyles of local people. Lane (2009) suggests that rural tourism facilities should be situated in the countryside, be based on rural tourism's features, have buildings and settlements on a small scale, be connected with local people and their families, be based on villages and small towns and it should also represent complex economic, environmental and historical patterns.

Due to its complexity, rural tourism is often confused with eco-tourism (sometimes called nature-based tourism), farm tourism, agro-tourism, adventure tourism, equestrian tourism, food and wine tourism while in actual fact rural tourism encompasses all these categories (Lane, 2009). Given its interconnectedness with the local communities, rural tourism has an impact on the communities and the environment, which warrants that it takes care of the social, economic and environment in which it operates through CSR.

Yiu et al (2015) indicate that the tourism sector in Lesotho has contributed USD152.3 million, almost 7% of the country's economy in 2012 to socio-economic development and was projected to grow by 4.4% in value during 2013 – 2022. Yiu et al (2015) further indicate that the tourism sector has been contributing significantly in creating employment opportunities, for example, it has created about 34,000 local employment opportunities which accounts for 6% of the total workforce in the country. The Government of Lesotho and other international institutions working in Lesotho have identified this sector as the one which can contribute towards economic development (National Tourism Master Plan 2019). Since rural tourism operates in the countryside it normally affects gender relations within rural communities because tourism processes are gendered in construction, presentation and consumption (Kinnaird, Kothari & Hall, 1994) and because of gender inequality which tourism in some cases reinforces (Cole, 2018).

Gender refers to socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men, including expectations held about characteristics, as well as behaviours of both men and women and the roles that men and women learn to fill from childhood onward (Biasutti, 2010). According to Momsen (2010), gender can be explained as the socially acquired notions of masculinity and femininity by which women and men are identified; however, these socially constructed roles and responsibilities seem to benefit men more than women. Momsen (2010) postulates that the development process affects women and men in different ways hence exacerbated effects of gender discrimination. For example, Momsen (2010) accounts that a majority of the better-paying jobs involving new technologies are operated by men but low-paid and low skilled jobs created in factories producing goods for export are acquired by young women. Biasutti (2010) states that modernization of agriculture has also altered the division of labour between men and women, increasing women's dependent status and workload.

Biasutti (2010) attests that the inequality among women and men can be the result of women's lack of access and control over resources such as land and are generally excluded from access to improved agricultural methods. Biasutti (2010) and Hadi (2017) indicates that career wise, males' mobility is flexible than that of females, both between places and between jobs, and in the process more women are left alone at home to support children and take care of the household, rendering women a double or even triple burden of work as they cope with housework, childcare and subsistence food production, in addition to expanding involvement in paid employment. These imbalances between men and women have been addressed both locally and internationally, culminating in gender mainstreaming which institutionalised equality by adopting gender-sensitive practices and norms (Daly, 2005). Similarly, Lesotho has tried all means to improve gender relations through the enactment of legal frameworks and ratifying international conventions on gender mainstreaming (Kali, 2015). Studies have been conducted on gender and different aspects of development in Lesotho. However, little or no attention has been paid to the role rural tourism plays in enhancing rural livelihoods and gender relations through CSR. More specifically, gender relations within tourism have not been explored in academic studies in Lesotho and internationally few studies have ventured into this terrain.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Despite all the efforts that the Government of Lesotho (GoL) has made to improve gender relations and despite the vibrant and promising rural tourism in Lesotho, the role of rural tourism in enhancing rural livelihood through CSR has not been explored, especially focusing on the gender dimension of rural tourism hence there is a dearth of knowledge about the interface between gender, rural tourism, CSR and rural livelihoods. This void in knowledge is created by limited literature on rural tourism and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Lesotho. This is because few studies on tourism and CSR do not address these issues. In addition, there are no studies that have explored the role of CSR related to tourism in addressing gender inequalities despite the commitment of the Government of Lesotho (GoL) to advocate for gender mainstreaming at all levels.

Malealea lodge as a rural tourist facility has been operating in Lesotho for a long time and it has been involved in corporate social responsibility activities, by establishing Malealea Development Trust (MDT). MDT has implemented various projects in the area

but the local community is still struggling to enhance its livelihoods. Therefore, using the Sustainable Livelihood Approach and Stakeholder theory, the impact of Malealea Lodge on rural livelihoods will be assessed. The Malealea Development Trust (MDT), an entity established by Malealea lodge to implement its CSR activities, will be used to provide answers to the research questions presented in this study.

#### **1.4 Aim of the study**

This exploratory qualitative study aims to assess the contribution of Malealea Lodge as a tourist facility in improving rural livelihoods through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) with a particular focus on its impact on gender relations.

#### **1.5 Research questions**

##### **1.5.1 Main Research question**

- How does Malealea Lodge enhance rural livelihoods for its beneficiaries through CSR?

##### **1.5.2 Subsidiary research questions**

- What has been the socio-economic impact of Malealea Lodge's CSR initiatives on beneficiaries?
- How has Malealea lodge's CSR affected gender relations?
- What factors make the CSR projects successful in improving the lives of men and women at Malealea?

##### **1.5.3 Research Objectives**

- To assess the impact of the CSR projects on the socio-economic lives of the beneficiaries.
- To evaluate the impact of the CSR projects on gender relations, that is, to establish whether the projects have empowered both men and women.
- Assess factors that make CSR projects initiated through MDT successful in improving the lives of men and women at Matelile.

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study is important because it is going to explore the role rural tourism plays in rural development. It is going to showcase the potential of rural tourism facilities in improving

the livelihoods of the local community and beneficiaries of CSR initiatives. This study is also important because it may help different ministries in Lesotho such as the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation as well as the Ministry of Trade and Industry in policy formulation regarding roles that rural tourism facilities can assume for a harmonious relationship with the local rural communities in the quest to achieve rural development. Given the limited studies in the area of rural tourism, gender and CSR in Lesotho, this study hopes to contribute significantly to the stock of literature in these areas.

### **1.7 Scope of the study**

The study focuses on the role played by rural tourist facilities to ensure poverty reduction and enhanced gender relations in the rural areas. This study was based on Malealea lodge as a tourist facility operating in rural villages of Lesotho. The interviews and focus group discussions were held with the beneficiaries of the CSR initiatives of the lodge implemented through (MDT). The study did not focus on all members of the community but on the direct beneficiaries of the different projects.

### **1.9 Organisation of the study**

The study is arranged in 8 chapters as demonstrated below.

#### **Chapter 1**

This is the first section where the study is introduced, it consists of the background, statement of the problem, the aim of the study, the research questions, the objectives, significance, scope and lastly the theoretical framework that the study finds its bases on.

#### **Chapter 2**

This chapter addresses the key concepts by giving their definitions regarding the perceptions of different scholars. The chapter consists of the concept of poverty and rural poverty, its state in Sub-Saharan Africa and in Lesotho, the causes of poverty and the mitigation measures that different scholars suggest for its eradication in both Sub-Saharan Africa and Lesotho.

#### **Chapter 3**

This chapter addresses CSR as a concept. It indicates its definitions according to different scholars and deals with its background as well as its proponents and opponents, this chapter also summarises the issues that contribute to the success of CSR initiatives. The state of CSR in both developing countries and Lesotho as well as the laws that govern CSR in Lesotho are also dealt with in this chapter.

#### **Chapter 4**

This chapter deals with CSR and Rural Tourism, providing definitions of both CSR and rural tourism; it addresses how CSR initiatives that are incorporated by rural tourist facilities affect the livelihoods of the poor rural areas.

#### **Chapter 5**

This chapter provides definitions and differentiates Sex, gender and gender relations. The chapter also addresses how CSR initiatives of rural tourist facilities may affect gender relations among males and females. As well as how gender affects CSR initiatives.

#### **Chapter 6**

This chapter presents the two frameworks (Sustainable livelihoods and Stakeholder approach) that the study will draw its bases on, and provides the justification thereof.

#### **Chapter 7**

This chapter based on methodology. It addresses the data collection process, research design and data analysis tools and methods. It also gives a summary of MDT as a study area.

#### **Chapter 8**

The chapter is on the presentation and analysis of the findings thematically.

#### **Chapter 9**

The chapter summarises the key findings and concludes the study. It gives recommendations and suggestions for further research based on these findings.



## **1.10 Chapter summary**

This chapter serves as an introduction of the entire research. It has given a definition and background of the key concepts, the statement of the problem as well as the aim and the objectives the study seeks to accomplish, this will be done by incorporating the three main questions as well as their subsidiary questions. This chapter also dealt with the scope and how the study is organised.

## **Chapter 2: Poverty and rural livelihoods in Sub-Saharan Africa and Lesotho**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Poverty has been a precarious issue not only in Lesotho but in Africa in its entirety. This chapter addresses the different definitions of poverty by different scholars and the possible causes of poverty in Lesotho and Sub Saharan Africa. It also deals with the issue of poverty and the profile of poverty in both Lesotho and Sub- Saharan Africa particularly the poverty situation in the rural areas and has established that poverty in Africa is more prevalent in rural areas than in any region. This chapter also addresses the mitigation strategies Lesotho incorporated to combat poverty and the state of poverty in Lesotho thereafter.

### **2.2 Rural poverty and strategies to reduce poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Different scholars define poverty differently and others concentrate specifically on the definitions of rural poverty (UN, 2001; Hunt 2004), May and Roberts (2005); Adeyemi et al (2009). They argue that poverty is a condition where humans are deprived of resources, capabilities, choices, security and power essential for the enjoyment of a sufficient standard of living. Adeyemi (2009) defines it as lack of material well-being, insecurity, social isolation, and psychological distress, lack of freedom of choice, unpredictability and lack of means to live with dignity. These scholars further indicate that poverty can be characterised by poor education, discrimination, hunger and social exclusion. Some scholars provide and define different types of poverty, such as absolute and relative poverty of which absolute is that which could be applied at all times in all societies and relates to the physical existence of a person (Lundahl et al 2020). Relative poverty is that which relates to the living standard of the poor to the standard that prevails elsewhere in the society in which they live (Kankwanda et al 2000; Lundahl et al 2020). This type of poverty results in members of the community feeling that they do not enjoy the type of life that is enjoyed by other members of the same community (Cosgrove and Curtis 2018).

According to Burchinal and Siff (1964); Cosgrove and Curtis (2018) Rural poverty refers to poverty in rural areas that includes factors of rural society, rural economy, and political systems that contribute to the poverty prevalent in these areas. Rural poverty is often

discussed in relation to the inequality between urban and rural areas and it is apparent that rural poverty is overly represented in rural territories (FAO 2019). FAO (2019); Bebbington et al. (2017); May and Roberts (2005) indicate that the rural areas tend to have common characteristics that limit the possibilities for their members to escape poverty like poverty traps, vulnerability and lack of opportunities. According to Bebbington et al. (2017), these traps are a result of social, political and cultural factors, and are the product of historical processes. Kambale et al (2020) aver that growth in African countries does not happen in rural areas regardless of the high number of people residing in these areas. They indicate that rural poverty that is so prevalent in Africa is attributable to the mismatch between where the growth is happening and where the poor are in this continent.

The profile of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has been documented by academicians, NGOs, governments and international financial institutions (World Bank, 1996; Adeyemi, 2009; Abebe and Quaicoe (2014); Kambale et al (2020). The World Bank (1996) maintains that poverty has been high in Africa, stating that on average 45 to 50 percent of Sub-Saharan Africans live below the poverty line which is higher than any region in the world other than South Asia. Adeyemi (2009) provides the profile of poverty in SSA through documentation of the population that lives below the poverty line and maintains that in this region, the poverty situation is precarious. It is estimated that about 45% of the population live below \$1 per day compared to other regions of the world. Although different countries experience different levels of poverty, it is argued that countries such as Uganda, Mali, Nigeria, Zambia, Niger, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Burundi and Rwanda were some of the countries where over 50 percent of the people were living below \$1 per day in 2002. According to Abede (2014), the situation of poverty in SSA has not changed much over the years, noting that 48 percent of Sub-Saharan Africans were living on less than \$1.25 per day and 69 percent live on less than \$2 per day (Adeyemi 2009).

Poverty in Sub Saharan Africa can be attributed to several Factors (World Bank, 1996; Adeyemi, 2009; Abebe, 2014; Kambale et al (2020). World Bank (1996) accounts that poverty in Sub Saharan Africa is associated with lack of employment opportunities, lack of education, lack of access to land, poor access to credit, insufficient rural development support, poor access to markets as well as poor participation and lack of involvement by the poor people in the design and implementation of development projects and prevalent

illnesses in these countries. On the contrary, Adeyemi (2009) asserts that poverty in Sub Saharan Africa is prompted by drought and man-made disasters such as environmental degradation and wars, limited resources, lack of skills which may result in unemployment and political and social instabilities. Abebe (2014) elaborates that poverty in Sub Saharan Africa is caused by poor economic and social policies as a result of poorly structured institutions.

There are many strategies that scholars suggest in the quest to eradicate poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, The World Bank (1996); avers that Sub-Saharan African countries should focus on growth, poverty reduction as well as human capital development. It also indicates that poverty, gender and environmental issues should be considered as important factors of macroeconomic and sectoral strategies and that poverty should be monitored systematically in all countries that receive bank lending. Adeyemi (2009) advocates for accountability, transparency and openness in the implementation of the measures of poverty reduction, and suggests that anti-corruption strategies should be intensified and adds that the provision of education, safe water, sanitation, and modern health care services and the prevention of wars and HIV/AIDS in this region can account for the eradication of poverty. Kambale (2020) suggests the need for African leaders to consider the developmental state to enhance the well-being of the poor. Kambale (2020) further emphasises the consideration of increased agricultural productivity and the transformation and implementation of economic policies and institutions that are aimed at stimulating growth as a strategy for poverty reduction in this region. Adebe (2014) states that there is a need for investment in roads, communications and rural infrastructure for effective accessibility of the markets.

To overcome rural poverty, FAO (2017) specify that the geographic factor, the linkages between rural territories, national and international markets, the degree of participation or integration of the rural population in the development of social policies, market dynamism and job creation with better incomes, as well as higher tax revenues that can be used to finance social programs are extremely paramount in the design and implementation of policies that seek to overcome rural poverty as well as their situation of vulnerability and exclusion.

### **2.3 Profile of poverty and strategies to reduce poverty in Lesotho**

Studies show that poverty in Lesotho has always been high and over time there has been moderate improvement (Wason and Hall, 2002, May and Roberts, 2005, Lesotho VNR, 2019). Wason and Hall (2002) observed that in 2002, Lesotho ranked 127 out of 174 countries on the UNDP's Human Development Index suggesting that at the time the poverty line in Lesotho was M124.00, 8 pounds per month which meant that 68% of Basotho were poor. The profile of poverty in this country was characterised by huge inequality with a Gini coefficient of 0.6 at the time. Lesotho VNR Report (2019) argues that though there was economic growth in the country in the 1990s as a result of the construction of dams and access roads and other infrastructures especially in the rural areas, there was no significant reduction in poverty. Nonetheless, Wason and Hall (2002) indicate that some of the social indicators of development in Lesotho are higher than those of some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa since there is high literacy and school enrolment rates.

In the same manner, May and Roberts (2005) studied poverty trends between 1986/87 and 1994/1995 which revealed that in the earlier period 58.8 percent of Lesotho's population was categorised as poor. The data indicated that 34.7 percent of the people were either very poor or ultra-poor and the data indicated that in 1994/95 the poverty profile had not changed much because 58 percent of the population was still poor, a reduction of only 0.6 per cent from the 1986 figures. Besides, there was no reduction in the number of households that were considered poor in 1986 because approximately 38% of the population was ultra-poor in 1994. The study revealed striking differences between urban and rural areas concerning changes in poverty profile. Urban areas including Maseru urban poverty had declined between the two study periods while poverty had increased for most rural areas.

Recently, it has been reported that Lesotho has been successful in reducing poverty (Lesotho VNR Report, 2019). It is reported that though poverty is still high, national poverty and extreme poverty headcount ratios have declined between 2002/2003 and 2017/2018 from 56.6 percent to 49.7 percent and from 34.1 to 24.1 percent respectively. The level of inequality, measured by the Gini coefficient, which was recorded above 60% in the 1990s, has also declined from 51.9 in 2002/2003 to 44.6 in 2017/2018 (Lesotho VNR Report, 2019).

Kali (2020) and Hapazari and Loubser (2021) attest that shortage of inputs, the government failure to create job opportunities and poor poverty eradication policies as well as the shortage of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are the main causes of poverty in Lesotho. Kali (2020) establishes that poverty in Lesotho can be attributed to several factors like large family size, households that are headed by women or elderly and households that are headed by unemployed people, political instability, corruption and exclusion of some citizens based on gender and age among others. Another factor that can be regarded as a cause of poverty in Lesotho is the lack of economic production hence the inability to create jobs. Wilson et al (2008), unlike Kali (2020) note that the fact that Lesotho introduced free primary education has not improved the poverty situation in this country because parents still pay for post-primary education.

Different Scholars make note of the different strategies the government of Lesotho (GoL) has put in place and also make suggestions of the strategies that need to be implemented to reduce poverty in Lesotho (Wason 2002; May and Roberts 2005; Lesotho VNR Report(2019). Poor health as one of the characteristics of poverty that has been prevalent in Lesotho for a long time was one of the issues that were addressed during the 1970s. Wason and Hall (2002) indicate that during the 1970s, the GoL embarked on ensuring accessible basic health services to all including the poor. This was done by the adoption of the Primary Health Care (PHC) strategy which introduced a network of Village Health Workers who were closely monitored and supervised by the local clinics. The GoL also subsidised the outpatient fees for both consultation and medication to M10 and M15 for children and adults respectively and the health care workers' salaries were restructured. Poor education and poor school enrolment are what has characterised Lesotho over the years. However, starting in January 2002, Free Primary Education (FPE) was introduced as a strategy to combat poverty though some commentators were sceptical about it. However, this has been fruitful as Lesotho stands as one of the countries that have the highest literacy rates in Africa (Wason and Hall 2002).

Lesotho VNR Report (2019) suggests several strategies for Lesotho to eradicate poverty, it indicates that the GoL should enhance food security by improving productivity through research and development, optimal use of agricultural land and technology, funding and effectively implementing and monitoring the economic, social and environmental programmes as well as the “Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Under nutrition”

(REACH), and strengthening health systems and nutritional programmes to ensure good health.

Concerning gender equality, Lesotho still lags, Kali (2018) emphasises that regardless of women's higher literacy rate as compared to their male counterparts, they still constitute a higher fraction of the unemployment circle with 34% female unemployment rate and 29% for males. The GoL has therefore enacted laws that deal with gender inequality which characterise poor countries (Fogelman 2017). Some studies have commented on some sectors for their role in poverty reduction. These include tourism, mining and manufacturing (NSDP 2018; Tourism Master Plan 2019)

## **2.4 Chapter summary**

This chapter has reviewed the literature on poverty in Sub Saharan Africa and a particular focus was given to Lesotho. The chapter has shown that poverty is high in this region of the world and in most cases; rural areas are the ones that suffer the most. The chapter has argued that various strategies have been used to deal with poverty but it has further argued that there is very little progress in reducing poverty given the many causes and ineffectiveness of some of the strategies employed to reduce poverty. The chapter has shown that whichever definition of poverty could be used, whether relative or absolute, rural communities in Lesotho are the poorest. It is clear from this chapter therefore that governments and NGOs which traditionally were the main players in development cannot win the battle alone. More actors should be invited to join and as some studies show, the private sectors through CSR can contribute to poverty reduction, particularly rural poverty. The next chapter will review the literature on CSR.

## **Chapter 3: Corporate Social Responsibility: Definitional issues and history**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature related to the research questions of the study. It covers main issues related to CSR as it relates to Gender and rural development, rural tourism and rural livelihoods. The review will explore the concept of CSR by looking at its definitions, history and how it has been practised in the developed and developing countries as well as in Lesotho particularly. It has also reviewed laws and policies in Lesotho across different ministries where CSR laws and policies can be drawn.

### **3.2 Definitions of CSR**

CSR has several definitions which are aligned to four dimensions, being stakeholders, social, environmental and economic. Although these definitions are expressed differently, they largely correspond. Fliess et.al (2007) explains that the definitions of CSR differ across cultures and stakeholders, and can entail a wide range of activities and issues; nonetheless, many CSR initiatives respond to the issue of how a company treats its employees and what it does to protect the environment in which it operates. Khoury et al (1999) account that CSR is the overall relationship of the corporation with all of its stakeholders including customers, employees, communities, investors, government suppliers as well as competitors. They further indicate that it incorporates elements of social responsibilities including investment in community outreach, employee relations, creation and maintenance of employment environment stewardship and financial performance. Hopkins (1998) emphasises that CSR is concerned with treating the stakeholders of the firm decently or in a socially responsible way to increase human development both within and outside the corporation.

According to Masum et al (2020) CSR refers to a business system that allows the production and distribution of wealth for the betterment of its stakeholders through the implementation and integration of ethical systems and sustainable management practices. They further indicate that CSR means strategies corporations or firms incorporate to manage their business in an ethical, society friendly and beneficial to the community in terms of development.



Mathende and Nhapi (2017) account that CSR means operating a business in a manner that meets or exceeds the ethical, legal, commercial and public expectations that society has of a business. Maatman and Reefman (2015) define corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders voluntarily. They point out that it is about enterprises' decision to go beyond minimum legal requirements and obligations originating from collective agreements to address societal needs.

The concept of creating shared value was further developed by Porter and Kramer (2011) and it has become part of CSR. They explained it as a necessary step in the development of business and defined it as policies and operating practices that enhance the competitiveness of a company while simultaneously advancing the economic and social conditions in the communities in which it operates. Shared value creation focuses on identifying and expanding the connections between societal and economic progress. Kahreh et al (2013) indicate that in a broader sense, CSR entails that a company assumes the responsibility of addressing society's expectations on the environmental and social dimensions of their operations such as pollution, energy consumption, labour conditions, and human rights and balances the claims of key stakeholders. Bohrer (2016) clarifies that CSR can be applied by companies on four levels, being; (1) in the company itself, (2) across the company's value chain, (3) at the sites where the company is active, and (4) in the market.

As indicated CSR is a concept with many definitions and practices, and the way it is understood and implemented will vary between country and industry, and even within a company. Regardless of the differing definitions of CSR, Zahidy et al (2019) attest that the overall emphasis is on the relationship between business and society. Though the definitions presented in this section do not differ very much, in this study, definitions that emphasise the involvement of different stakeholders will be used hence Khoury et al (1999); Zahidy et al, 2019 and Masum et al (2020) definitions will be used across this study.

### **3.3 History of CSR**

The formal publications and literature on CSR begun as early as the 1930s and continues to be relevant among academic journals, business magazines, books, and reports from international bodies as well as from non-governmental organizations and associations

(Latapi et al 2019). Chaffee (2017) emphasises that the origin of corporate social responsibility can be traced back to the ancient Roman Laws and can be seen in institutions such as asylums, homes for the poor and old, hospitals and orphanages. In the following years, through the expansion of the English Empire and its dominance in other countries, the English Crown exported its corporate law to its American colonies where corporations also played a social function to a certain extent (Chaffee 2017).

During this period, there was a growing level of urbanization and industrialization marked by large-scale production (Carroll 2015). This brought new concerns to the labour market such as new challenges for farmers and small corporations to keep up with the new interdependent economy, the creation of unions of workers looking for better working conditions, and a middle class worried about the loss of religious and family values in the new industrial society. As a response to these new challenges, and to find harmony between the industry and the working force, some business leaders created organizations for the promotion of values and improvement of the working conditions. It was during this time that companies aimed at protecting and retaining employees and some companies even looked into improving their quality of life and the communities as well (Heald 1970; Chaffee 2017).

The concept of CSR has a long history that covers hundreds of years as some scholars argue that it can be traced back to some years BC (Husted, 2015). However, it was in the 1950s when the concept became part of the discussion in the academic literature and since then the concept has developed in phases in which each phase was characterized by issues that were facing the world society. Carroll et al. (2008) maintain that scholars have divided the period since 1950 into three distinct phases. The first phase covers the period 1953 -1967, a period where the overall responsibility of business in community issues was recognised and appreciated hence the period was labelled an awareness era. The next phase span 1968-1973 where business was concerned about and addressed specific issues of the time. They included pollution, discrimination and urban decay among others. The last phase covers the period 1974-1978. This was a period when CSR was embedded within companies to reorganise the organisational and management of companies to address CSR issues. This involved re-arranging the board of directors to address CSR, evaluating companies' ethics and implementing social performance disclosure to assess how companies address social issues.

Some scholars, according to Carroll et al (2008) and Masoud (2017), during the 1950s there were intense debates about CSR but there was little action taken beyond philanthropy which started centuries ago. They argue that what was important about the 1950s was that the concept of shareholders dominated the academic debate of the time in which some scholars believed that the sole responsibility of business was its shareholders. In 1960, the main focus was placed on the definition of the concept of CSR and the reasons why companies should engage in it (Moura-Leite and Padgett, 2011). Some of the reasons that were put forth were the economic order of the time which left some sections of the society destitute hence CSR would ensure that resources benefit a large society not only the private sectors. The time marked a shift away from shareholder concerns of the 1950s to the concerns about wider stakeholders. Some scholars emphasised that when companies engage in CSR they will benefit in the long run. In the 1970s and 80s the focus fell on how CSR should be implemented (Moura-Leite and Padgett, 2011) and this was the period when the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development became buzzwords and hence became part of CSR. But above all, the 1980s marked a shift away from definitions of CSR to a focus on new concepts, models and theories that could help in the implementation of CSR. They included the emergence of corporate social performance, corporate social responsiveness, stakeholder theory and business ethics (Masoud, 2017). The business ethics could be attributed to the socio-economic scandals of the 1980s such as the Infant formula of the late 1970s and early 80s, the 1984 Union Carbide Bhopal explosion in India and unethical concerns about companies that were operating in South Africa during the apartheid regime. Other scholars maintain that this was a period in which CSR shifted from being a terrain of enlightened top managers to a period in which companies underwent structural transformation where special offices and officials responsible for CSR were implemented (Acquier et al., 2011).

During the 1990s the interest in CSR grew rapidly. It was during this time that the concept gained international consideration. Carroll (2015) explained that during the 1990s the globalization process increased the operations of multinational corporations which now encountered diverse business environments in developing countries. Business managers began taking the responsibility of balancing the maximization of profits with creating and maintaining balance with the demands of their clients, their labour force, as well as the community (Carroll et al. 2008). This led to managers being viewed as trustees

for the different set of external relations with the company, which in turn translated into social and economic responsibilities being adopted by corporations (Heald 1970; Carroll et al 2008).

In 2000 the United Nations implemented the Millennium Declaration with its eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and set the international agenda for the following 15 years. Although the debate around the MDGs was not directly linked to CSR, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) pointed it out as a framework for the UN – private sector cooperation to achieve its goals and as a result, the global recognition of the concept became stronger (Latapi et al 2019).

### **3.4 Proponents and opponents of CSR**

Some scholars support the idea that corporations should engage in CSR activities. Similarly, some are against businesses engaging in CSR activities and argue that the definitions of CSR mainly fall into two general schools of thought; the theorists who argue that businesses are obligated to maximise profits within the boundaries of the law and minimal ethical constraints and those that advocate for a broader range of obligations towards the societies (Masum et al 2020). Scholars like Selvi et al (2010), Morrison and Bridwell (2011), Fitzpatrick (2013), Adeyemo et al (2013), Masum et al (2020) indicate that CSR has been an important global issue and has lots of benefits not only to the stakeholders but the business as well, benefits such as good reputation, promotion of social progress between the firm and the society, and promotion of good balance of the stakeholders' interests. Adeyemo et al (2013) state that social performance may lead to obtaining better resources, better quality employees, better marketing of products and may even result in the creation of unforeseen opportunities for the businesses.

Benlemlih and Bitar (2018) affirm that high CSR commitment increases investment efficiency resulting in better financial performance that will in turn result in more resources being available to pursue CSR goals. Sangle (2010) acknowledges a positive correlation between CSR and financial performance. Similarly, Sangle (2010) points out that managers in the Indian public sector appraise CSR as fundamentally paramount for the success of their organizations. CSR initiatives have in the long-term proven beneficial to society, the environment and also the companies and their investors through the voluntary commitment of company leaders, reputational incentives and market forces (Bohrer 2016). Masum et al (2020) suggest that CSR can win new business, increase

customer retention, bring about good relationships with suppliers, make an organisation an employer of choice, make business attain a competitive advantage, improve business reputation, reduce risk, and provide access to investment and funding opportunities. Masum et al (2020) further contend that costly social problems such as employee turnover and customer boycott can be avoided by actively pursuing CSR activities, making it clear that there is a positive relationship between CSR and corporate financial performance.

### **3.5 Opponents of CSR**

Antagonists of CSR see CSR as an unrealistic expectation on the side of corporations (Morrison and Bridwell, 2011). They also argue that CSR activities be done outside the definition of business. Morrison and Bridgewel (2011) make use of a renowned economist Milton Friedman (1970) as their reference in this regard. Friedman is a known and famous enemy of CSR. He argues that the sole purpose of businesses is to maximise profits and that corporations should not be obligated to partake in CSR initiatives but rather, the shareholders and individuals be the ones who use the profits for the betterment of the society if they choose to do so. Friedman holds governments accountable for the promotion of better standards of living and not businesses.

Scholars such as Banerjee (2012); Palazzo and Richter (2005); Lin (2010) argue that CSR does little to curb social and environmental issues. According to them, there are no significant changes CSR does in terms of halting resource depletion and social inequalities. Rather, weak models of sustainability permit the domination of economic and corporate elites to continue and allocate greater power to the market and corporate actors to control economic, political and social processes. Davis (1973) argues that businesses are not equipped to handle social activities and do not have the necessary expertise to run CSR initiatives. Ugwunwanyi and Ekene (2016) indicate that CSR can make businesses less competitive globally, as a result of reduced business profits due to costly CSR initiatives resulting in compromised business plans to expand business globally.

### **3.6 CSR Success Factors**

Sangle (2010); Adeyemo et al (2013); Kahreh et al (2013); Maatman and Reefman (2015); Bohrer (2016); Jerono (2018); Zahidy et al (2019) indicate that critical success factors are factors or activities that are needed to ensure the success of a business or

project and the achievement of these factors lead to a successful business or project. For a successful and sustainable CSR, several factors have to be put in place. Sangle (2010); Maatman and Reefman (2015) emphasise the need to integrate CSR with other functional strategies, management of stakeholder groups, evaluation of CSR benefits and support from top management for the successful implementation of CSR. According to Zahidy et al (2019), CSR initiatives success can be attributed to financial resources, top management support, managerial or internal skills on CSR, national economic growth, employees' education and training on CSR, participation of key stakeholders in the CSR process, effective CSR communication, and organizational structure. Jerono (2018) attributes the success of the CSR projects to the involvement of the local community, availability of necessary resources, frequent culture assessment, consultation of the project beneficiaries during project conception, preparation and implementation process, the autonomy of the CSR project free from political interference.

Sangle (2010); Maatman and Reefman (2015) account that integration of CSR with other functional strategies is imperative for a successful implementation of CSR initiatives. They indicate that to acquire the integration of CSR with other functional strategies, acceptance from top management support and a 'champion' i.e. (a person who fights or argues for a cause on behalf of someone or something else) who initiates this innovation is vital. They argue that this is because strategies that are linked to CSR often require some changes within a company, leading to resistance from employees which will, in turn, result in rejection. It is therefore imperative according to Maatman and Reefman (2015) that a company possesses a 'champion' in the management who can influence employees and encourage favourable reception of the CSR strategy.

Sangle (2010) on the other hand affirms that the integration of social issues into other functional strategies of the firm is very critical for the successful implementation of CSR resulting in a competitive advantage. Sangle (2010) accounts that the integration of core managerial processes and functions with corporate environmental management enables firms to achieve corporate sustainability and gives support to the market and non-market forces influencing the firms.

Adeyemo et al (2013); Bohrer (2016) states that for a successful CSR the corporation needs to conform to the prevailing norms and expectations of social performance in a given society and also the adaptation to the buyers' needs to be incorporated for a

successful CSR strategy. This is simply because the business organization only contributes fully to a society if it is highly efficient, highly profitable and has socially responsible agendas (Adeyemo et al 2013).

With regards to top management support, Maatman and Reefman (2015); Sangle (2010); Kahreh et al (2013) suggest that the support can be created in two ways which are: empowering employees in a way that they feel involved in the formation of the strategy or by using the right set of communication tools when sharing a strategy formed by the top management. For example, companies can empower their employees by giving them a certain degree of responsibility to stimulate leadership throughout the company. And by offering their employees training to become an ambassador of the company's CSR strategy than challenging them to initiate, plan and execute their own CSR project (Maatman and Reefman 2015).

### **3.7 CSR in Developing Countries including Lesotho**

The exploration of the effectiveness of CSR in developing countries cannot be considered to be complete unless CSR impact on these countries is recognized, as they are rapidly growing economies, providing a profitable market for the growth of commercial businesses (Nakib 2014). Petkoski and Twose (2003) state that the governments of developing countries have started to view CSR activities as a way to reinforce sustainable development strategies, as a constituent of their national competitiveness strategies to compete for foreign direct investment and to position their exports globally, and to improve poverty-focused delivery of public policy goals. Visser (2008); Jamali and Neville (2011) emphasise that CSR in developing countries is noticeable as it is more extensive, less embedded in corporate strategies, influenced by personal and religious motivations and less politically influenced than in a lot of developed countries.

People in developing countries are more committed to the sustainability of their normal living rather than going for any developmental incentives and despite the massiveness of their market, they are unexplored by multinational companies despite that, the SMEs seem to be the ones that pursue the CSR initiatives in developing countries (Nakib 2014). Nakib (2014) further indicates that national CSR agendas in developing countries have not been visible internationally, and have often not been labelled as 'CSR', this is clarified by Jamali and Neville (2011) where they point out that SMEs' CSR initiatives in

developing countries are influenced by personal and religious motivations, are more philanthropic and primarily focused towards helping the local communities.

Barkemeyer (2007) specifies the conceptual limits of CSR in developing countries. His study draws from the organisational legitimacy theory highlighting two limitations regarding CSR in Developing countries; a multinational company that operates in a developing country will attempt to attain validation from its primary stakeholders based in its home market, resulting in biases on short term projects with high visibility rather than initiatives that are long term and capacity building. Another limitation is the differing perceptions of validation in the home and developing host country, resulting in a misallocation of resources. Barkeremeyer (2007)

### **3.8 CSR in Lesotho**

The concept of CSR is still new in Lesotho and not very much entrenched and companies operating in this country, local or non-local implement CSR initiatives for various reasons. Local companies are encouraged to demonstrate their commitment and responsibility towards the community and its environment by investing in both ecological and social projects. Though much has not been documented in the literature, some companies have begun to implement CSR in Lesotho and this is manifested in the web pages and local newspapers. The Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) donates to and offers sponsorships to the needy, orphanage homes, less privileged community associations, and the disadvantaged community members including the elderly, disabled and orphaned children, this has, in turn, made it possible for (LEC) to promote its brand as it helps to build customer loyalty, based on distinctive ethical values (Lekaota 2017).

Similarly, Water and Sewage Company (WASCO) has strived to work in partnership with the communities in its operating areas. To fulfil this, WASCO has sponsored registered Non-profit making Organizations that offer their knowledge for the benefit of the communities (Charity Organizations that take care of the: vulnerable, Orphans and persons with disabilities). WASCO is also committed to a programme of management, continuous improvement and reporting of direct and indirect environmental impacts, which marks its contribution to improving the communities it serves. As a CSR initiative, WASCO offers support to communities' initiatives on environmental conservation and rehabilitation programmes and engage in environmental outreach initiatives (Lekaota 2017). Besides, the diamond mining companies operating in Lesotho have also been



engaged in CSR initiatives. Letseng Diamond and Kao Diamond mine have been helping local communities where they operate. Letseng Diamonds, for example, has been supporting the community of Mokhotlong in the areas of crop and animal production; it has been supporting Liphamola Dairy Association (Hlojeng 2020). In the same manner, Kao Diamond mine has been supporting the local community with infrastructural development that includes schools and health centres (Arthur and King 2014; Rantlo 2019) In addition some scholars have written about CSR concerning textile factories in Lesotho (Okyere 2019; Brown 2021) Beyond these CSR initiatives, little is known and documented about CSR activities from other tourism companies operating in Lesotho despite the growing tourism and textile sectors.

### **3.8.1 Laws and Policies on CSR in Lesotho**

Nakib (2014) attests that developing countries have non-existent CSR regulations, a controlled press and weak institutional setups and the World Bank (1999) argues that MNCs transfer some of their operations to developing countries where there is a void or weak institutional infrastructure. Lesotho is not an exception in this regard. There are no laws and policies that govern CSR in Lesotho as it is still a new phenomenon. Lesotho's related laws and policies that could regulate CSR are scattered in different documents and ministries. The relevant laws and policies could be found within the ministries of Environment, Local Government, Law, Mining and Natural resources. However few countries in Africa including South Africa have a well-established set of legal frameworks that govern CSR. The South African King I, II and III, for example, cover issues of CSR in South Africa.

As per the definition of CSR that companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and their interaction with their stakeholders voluntarily Maatman and Reefman (2015); Kahreh et al (2013), CSR laws and policies in Lesotho regarding environment conservation can be drawn from the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) and the Mining Act of Lesotho, which according to Mokhehle and Diab (2012) NEAP's objective is to use and conserve the environment for the benefit of both the present and future generations. It brings forth improved awareness of environmental concerns in sectoral planning and programming and incorporates those sectoral priorities and national plans for the implementation of international conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification control NEAP (1989). For this study,

only the objectives that are relevant to CSR will be explored, using the National Environmental Action Plan and the Mining act of Lesotho as an illustration.

As Fliess et al (2007); Khoury (1999); Maatman and Reefman (2015); Kahreh et al (2013) attest, many CSR initiatives respond to the issue of how a company treats its employees, the stakeholders as well as the local communities and what it does to protect the environment in which it operates. NEAP (1989) advocates for the achievement of sustainable development through integrated programmes of employment generation, poverty reduction, environmental and natural resources rehabilitation and management in rural and urban areas. NEAP (1989) suggests that there should be the promotion of environmental education and awareness and encouragement to the individuals and community members to participate in improving their own lives and the environment through sustainable development programmes. The Mines and Minerals act of Lesotho (2005) stipulates that the mineral rights holders must carry out their mining proceeds in a way that will conserve the natural environment and must secure and fence the mining area to ensure the safety of both the environment and the local community. The mining licence holder must ensure that there is minimal pollution and contamination of the environment but where this is inevitable they are obliged to engage in recuperation measures of the environment. Upon the completion of the mining exercise, the Mining and Mineral Act of Lesotho (2005) indicates that the licence holders are mandated to ensure that the affected mineral areas are rehabilitated and the topsoil of these areas are restored leaving the area in the condition it was in preliminary to the inception of the mining process. As the issue of gender has informed this study, NEAP (1989) also addresses the concerns on gender and environment by suggesting that it is imperative to integrate gender, youth and children concerns in environmental policy planning and management.

Mathende and Nhapi (2017) account that CSR means operating a business in a manner that meets or exceeds the ethical, legal, commercial and public expectations that the society has of a business, this concurs with the NEAP (1989) mandate on the expansion of employment opportunities through a liberal economic environment for business sector entrepreneurship and initiatives, promotion of local investment opportunities and entrepreneurial culture through training workshops, training in business management skills and provision of appropriate skills. NEAP (1989) similarly advocates for the development of appropriate price and marketing support services, for small scale crop

and livestock farming, cottage industries and rural economic diversification and promotion of labour-intensive production systems, when necessary. This objective is relevant to Khoury et al (1999)'s definition of CSR where it is indicated that CSR incorporates elements of social responsibilities including investment in community outreach, employee relations, creation and maintenance of employment environment stewardship and financial performance.

### **Chapter summary**

The chapter has reviewed CSR as a concept. It has dealt with its different definitions according to different scholars. It has reviewed CSR history and revealed that CSR has been an issue since the 1930s and its popularity has grown over the years across the MNC's and the SME's in both developed and developing countries. It also studied the factors that contribute to the success of CSR initiatives, dealing with CSR in both Developing countries and Lesotho and the laws and policies on CSR in Lesotho, revealing that there are no apparent laws and policies on CSR but the laws and policies can be drawn from different ministries like the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Mining and Minerals. The chapter has also dealt with the opponents and proponents of CSR, it revealed that there are scholars who are for, and those that are against the idea of businesses engaging in CSR initiatives. Those that are for the idea that CSR should be engaged in businesses' mandate indicate that it makes good business sense to give back to the community that has been supporting the business, and that engaging in CSR results in the good reputation of the business which results in the good performance of the very same business. Those that are against the idea of CSR indicate that the businesses' sole purpose is to make profits, and engaging in CSR will hinder the process.

## **Chapter 4: Corporate Social Responsibility and Rural Tourism**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a case for the involvement of rural tourist facilities in local development. It begins by presenting the rationale for rural tourist facilities engaged in rural development. It then explores the meaning of rural tourism, different aspects of rural tourism, argues that among other types of rural tourism, ecotourism is the most appropriate for this study and its values and limitations are given attention. The chapter ends by exploring literature on rural tourism in Lesotho, highlighting the terrain traversed and limitations hence the rationale for the present study.

### **4.2 Rural tourism, CSR and rural development**

Poverty is not only an economic issue but an ethnic, social, environmental and political issue too. In most developing countries poverty is rampant in the rural areas where development hardly reaches. Many governmental interventions carried out to eradicate poverty have failed in developing countries, resulting in other actors besides government and NGOs participating in poverty eradication strategies (Zeng and Wang 2019). Other scholars have argued that public-private partnership is essential for rural poverty reduction. The private sector has recently been involved in poverty reduction strategy through CSR. Garrod and Fyall (2000); Zeng and Wang (2019) indicate that CSR as one of the poverty reduction strategies was then adopted in order to enhance the company's social, cultural and environmental commitments to help eradicate poverty. Garrod and Fyall (2000) indicate that CSR in social enterprises have been practised in developing countries and have proven that engaging the community's participation in local development especially in disadvantaged rural areas has been fruitful. However, few studies have not explored the role of rural tourism facilities in poverty reduction though it operates in rural areas.

Attempts have been made to define rural tourism but there is little consensus and scholars believe that definitions would differ from one context to another (Lane, 1994; Gartner, 2004; Nair et al, 2014; Rosalina et al, 2021). Lane (1994) asserts that rural tourism is a discrete activity with distinct characteristics that may vary in intensity and by area. According to Lane, five conditions are used to define rural tourism: location in rural areas, functionality, scale, character and pattern of the place. Nair et al (2014), based on various

definitions of rural tourism, conclude that there are four key aspects of rural tourism that include location, sustainable development, community-based features and experiences. Just like other scholars argue, the different aspects do not receive equal attention in different contexts. The location, for instance, received attention in both developed and developing countries but sustainable development and community-based aspects predominate literature in the developing world (Rosalina, et al 2021).

Some studies define rural tourism based on activities in the rural destinations such as farm-based tourism, nature-based tourism, adventure tourism, wellness tourism, spiritual tourism, nostalgia tourism, cultural and heritage tourism as well as ecotourism (Roberts & Hall, 2004; Ayhan et al., 2020). Of all these subcategories of rural tourism, ecotourism has received much more attention from the scholarship (Das et al., 2015; Tseng et al., 2019; Wondirad et al., 2020). It is defined as responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and improve the welfare of the local people. It consists of five fundamental principles that include minimising negative environmental impact, building environmental as well as cultural awareness and respect, providing positive experiences for both visitors and host communities, providing direct financial benefits for conservation and empowerment for local people among others. In the same manner, Wondirad et al., (2020) postulated that it originated in the 1980s as a subcategory of rural tourism in response to the view that conventional mass tourism was detrimental and unsustainable to destinations and it is argued that with rapid growth in industrialisation, tourists sought wholeness in different things that they could not see in their daily lives (Nilsson, 2002). As a result, many people found comfort in relaxing in the authenticity of nature (Ayazlar 2015). According to Nulty (2004), tourists wanted new and tailor-made experiences in their holidays, as a result, people in urban areas gradually started to seek relaxation and leisure in rural areas which include horse riding and bird watching, adventure activities like kayaking, snowboarding and windsurfing.

Mecheri and Pelloni (2006); Fotiadis et al (2016); Lee & Jan 2019) account that rural tourism makes substantial contributions to the development of rural areas. For instance, it improves infrastructure improvement and the conservation of the natural environment. Su (2011) attests to this by stating that rural tourism has rapidly grown in China and that it has contributed a Gross Value Added of 16%. Su (2011) further argues that the number of enterprises and employment has also increased in rural areas (29.9%).

There are many proponents of rural tourism and ecotourism in particular for its contribution to local development Das and Chatterjee (2015); McComb et al., 2017; Tseng et al., 2019; Snyman, 2017; Wondirad et al., 2020). McComb et al (2017) postulate that tourism has been pursued by governments as means of development in rural areas and that the stakeholders' participation can result in a significant contribution to the rural tourist destinations. Manaf et al (2018) studied the role played by CSR in rural tourism in terms of its effects on the socio-economic disparities between the rural and the urban areas. Nglanggerah tourist village was used as the case study because it is said to be sustainable. The results were that various entities of stakeholders and the local community have had a major role in the implementation of this tourist village. This is in line with McComb et al (2018) that the involvement of the stakeholders is a very important tool in addressing specific factors (poor infrastructure, inadequate services, lack of accessibility and lack of appropriate knowledge and skills as well as unclear destination image) that inhibit the smooth running of the rural tourist facilities.

According to Davison et al (2005), rural tourist facilities seek to contribute to the local society through CSR initiatives. As a result, some social problems such as poverty and environmental degradation will be improved. This can be attributed to the rise of CSR that more and more businesses have begun to realise that their business can have a role to play in addressing social problems while still running a profitable business. Zeng and Wang (2019) affirm that CSR does not only contribute to society but also has a considerable role in the reputation and public perception of the business. Wang (2014) reveals that when it comes to rural tourism CSR initiatives, strategies and behavioural choices are closely related to the positive responses of the tourists resulting in customer commitment and loyalty and word-of-mouth. Henderson (2007) is of the view that the characteristics of tourism add an extra dimension to CSR. Henderson (2007) regards society as part of the product and rural companies have perspicacious obligations and responsibilities regarding the places in which they are selling, making them more sensitive to the adoption of CSR and better tourism management because of the consumer tastes and environmental movements

Zeng and Wang (2019) acknowledge the important role played by rural tourist facilities through their CSR initiatives in enhancing the empowerment of women in rural areas. They indicate that to achieve poverty reduction especially through tourism it is pivotal to boost and empower disadvantaged groups in the society like women, orphans and people

living with HIV and CSR will play an important role in this regard. In the same manner, Snyman, (2017) has found that in Southern Africa the private sector has an important role to play in local socio-economic development concerning employment creation, skills training and development as well as philanthropic development projects.

Ecotourism is not without critics (English 2002). Some critics attack ecotourism on its label arguing that it is fuzzy; it is not clear what it means when tour operators use the label 'eco' (English 2002). As a result, it is blamed for 'green-washing to lure unsuspecting tourists who want to enjoy 'green' choices. Some scholars equate it with an oxymoron, a figure of speech that juxtaposes seemingly contradictory concepts such as 'an open secret' (Wilcox, 2015). In the case of ecotourism, two contradictory concepts 'eco' and tourism are juxtaposed, suggesting that there is nothing ecological about tourism. They argue that tourism is anti-ecology (Wallace, 2004; Hartman and Cavaliere, 2009). Ecotourism is blamed for the inevitable cost of revealing nature's secrets, that is, it has a potentially negative impact on the environment in the areas of energy, water, sewage, food, waste (organic and inorganic), overcapacity of tourists and logistics (English, 2002).

Ecotourism is considered a paradise but critics argue that paradise will fall when something goes wrong. It can harm the socio-economic and political life of the local communities in the sense of negatively affecting the flora and fauna, lead to political corruption, offshore banking and drug trafficking (English, 2002; Russel and Wallace 2004). Several studies in Southern Africa and other parts of the world have demonstrated that ecotourism could lead to enclave development in which local communities are excluded from the benefits (Mbaiwa and Stronza 2010, Mbaiwa and Hambira 2019).

There is also literature that demonstrates that tourism is limited in improving rural livelihoods because it is a sensitive industry easily affected by epidemics and disasters. Some of these studies have documented the impact of the present COVID-19 pandemic and argued that tourism, in general, has been pushed to its limits (McKercher and Chon 2004; Chen, Janng, and Kim 2007; Mizrachi and Fuchs 2016; Maphanga and Henama 2019).

#### **4.3 Rural tourism and CSR in Lesotho**

Lesotho like a vast number of developing countries sees rural tourism as a pertinent means of its economic growth, like Camillo (2015) states, tourism is one of the top three

exports for the majority of developing countries for at least 22 Less Developed Countries (LDCs) (including Lesotho). In Lesotho, there are many tourist destinations and facilities situated in rural areas. They include scenic mountains, dams, Ski resorts, lodges and guest houses. All these destinations and facilities make Lesotho have vibrant rural tourism, however, its contribution to rural livelihood through CSR has not been fully explored. Nonetheless, the government of Lesotho acknowledges that tourism will become one of the key economic sectors, contributing effectively to the GDP growth, biggest national employer and revenue earner in the coming years (Lekaota 2017; National Tourism Master Plan 2019).

There are few studies about tourism in Lesotho (Mapeshoane and Panther, 2017). These studies reveal that although the tourism sector mainly comprises small micro-enterprises, it has a great potential for improving the economy and reducing poverty particularly in the rural and highland areas where poverty is widespread (Mapeshoane and Panther, 2017). The Lesotho tourism sector employs nearly 21 000 individuals and contributes about 2.1 percent to the country's GDP and it is hoped that the industry has the potential to grow further. As a result, the sector has been identified by the government of Lesotho, International Monetary Fund the United Nations and World Tourism Organisation as the sector that could easily reduce poverty and absorb the unskilled and semi-skilled labour force (Yiu et al, 2015). In addition, most of the best tourist-attracting destinations in Lesotho are located in rural areas. These include the Afriski and Mountain Resort which is one of the only two Ski resorts outside of North Africa and the best in this place (Yiu et al, 2015).

Similarly, there are few studies about CSR in Lesotho ( Gitari 2007; Pike, 2014; Jeppesen & Bezuidenhout, 2019; Okyere, 2019; Moshoeshoe-Chadzingwa, 2020). However, these studies do not address CSR and rural tourism but address it in other areas such as textile manufacturing, education and mining.

Gitari (2007) investigates the impact of CSR and different approaches in the management of HIV/AIDS at workplaces, with Thetsane Garment Industries as a case study. This study revealed that there are no CSR initiatives with regards to HIV in these firms as there are limited resources to support HIV programs in these factories. They are therefore reliant on private doctors for the distribution of condoms, HIV awareness education as well as provision of medical care to their employees.



Jeppesen and Bezuidenhout (2019) studied CSR in textiles too, with their study focusing on Garment industries in Lesotho, Swaziland and South Africa to assess and compare ways garment factory workers in these countries experience the interaction between mechanisms for inspecting labour codes of conduct, government functions and trade unions. Their findings are that in Lesotho workers are more aware of the codes however the impact of instruments is limited by the confusion of who the visitors to the firms are. Also, workers in all three countries render the impact of codes of conduct on labour rights negligible. Jeppesen and Bezuidenhout (2019) argue that the absence of coherent global governance of trade in the garment industry manifests the inadequate response to the abuse of workers' rights worldwide.

Moshoeshoe -Chadzingwa (2020) study on CSR focused on the education sector. She examined the outcomes and impacts of the projects called the Distance and Rural Learner-teacher Support through a mobile Digital library (DRULETSMODIL) in Lesotho, examining how CSR utilised the case study approach to integrating the project's performance. The study found out that the project incorporated different levels of diversity, inclusivity and social responsibility aspects of providing information for free to the marginalised communities. She then recommends advocacy on CSR for all types of business and consideration for this model in developing countries.

There are few studies on CSR and mining in Lesotho (Rantlo, 2019; Hlojeng, 2020). Rantlo (2019) found out that some mining companies in Lesotho have had no significant impact on the social aspect of life as it was found that the mine's activities led to increased crime, prostitution and population growth. Further, the study found that the mine had a serious environmental impact leading to water, air and noise pollution. Using Letseng Diamonds, Hlojeng came to two main conclusions relating to its CSR: CSR emerged from being philanthropic to sustainable and strategic, the shift in the award of licences from individuals to mining companies resulted in more expectations for communities from the mine's CSR. Nonetheless, the study found out that the CSR projects were not sustainable.

Abuya (2018) reviews mining conflicts in Africa and examines how CSR can alleviate the dissatisfaction of the mining community over mining projects. This study supports the view that CSR activities especially in Africa have had a very good reputation. Abuya (2018) regards CSR as one of the ways to curb the difficulties associated with mining in

communities. Rammusi (2013) assessed the challenges, experiences and results of CSR with regards to dependency and empowerment in Thabazimbi. Rammusi (2013)'s focus was on the perceptions and experiences of key personnel from the mining companies in Thabazimbi who are responsible for the designing and implementation of the CSR strategies. The study's findings are that for the empowerment of the local community to be achieved, all relevant stakeholders need to play a role in the development process.

The situation in Lesotho contradicts the fact that a lot of studies address CSR in South Africa and some other African countries. In South Africa, one thing that is common about these studies is that they acknowledge the imperative role CSR plays in the day to day running of the mines. Tshabalala (2020) argues that CSR in the mining sector was neglected for years and only became popular after the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Act was announced. Tshabalala reports that although CSR initiatives are voluntarily it has become a legal mandate for the mining industry through the establishment of a Social Labour Plan in South Africa.

#### **4.4 Chapter summary**

This chapter has explored the role of rural tourism on rural development. It has indicated that many studies acknowledge the potential rural tourism has for the improvement of the rural communities' livelihoods because it operates in these areas. It has defined rural tourism and showed that it entails all different forms of tourism that take place in rural areas. The chapter has further explored the state of tourism, CSR and rural development in Lesotho, showing that little has been written about the contribution of rural tourist facilities' CSR to rural development. However, few studies have discussed CSR in other areas such as education and mining hence the rationale behind the study.

## **Chapter 5: Corporate Social Responsibility and Gender**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter studies gender and the state of gender relations in Lesotho as well as different aspects that seem to perpetuate gender disparities among males and females in Lesotho. This chapter also deals with CSR concerning gender. It deals with how they influence each other in terms of practicality and execution and also how CSR can influence gender relations in the community.

### **5.2 Gender and gender relations in development**

Gender is defined as the social and cultural features that differentiate men and women and some scholars have compiled different definitions for it (Unger & Crawford, 1993). They argue that gender is defined in terms of differences in traits between men and women in the sense that in some societies men ought to be more aggressive than women and women should be more nurturing than men as result, they proposed what is called the trait-linked definition. Some scholars define gender as a social construct, that is; differences between men and women as a society perceive them and differentiate it from sex which is defined as a biological difference between men and women. Hence while sex will be the same all over the world, gender will differ from one society to another (Epprecht, 1995; Makoa, 1997; Fogelman, 2017; Mojapelo and Faku, 2019; Ramakhula, 2019).

According to Flax (1987), gender relations refers to a category meant to capture a complex set of social relations, to refer to a changing set of historical variables and social processes. Flax (1987) and Agarwal (1997) suggest that gender is both an analytic category and a social process. They clarify that it is relational, meaning gender relations are complex and unstable processes constituted by interrelated parts. They argue that gender relations are both constituted by and help constitute practice and ideologies in interaction with other structures of social hierarchy. Agarwal (1997) accounts that relations of power between men and women are not easy to grasp because gender relations embody both the material and the ideological, meaning they are not only seen in the division of labour and resources between men and women but also ideas and representations. Gender relations is characterised among others by patriarchy which is defined by Hadi (2017) as the manifestation and institutionalisation of male dominance

over women and children in the family as well as in the society where women and their rights are oppressed and exploited by men. This being the case it is apparent that gender relations do not benefit men and women equally.

### **5.3 Gender and Development in Lesotho**

Studies have been conducted in Lesotho about gender relations in various fields such as Politics, Health, Law, Education and at places of work generally. But there is very little written on Gender relations and rural tourism. Several scholars have written about gender and politics in Lesotho (Epprecht, 1995; Makoa, 1997; Fogelman, 2017; Mojapelo and Faku, 2019; Ramakhula, 2019). They are all unanimous that gender relations in Lesotho are discriminatory against women hence women do not benefit in the development process. Epprecht (1995) focused on the history of Basotho women participation in politics. His findings were that Basotho women had active participation in partisan politics. He alludes that starting from as early as the 1920s women have been actively involved in politics and were ordained as chiefs through the 1930s. Epprecht (1995) makes reference to Mants'ebo who was the 1st woman to be made chief in 1939 and reigned as the only woman for 19 years. However, she was later dethroned and power was given to males as females were regarded as incapable/incompetent to rule and perform the strenuous tasks of a chief. He accounts that this situation is still prevalent in Lesotho; women are regarded as incompetent chiefs as compared to their male counterparts.

Makoa (1997) reports that there is no improvement in the social status of Basotho women. This makes it difficult for women to fully participate in politics. Makoa affirms that the non-improvement can be attributed to the national laws, societal norms, traditions, customs, institutions as well as patriarchy. He is of the view that gender relations are not only sexual, legal or social but are political as well. In addition to the lack of participation of women in politics, Mojapelo and Faku (2019) suggest that Lesotho does not have clear strategies to eradicate gender inequality in the parliament. Their finding is that in 2007 the Lesotho parliament had only 7 female ministers out of 120 members of the parliament and in 2012 the number declined to only 5 female ministers out of 120 members of the parliament.

Another aspect where gender inequality is prevalent is the Education system in Lesotho. Many scholars have explored the gender inequality in education in Lesotho (Unicef 2008;

Morojele 2011; Morojele et al 2013). The results are that indeed the education system fosters gender inequality in Lesotho. Morojele (2007) views initiation schools as a means for unequal power relations between men and women, this stems from the fact that in these schools men and young boys are taught leadership skills, life education, cultural history, military techniques, national philosophy and patriotism while women and young girls are socialised towards patriarchy; their education in initiation schools emphasises politeness and respect towards men.

Unisef (2008) points out that Lesotho is a country with more educated females as compared to their male counterparts but women's state of oppression does not seem to be alleviated. Makoja (1997); Komiti and Moorosi (2020) affirm that Lesotho women may be literate but they are not empowered to benefit from the policies and international ratifications to which Lesotho is a signatory. Moorosi and Komiti (2020) accounts that women are under-represented in the principalship of high schools in Lesotho, although they are trained and have achieved academically, being so much greater in numbers and degree than men and regardless of women's dominance in the teaching profession.

Morojele (2011) is of the view that the way subjects are taught in Lesotho schools seems to perpetuate the gender disparities between the two genders. For example, Morojele identifies Sesotho proverbs that deem boys as high and mighty but girls as weak, powerless and vulnerable. "*Monna ke ts'epe e nts'o*" [A man is an iron] this proverb regards males as very strong and their strength is equated to that of iron metal. "*Tsoho la monna ke mokolla*" (meaning the man's hand is a marrow), similarly, this proverb gives the males the sense that without their input, things can never go right in the family or community at large. On the other hand, proverbs regarding females stimulate the patriarchal roles of a woman. For example, "*Mosali o ngalla mots'eo*" this proverb encourages women that regardless of how angry, a woman must cook, clean the house and serve the husband. A man who is regarded as "weak" is referred to as "*Mosali*" meaning women are deemed weak and powerless.

Lesotho laws add to the prevailing gender inequality as they favour men more than women. Makoja (1997) attests that Basotho women's social status has not improved despite the political modernisation in Lesotho as their freedom continues to be constrained by a battery of national laws, societal norms, taboos, traditions as well as patriarchy. For example, Metsing (2015); Makoja (1997) account that Lesotho customary

law denies girls and women the right to succeed chieftainship and practices associated with inheritance of property favours men over women, making women more vulnerable and more inclined to men. Fogelman (2017) attests that the social status of Basotho women has not improved concerning land politics. Fogelman accounts that the Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act of 2006 bestows full citizenship and full property ownership rights to women rather than subjugating them as minors to the will of husbands and fathers leading to improved social, economic and political outcomes for women but this was very short-lived as the norms, traditions and customary laws constrained women to attain and exercise their rights over their land and inheritances.

On the issue of gender inequality at workplaces Broadbent (2016); Flax (1987) argue that in workplaces women are normally subordinated with regards to relative power and economic rewards. Broadbent (2016) clarifies that women are often regarded as support staff, accompaniment and housekeepers and these lead to women's direct discrimination regardless of women out-performing the men resulting in women's exclusion in senior positions.

#### **5.4 CSR and gender**

CSR makes good business sense by improving business outcomes such as risk management, corporate and brand reputation, and the recruitment and retention of employees, and having a gender-inclusive leadership at workplaces accounts for sustainable benefits to both companies and the society (Soares 2011). Kaur (2013); Broadbent (2016) emphasise that women are often deprived of their fundamental rights, given low paid subsidiary jobs and are barred from the decision making process in the economy. However, CSR plays a pivotal role in the creation of gender equality at workplaces as equality and diversity are its main pillars. Kaur (2013), accounts that companies have begun to incorporate the issue of gender equality within their CSR initiatives and they have seen fruitful results.

Grosser and Moon (2019) are of the view that although CSR addresses gender issues, the feminist theory is rarely explored in the CSR literature. They argue that this omission becomes a limit in this field. Their study seeks to address this gap by reviewing the developments in feminist organisation theory and mapping their relevance and importance to CSR. McGueness et al (2017); Rao and Tilt (2020) explored the role played by gender and foreign ownership in the CSR performance of Chinese firms. Their

findings are that there is an increase in the number of Chinese firms which attract female board members. McGueness et al (2017) attest that the greater the gender balances in top management, the stronger the CSR performance.

Gender in Agriculture is one important field where CSR initiatives' contributions are studied. Agriculture accounts for 14 percent of Africa's GDP and 60 percent of its employment (African Development Report 2015). The agricultural and tourism sectors go hand in hand (Ujudi and Okolo-Obasi 2019). Africa Competitive Report (2017) confirms that women in rural areas can contribute to agriculture-tourism product diversification because of their strong community ties and their traditional farming skills. Uduji and Okolo-Obasi (2019) account that there is a very low agricultural production in females compared to their male counterparts, this shortage in production can be attributed to women's lack of access to agricultural land and inputs. As a result, Ujudi et al (2019) assessed the contribution multinational oil companies' CSR initiatives in Nigeria had on rural women about their access to modern agricultural inputs. Their study revealed that indeed there was a rise in agricultural production however gender inequality was still prevalent.

Apart from little access to agricultural land and technologies, women seem to not be empowered to take part in agricultural activities. Ojudi et al (2020) seek to examine the impact CSR initiatives of multinational oil companies had on rural women empowerment in strengthening the agritourism linkages in Niger Delta. The study concluded after 800 women were interviewed that rural women hardly take part in the global memorandum of understanding interventions in agritourism value chain projects because of the culture and norms of the rural communities. This exclusion results in rural women not being able to partake in the economic benefits of agritourism as compared to males.

### **CSR and the Small Business Enterprises**

Blowfield and Frynas (2005) attest that more focus on CSR has been put on developed and industrialised countries where large companies and multinationals and their practices are a subject. Jeppesen and Kothuis (2020) account that there is very limited research with regards to CSR issues and SMEs regardless of their economic and industrial importance in developing countries. This has resulted in very limited attention on CSR issues not only in developing countries but in micro and medium-sized enterprises and

informal CSR practices being overlooked (Morsing and Perrini 2009; Moore and Spence 2006)

This shortage is what informed Jeppesen and Kothuis' (2020) study. Their study sought to analyse the role played by the SMEs' CSR practises and their main focus is on the provision of the SMEs' perspective with regards to voices of managers and workers, the practices undertaken by SMEs regarding CSR as well as the analysis of the key institutional issues affecting the CSR practices of SMEs and the reason behind those practices. And according to them, there are formal and informal practices of CSR. The informal CSR practices include; loans provided by management to the staff, granting them extra holidays, workers being liable for the time off to attend and partake in important family events such as marriage and funerals and contributions of cash or in-kind to the local community. The formal CSR practices are; Safety of both the physical and the working environment and perfect labour standards or working conditions.

Karam and Jamali (2017)'s study was on CSR and the latent power dynamics that surround it. They attest that there should be more space in the literature that examines the realities and the potential of local SMEs' CSR expressions to counterbalance the overwhelming focus on MNCs. They argue that balancing the focus can result in the recognition that power and domination are not the only important dynamics to examine in CSR research. Jamali and Nevile (2011), account that important global institutional pressures are the ones that shape the MNCs' CSR activities in developing countries. While the national business system and other salient macro-level institutions are the ones that shape the SMEs' CSR activities in these countries more women than men concentrate.

### 5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has dealt with CSR and gender; it has revealed that having women as custodians of CSR initiatives yields success because of women's strong community ties. Similarly, balancing gender representation in the CSR initiatives accounts for their success because of equality and representation balance.



## **Chapter 6: Theoretical framework**

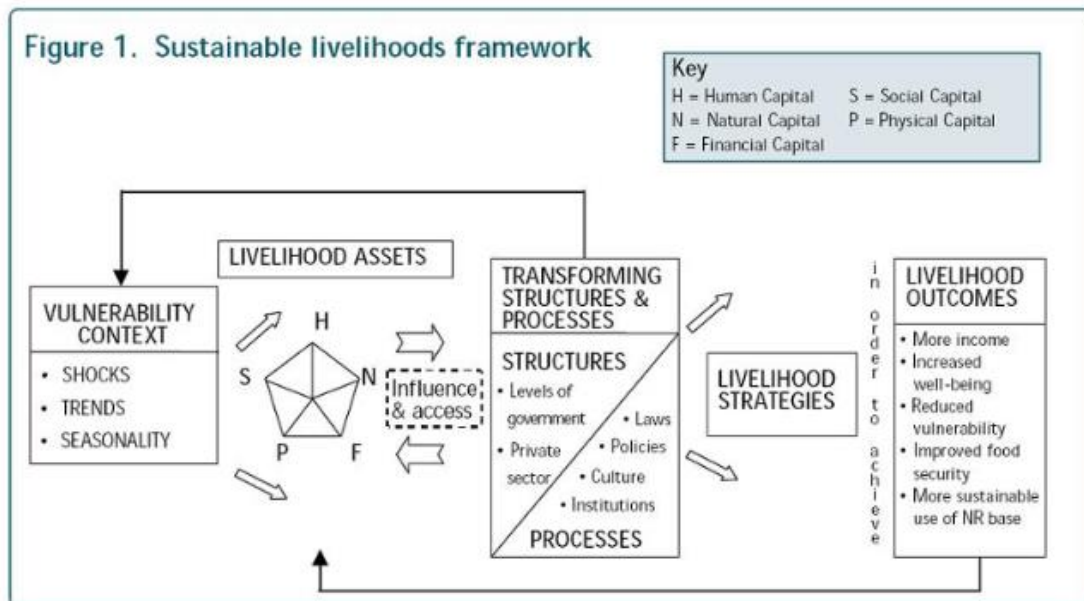
### **6.1 Introduction**

In research, studies are guided by different theoretical and conceptual frameworks. They are some of the most important aspects of the research process because they form a foundation from which all knowledge is constructed for a research study (Friedman, 1970; Grant and Osanloo, 2014). They serve as the structure and support for the rationale for the study, the problem statement, purpose, significance, and the research questions. They provide a grounding base for the literature review, and most importantly, the methods and analysis (Grant and Osanloo, 2014; Rocco and Plakhotnik, 2009). Based on the nature of the study, a combination of theoretical and conceptual frameworks could be used in one study. Hence this chapter presents, after this introduction, a combination of a framework and theory that guided the study. This is followed by the summary of the chapter

### **6.2 Sustainable Livelihood Framework/Approach (SLF/A)**

Commonly, studies on rural development employ the Sustainable Livelihood Framework or Approach (SLF/A). Levine 2004; Colombo et al 2017; Olivier (2019); You and Zhang (2017) This study is also based on the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, which refers to a way of thinking about the objectives, scope, and priorities for development activities. Serrat (2017) reiterates that the sustainable livelihoods framework improves the understanding of how the poor people live, for it organises the factors that alter or enhance livelihood opportunities and demonstrate how they are related. This framework can help protect development activities and assess the contribution that existing activities have made to sustain livelihoods. It involves thinking about the way the poor and vulnerable people live and the importance of policies and institutions by formulating activities that are people-centred, responsive and participatory, multilevel and are conducted in partnership with the public and private sectors (Colombo et al 2018; Olivier 2019). These components are put together in an interconnected framework. Figure 1 presents the framework.

#### **Figure 6. 1 Sustainable livelihoods framework**



**Sources: DFID, 2002**

It is important to note that the SLA presents the livelihood outcomes after the intervention of the transforming structure and process. Hence this framework could easily be used to assess any intervention. In this study, it will be easy to assess the impact of MDT on the livelihoods of local communities using these outcomes.

### 6.3 Stakeholder theory

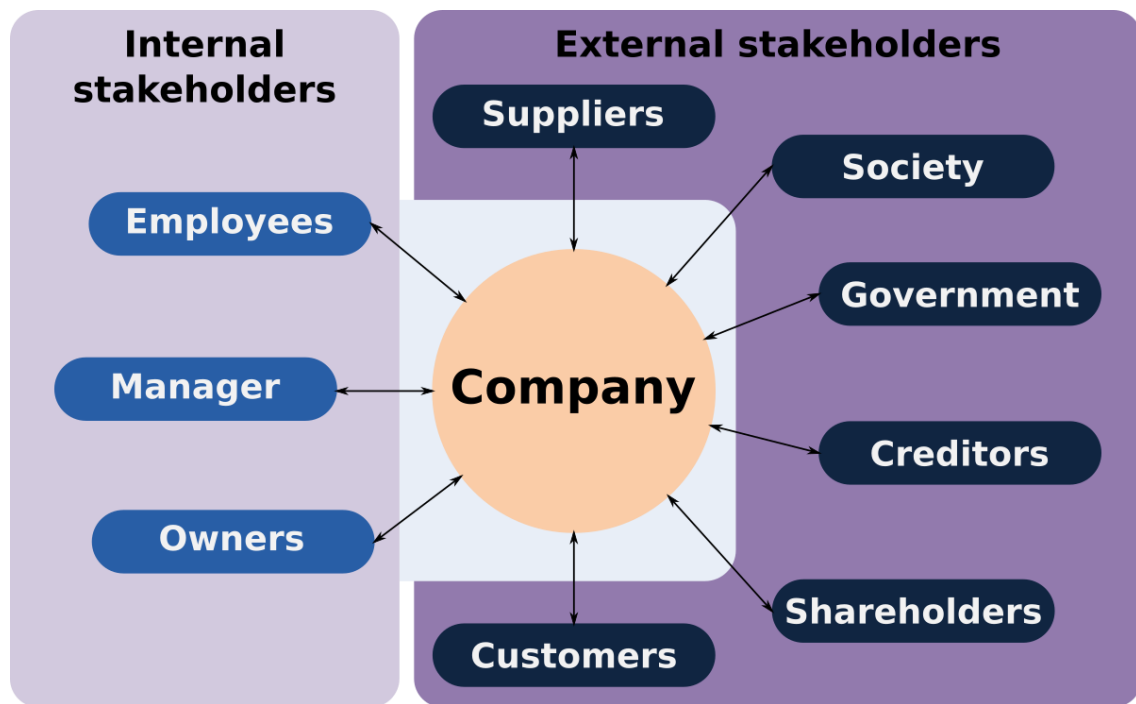
This study is mainly based on CSR and in the field of CSR different theories are ranging from stockholder theory to stakeholder theory. This study used the Stakeholder theory which pertains to the modern understanding of companies as it is incorporated into the rest of the society (Pedersen 2006). Freeman (2015) indicates that the stakeholder theory is characterized by acknowledging the networks of relationships between different stakeholders, value creation for different stakeholders, integration of stakeholders and lastly a specific purpose that constitutes the organization, to create mutual interests between stakeholders.

This theory has gained popularity in both business and sociological literature in recent years because of its practicality from the viewpoint of both managers and stakeholders. Several researchers and academics have noted that stakeholder theory embraces the responsibility of not only its internal stakeholders but its external stakeholders as well (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Prieto-Carrón, et al 2006). This theory provides

opportunities for both the government and the private sector to enter into the exchange of ideas with local communities (Pedersen, 2006). The literature regarding CSR shows that the implementation of CSR can operate effectively under a prevailing stakeholder paradigm based upon partnerships between different stakeholders, being the business as well as the local communities.

Figure 2 presents a diagrammatic illustration of stakeholder theory.

**Figure 6. 2 Stakeholder theory**



**Source: Own construction from literature e.g. (Khoury et al 1999)**

As figure 2 shows, in CSR the company sits at the centre of all other stakeholders but each stakeholder could contribute to the success of the CSR initiative. In the present study, Malealea Lodge with its entity MDT was at the centre of the initiative while other stakeholders including the managers, employees and the community were the beneficiaries.

#### **6. 4 Chapter summary**

The present chapter has presented the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach and Stakeholder theory as the guiding pillars of this study. It has shown the rationale for the inclusion of each framework as well as its effectiveness and practicality in poverty reduction.

## **Chapter 7: Research Methodology and methods**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter addresses issues concerning the methodology in research, methods of data collection, research design, research process and the reasons behind the choice of the methodology incorporated during this study. In this study, a qualitative approach is used because of the nature of the information the research seeks to gather. This chapter also presents a profile of MDT as the study area followed by a profile of the individual participants and focus groups as well as their relevance to this study. The chapter further presents the ethical consideration and the rigour of this study which pertains to the credibility, dependability, transferability and conformity of the study.

### **7.2 Research methodology**

Research methodology refers to the science of doing research that involves how knowledge is acquired. Traditionally there were two main methodological approaches to research that were considered oppositional; the quantitative and qualitative approaches (Creswell 2014). The former is based on the positivist approach which believes that there is only one truth that can be investigated using rigorous scientific methods. According to positivists, researchers should be detached from the knowledge created hence scientific methods and instruments should not be tampered with to create true knowledge. The latter is based on the interpretive approach to knowledge and believes that there are multiple sources of knowledge. It is believed that researchers should be part of knowledge creation (Patton and Cochran 2002). A new methodological approach that has emerged is the mixed-methods approach; it combines some features of quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single study (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Creswell, 2014). Each of the three approaches is used in a study for the benefits that it brings to the field of knowledge. This study, therefore, adopted the qualitative approach.

Qualitative research methodology is used when the researcher seeks to gather information by having an actual conversation with the interviewees to observe their actions and how they behave during the interviews (Creswell 2014). In this study, qualitative research methodology has been used because the researcher sought to have an in-depth understanding of the issues relating to rural poverty and how the rural tourist facilities can contribute to its eradication through CSR. Because it allows for the research process

to occur in its natural setting, the researcher was able to observe the real poverty situations within the Malealea communities and the projects the Trust has implemented in a quest to combat it.

### **7.3 Research design**

There are several research designs used within the qualitative methodology. They include phenomenology, qualitative case study, and grounded theory, ethnographic, narrative and historical designs (Yin, 2003; Creswell 2014). This study adopted a combination of a qualitative case study and phenomenology. A case study is used when the researcher wants to focus on how and why; the behaviour to be observed not manipulated, to understand a phenomenon in detail and when the boundaries between the context and phenomena are not clear. Phenomenology is used when researchers want to describe, in-depth, the common characteristics of a phenomenon that has occurred. Both designs use in-depth interviews. In this study, the designs were used to understand a phenomenon that has occurred, that is Malealea lodge has implemented CSR and the study wanted to understand how and why the lodge is addressing rural poverty in the proximate community of Malealea. Hence the case study in this study is Malealea lodge and its MDT CSR initiatives. The study aimed at understanding the phenomenon in detail.

### **7.5 The study case - Malealea lodge study case**

Malealea Lodge is situated approximately 60km south of Maseru, the capital city of Lesotho. The initial major attraction to the area was the pony trekking that was managed and controlled through an informal agreement between the Pony-trekking Association and the Malealea Lodge. The treks could be taken as a short day trek or overnight trek traversing through the Lesotho highlands via places of interest such as Ribaneng, Ketane and Maletsunyane Falls (Mohasi, 1999; Mearns, 2012). The activities at the lodge have since grown to accommodate more and more community-based ecotourism ventures.

The history of the present vibrant ecotourism activities at Malealea lodge can be traced back to a local store in the area of Matelile, in the southern part of Lesotho (Mohasi, 1999; Mearns, 2012). The government of Lesotho through the Lesotho National Tourism Office realized in 1973 that a manager of Frasers store in the area of Matelile owned a lodge at the place called Ha Qaba. He had three horses that were used for trekking to entertain visitors to the lodge. The activity grew over time culminating in the formation

of a Farmer Community Pony Trekking association in 1988 (Mohasi, 1999). It is reported that the Qaba lodge was later overwhelmed by the number of tourists during the peak seasons resulting in another local trader, Mr Jones, venturing into the business of accommodating tourists in his premises. His lodge was bigger hence accommodated more tourists. Mr Jones established the Malealea Pony Owner's Association in 1991 which offered pony trekking services for the lodge (Mohasi, 1999).

The Malealea Lodge and the adjacent community have since become inter-reliant (Mearns, 2012) and the success of the lodge has directly affected the well-being of the local community. As a result of the close relationship, the Malealea Lodge has established the Malealea Development Trust (MDT) whose main objective is to "promote and support community empowerment and community participation for the advancement of the quality of life for the members of the Malealea Community" (MDT, 2008). MDT was registered in 2002 with the Law office under the deeds office. It was established as a result of tourists' interest in improving the livelihoods of people. Tourists used to work directly with members of the community and the lodge would receive donations on behalf of the community but later the lodge realized that more tourists were contributing to the community and decided to establish the Trust to handle the funds (MDT Director, June 2021). MDT is therefore an entity that manages CSR initiatives of the Lodge and is currently focused on five priority areas on which all projects within the Malealea community are focused. They are education projects, infrastructure development projects, health and well-being and income generation and self-sufficiency projects (Mearns, 2012, MDT, 2021).

## **7.6 Research Process**

The research process began when the researcher requested access to conduct interviews and built rapport with the MDT employees as they are the study population. The rapport began well before the interviews and discussions could start as there was an exchange of phone calls and emails between the researcher and the Director of MDT (See appendix 1). The agreement was made between the Director and the researcher that the interviews can take place on a given date and he indicated that he had made arrangements with his staff to participate in the study on that particular day. Upon the researcher's arrival at the lodge, the director introduced the staff and delivered a summary of what MDT is all about before he could give access to the employees of the Trust as the key informants in this

study. Interviews were undertaken between the researcher and the director, between the employees as the key informants, and also between the focus groups. Table 7.1 presents different groups and individuals who participated in this study.

This model of data collection was inspired by Creswell (2014) where he indicates that for research to be competent it has to undergo a data collection cycle, and as Kleinhans (2018) states, qualitative data analysis is iterative and goes back and forth until the researcher has reached data saturation. This has been the case with this study because after the interviews and the analysis was done, the researcher went back to the participants to verify and collect additional data. The new additional data was further analysed together with the previous data.

**Table 7. 1 Individual and groups selected for interview**

<b>Individuals and groups</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
MDT Director	Knowledge of MDT and main gatekeeper
MDT CSR officers	Knowledge of CSR in different projects
HIV/AIDS support group	Knowledge of challenges relating to HIV/AIDS
Men’s only Group	Knowledge of challenges facing men
Hiking Guides Group	Knowledge of issues related to hiking
Pony Trekking group	Knowledge of issues related to pony trekking
Teachers	For their experiences with education-related issues
Keyhole Garden Group	Experience on community projects - Keyhole gardening
Lodge Management	Knowledge of issues relating to Malealea lodge and MDT

**Source: Researcher's construction**

## **7.7 Data collection methods**

### **7.7.1 Key participants**

Key participants' interviews are conducted on people who are knowledgeable about the research topic (Stover 2011). In this study, the key informant interview was conducted with the Director of MDT to get a better understanding of how the Trust with its developmental projects helps reduce poverty in the local communities of Malealea. The employees of the MDT were interviewed on a one-on-one basis concerning their knowledge about each of the projects of the CSR. The interviews were conducted using a combination of Sesotho and English and were later fully translated to English. Each interview session lasted for about 30 minutes.

### **7.7.2 Focus group discussion**

A focus group interview is any formal discussion with a group of people in a controlled, pre-arranged time and place. Usually, these interviews are audio-taped and transcribed for analysis, the participants in focus group discussions were selected to meet the sampling criteria, and these discussions seek to attain a broad range of ideas on open-ended topics (Patton and Cochran 2002). In this study, focus group discussions were conducted with several beneficiaries of the CSR projects supported by MTD to get an in-depth understanding of the social structure of the community and how opinions and knowledge are formed in this social context (Patton and Cochran 2002). A summary of key groups that were interviewed as well as the purpose for involving them in the study is presented in Table 7.1.

### **7.7.3 Field Notes**

Field notes are used in qualitative research as a way of building evidence and as a ground for the researchers' claims about meaning and understanding of the research process (Kleinmans 2018). The researcher jotted down detailed notes in the notebook immediately after the interviews; this was done to reflect on the verbal and non-verbal indications which were apparent during the interviews. These notes were then used during data analysis to strengthen the descriptions and explanations of some findings.



## **7.8 Data Analysis**

The digitally recorded data from the interviews and focus group discussion were transcribed into a word document. The Atlas.ti version 2.2 was used to organize and develop initial codes and categories based on the research questions of the study. Thematic instead of content analysis was used because it is the most common method for descriptive qualitative projects (Patton and Cochran 2002). Unlike content analysis which examines who says what, to whom, and with what effect, counting the frequencies of what was said, thematic analysis emphasises, pinpoints, identifies and records patterns or themes within the data (Vaismoradi et al 2013; Kleinhans 2018). Nowell et al. (2017) aver that thematic analysis follows five steps namely: familiarising with data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming them and producing a report. Similarly, Patton and Cochran (2002); Vaismoradi et al (2013) clarify that with thematic analysis, all the data is inspected to spot the common issues that recur and identify the main themes that summarise all the views that have been collected.

In the present study, data were coded for classification into predefined subcategories, categories and overall themes. The thematic analysis involves a 'bottom up approach, where the lowest level consists of descriptive codes that are applied directly to data. The second level involves gathering similar codes into more conceptual categories. The categories are then summarised into a limited number of interpretive themes, usually 3-5 of them (Vaismoradi et al 2013). In line with Nowell et al (2017), the study followed the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ) to ensure transparency that details the methods used to achieve the findings. A combination of shorter quotes within the narrative and longer block quotes were included in the reports and all the quotes were given a unique identifier to demonstrate that variegated participants were represented across the results. A table was used to present a summary of themes, categories and codes which aided with a visual representation of the process of data analysis. Fig 8.1 presents a summary of themes and sub-categories that emerged during data analysis.

## **7.9 Study rigour**

Unlike quantitative studies, qualitative studies have been criticised for lack of reliability and validity. Reliability in research measures the extent to which the findings of the research could be replicated using the same methods and Babbie (2014) succinctly

defines reliability as 'a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, yields the same result each time.' As Denscombe (2002), stated two questions must always be addressed when dealing with reliability: (a) Is the data valid, (b) Are the methods reliable? As explained below these questions were addressed in this study because several principles were adhered to, to ensure the rigour of the study. They included credibility, dependability, transferability and conformity.

The credibility of the study was increased by triangulating data. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple sources of data which allows for a comprehensive understanding of the problem under investigation. It involves collecting data from several sources, at different times, from many sites and different groups and individuals. In this study, data were collected through interviews in line with Korstjens & Moser (2018). Different key participants were interviewed at different sites. This form of triangulation would ensure the credibility or the believability and trust of this study (Mandal, 2018). Besides, the use of thick description (Ghafouri & Afoghi, 2016) in this study ensured that it conformed to the aspect of credibility and limited bias through constant comparison of data, searching the literature for examples of the phenomenon under consideration, obtaining multiple viewpoints (Korstjens & Moser, 2018), searching for negative examples of the phenomenon, and checking and re-checking the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The trustworthiness of findings in qualitative research is normally assured through dependability (Yin 2003, Cohen *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, the researcher increased dependability through a detailed description of how data were collected, how categories were formed, and how decisions were reached throughout the entire study inquiry (Ghafouri & Afoghi, 2016).

Transferability is achieved when the findings obtained in a study could be easily applied in other settings and contexts which is referred to as the external validity of the findings (Mandal, 2018). To achieve transferability, the researcher should provide a detailed setting and context of a study. In this study, the setting and context of the Malealea Lodge and its MDT CSR projects were presented in section 7.5.

In qualitative research, conformability refers to the objectivity of the study during data collection and data analysis. To ensure conformability, there is a need to obtain congruence between two or more independent persons about the accuracy, relevance and

meaning of the data. Conformability does not deal only with data collection and analysis but with the whole quality of the research. As a result, analysis of the methodology used in the study might be emphasized by a researcher to establish conformability (Mandal, 2018). In this study, conformability was achieved through the assessment of the accuracy, relevance and meaning of the data through engaging other experts in the field of rural development and CSR to check the data, and the study devoted a whole chapter in analysing the methodology employed in this study. Other studies related to rural development, CSR and ecotourism were analysed through literature review presented in three different chapters of this study.

### **7.10 Ethical Consideration**

Two key ethical issues that should be considered in any project are consent and confidentiality (Patton and Cochran 2002). As Patton and Cochran 2002) indicates, everyone who participates in the study should do so voluntarily, without any coercion or being pressured. Before interviews could begin the interviewer obtained the participants' verbal consent and they were made aware that they can decide to withdraw from participating in the interview at any time whenever they wished without any negative consequences.

The confidentiality was well observed and the participants were assured about the interviewer-interviewee confidentiality. This is in line with what Patton and Cochran (2002) suggest that it is paramount that the identity of the person from whom information is obtained is protected. To ensure the protection of the data collected and the identities of the participants, no identities were recorded in the digital recordings and the recordings and transcriptions were stored in a well-secured computer file, accessed only through a password. All interviews were conducted in a pre-arranged hall which was locked before the interviews commenced. During data collection, doors were closed to ensure maximum confidentiality. The researcher has planned to keep all data files secured for the next five years after which they will be all deleted and destroyed. Besides, there researcher ensured that the views of the participants were truly presented by going back to them to verify that that the transcripts truly represents their views. Similarly, the researcher adhered to various scholarly ethics including avoiding plagiarism because the final dissertation was subjected to Urkund, a tool used by the university check plagiarism (See Appendix 2)

## **7.11 Chapter summary**

This chapter presented the data collection and analysis methods, their relevance to the type of data the researcher was seeking to gather. It symbolised that there are different approaches to research and each research approach has different data collection and data analysis tools. It explained in detail how issues of validity and reliability were addressed throughout the study. The chapter indicated how imperative it is to consider all the necessary precautions when conducting qualitative research that includes participant informed consent and confidentiality.

## Chapter 8: Presentation and analysis of research findings

### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study conducted on the contribution of Malealea lodge on the livelihoods of the beneficiaries of the CSR initiatives administered through MDT. There were three main research questions and this chapter, which through using thematic analysis; the findings will be presented in cognition of the main research questions presented in chapter 1. It begins with a presentation of the profile of the employees of MDT who were interviewed on a one-to-one basis. However, the study does not present a profile of the participants who were engaged in a focus group discussion because their details were not recorded to avoid the follow of the discussion. This is followed by a presentation of the findings on each research question highlighting the main themes that emerged. In each case, the chapter presents and provides an analysis of the themes.

### 8.2 Profile of the participants

This section presents the demographic profile of the eight employees of MDT in terms of positions, age, sex and educational attainment.

**Table 8. 1 Demographic profile of the participants**

<b>V an</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>sex</b>	<b>Educational level</b>
P1	Director MDT	51-65	M	Master's Degree
P2	Finance & Admin	31-40	F	Diploma
P3	Field Worker	31-40	F	Form E
P4	Field Worker	41-50	M	Form E
P5	Computer Trainer	21-30	M	Diploma
P6	Preschool Teacher	41-50	F	Form C
P7	Lodge Manager	31-40	M	Diploma

P8	Social Worker	41-50	F	Form E
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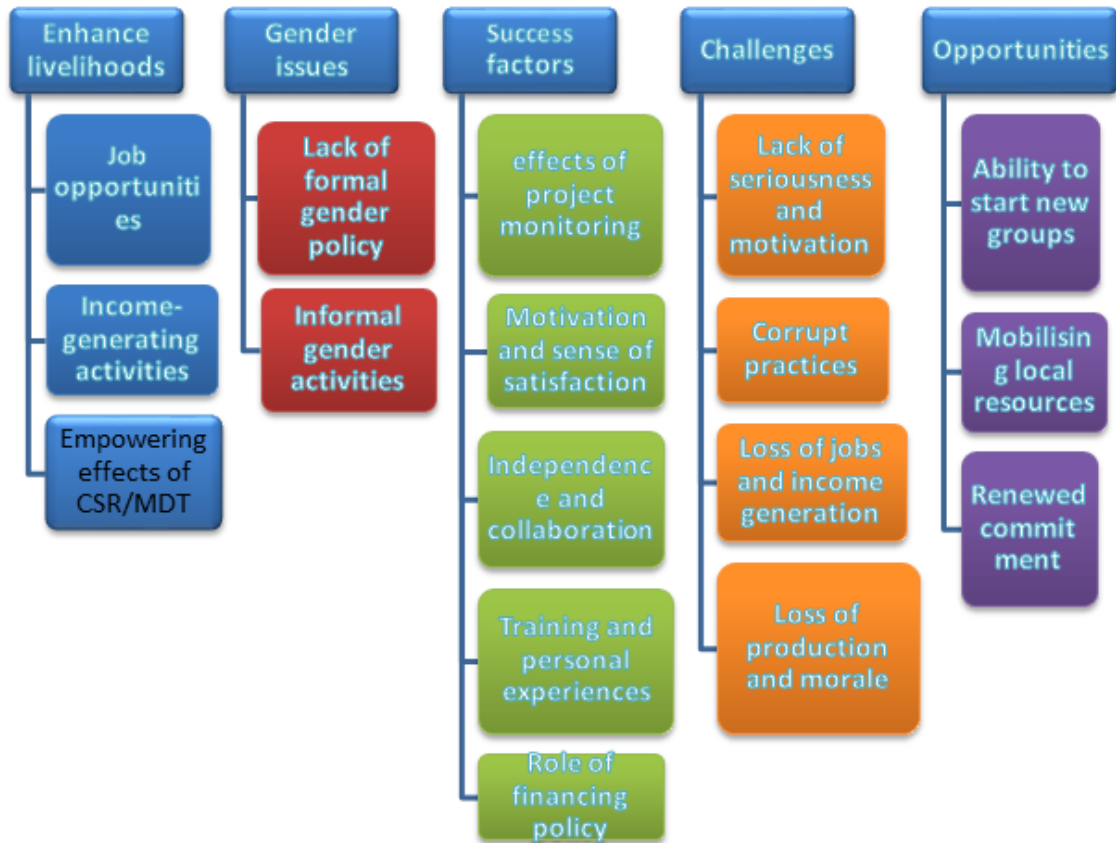
**Source: Own construction from field date 2021**

Table 8.1 shows that MDT's employees held different positions. Among them, the prominent ones were that of a director, finance administrator, lodge manager and computer trainer. The age of the participants ranged from the 20s to 60s while in terms of sex it was found that both sexes were equally represented. The education level ranged from secondary level to Master's degree. During data presentation, analysis and discussion, the participants are referred to using the number assigned to them during the one-on-one interviews and focus group discussion for confidentiality.

### **8.3 Emerging themes from the thematic analysis**

During data analysis, several codes, categories and themes emerged under each of the predetermined categories. However, some themes which were not anticipated emerged during data analysis. Figure 8.1 presents a summary of the themes and their categories and the subsequent sections present them and provide their detailed analysis and interpretation.

#### **Figure 8. 1 Themes and categories of the study**



Source: Own construction from data analysis 2021

### 8.3 Malealea Development Trust and enhanced livelihoods

The analysis of the qualitative data concerning research question number 1 produced the main theme: the enhanced livelihoods which consisted of the following three categories:

- Creation of paying and sustainable employment
- Income-generating opportunities and
- Empowering effect of MDT projects

These categories are presented, interpreted and analysed.

#### a) Creation of paying and long-term employment

One of the categories that emerged when participants were asked about the contribution of MDT to their socio-economic lives was the creation of paying and sustainable employment opportunities. Participant 6 indicated that she had been employed for twelve years as a preschool teacher in a school donated by MDT to the community and her colleague had worked in the same school for twenty years "I have about twelve years

*working at this school and my colleague had spent twenty years when she died.”* Participant 6 acknowledged that the trust had indeed created employment opportunities for the people of Malealea. The jobs created with the help of the lodge and MDT were considered long-term in nature. The code from participant 6 summarises the whole idea.

*“Yes, the trust (MDT) has indeed created employment for the people of Malealea because of the pre-schools that it has established in various villages. These schools have created employment opportunities for us. They have helped the surrounding communities because they are cheaper compared to private schools. When times are good teachers get good money from the children but when times are hard the Trust used to pay our salaries which are good given the area where we live.”*

The employees of MDT were happy and unanimous that the Malealea lodge through MDT had created employment for them and that they have been working there for many years. Some of them explained that they were once the beneficiaries of CSR initiatives and they were later absorbed as employees. Participant 3 indicated that... *“ I have been working with the trust since 2017, ... I am very happy to be working here because the Trust has allowed me to practice what I love most; helping people and my community. Participant 5 also indicated that “I started as a beneficiary of the Trust, and by me being employed by the Trust I feel like it is my turn to give back to the community and I am forever grateful. The money I have been receiving makes me feed and send my children to school.”*

Besides, the manager of the lodge was convinced that Malealea lodge was the greatest employer in the community. He explained that for many years, it had been employing many people from the community. *“We have had over twenty employees working in different sections of the lodge. The numbers have been reduced only recently because of the impact of COVID-19. However, the lodge and the Trust it created have been the biggest employers in this community for many years now.”*

The findings here suggest that the Malealea lodge as a rural tourist facility has been able to contribute to the livelihoods of the beneficiaries through the creation of long term jobs. The findings show that local people have been employed in different sectors created by the lodge and MDT. The various codes show that the jobs were long-term in nature and well-paying. The findings are consistent with the literature that rural tourism creates



employment opportunities in rural areas where the poor live (Camillo 2015; Mapeshoane and Panther 2017).

### **b) Creation of income-generating activities**

The participants believed that Malealea lodge through MDT has helped the beneficiaries and the community by enhancing their livelihoods through income-generating activities. Participant 3 clarified that *"...my focus is also on small projects, where people come and ask for assistance in agricultural inputs to implement their projects that will enhance their livelihoods. For example, planting trees, rearing chickens and commercial farming and we as the field workers monitor those projects to ensure that they are successful. This is where the Trust takes care of the 50% of the projects and the owners of the projects take care of the other 50%."* Another area where the trust had created an income-generating activity is the absorption of 22 trekking guides from the adjacent villages. The guides consisted mainly of the youth. In the past Malealea Lodge used to organise and operate tour guides but it decided to shift the responsibility of tour guiding to MDT which in turn engaged the youth from the villages. Participant 5 described the arrangement which seemed favourable to the youth in this way:

*"...Again the lodge hiking tours were shifted to MDT for the Trust to generate cash. The hiking guides are allocated 65% of the money generated from hiking and the trust gets the remaining 35%. So basically the trust has created employment for the 22 tour guides with the help of the lodge".*

The hiking guides explained that Malealea lodge and MDT had helped them develop income-generating activities for youth in the community. One of the tour guides who had been a hiking guide since 2017 explained how they had been working to ensure that they give chance to each other:

*"We used to work under the Lodge but Malealea lodge had established MDT which was responsible for equipment that we needed and everything went smoothly. It was ensured that we worked interchangeably as groups per week. Seven members would work one week and rest the next week to give a chance to the other group... It used to be a busy activity and it generally made money for all of us."*

The same sentiments were expressed by participants from a focus group discussion with pony trekking members. They explained that several people in the villages raised horses

and they worked with the lodge to transport tourists around important places in the area. They indicated that MDT worked with the lodge whenever there were tourists who needed horses. MDT would subsequently request horses from the villagers following the agreed roster. Participant 4 explained the arrangement thus *"The Lodge does not have horses. When tourists arrive at the lodge, it takes horses from the villages. There is a roster for horses and it makes the work to be simple; we already know which horses are next in the line."*

As a form of generating income for the local herd boys, participant 4 indicated that the trust has implemented a cattle festival where herd boys were able to get income in the form of awards from the trust. Participant 4 indicated that *"We have an initiative here where boys from surrounding areas are grouped in one place once a year. It is called a Cattle Festival, this is where the herd boys show off entertaining moves their animals can do and the winners get awards. This is to show and enforce oneness among herd boys and the community as a whole while also helping the herd boys get the money generated from those awards."*

Participants 2 and 5 from the focus group discussion with the keyhole gardeners explained that MDT had helped to generate income and feed their families throughout the year from the vegetables they planted. Participant 2 said *"We managed to feed our children all year round although this year things didn't go well. With the help of MDT, we managed to extend our production from homestead gardens to larger fields and the project was so successful."*

The findings here show that besides direct employment opportunities, MDT has been able to help the beneficiaries including the local community to participate in income-generating activities. This is consistent with Deller (2010) who indicated that rural tourism contributes to the regional economic growth by activating the local economic potential. The findings are further consistent with the literature that rural tourism in its different aspects positively contribute to the livelihoods of rural communities where they indicate that rural tourism is regarded as an instrument that can be used to develop and regenerate rural areas, as it creates employment resulting in enhanced economic development in both developing and developed countries (Long and Lane 2000; Briedenhann 2004; Hall 2004). However, the findings in the present study contradict some studies in rural tourism which have presented conflicting views about its

contribution. While some studies show that rural tourism inclusive of ecotourism harms the rural communities and environment (English 2002; Mbaiwa and Stronza 2010; Mbaiwa and Hambira 2019; Masum et al 2020) all the participants in this study were optimistic and confident that Malealea lodge and MDT had made a positive contribution to rural livelihoods. This was not expected from all the participants given what the literature suggests.

### **c) Empowering effect of MDT initiatives**

The third category under this theme that emerged from the data was the empowering effect of MDT initiatives. One aspect that can be seen as empowerment to the community is the contribution the Trust concerning both formal and non-formal education because as participant 6 has put it, the trust had donated pre-school buildings and teaching aids and helped poor parents with 50% of the school fees resulting in the empowerment of the kids from a tender age of 3. Similarly, the trust helps the less fortunate primary and high school children and students with their school needs and offered vocational training to those who were not interested in formal education to ameliorate their livelihoods. Participant 6 indicated that:

*“The educational programme assists the less fortunate children in this community by taking them to school and helping them with their needs which may lead to their independence in the future. .. for those that failed to finish their academic studies, the Trust has a programme that helps them with vocational training to equip them with skills that they may need to improve their livelihoods. They include carpentry, dressmaking skills, hairdressing and catering.”*

The Trust does not only empower women and young children, but it empowers males too. As participant 4 has indicated, there is a program that was designed to empower men called the "Men's-Only Group", that gives moral support to men in the Malealea community on challenges related to illnesses, unwillingness to visit health care centres when sick, support for HIV victims, as well as ways to end early child marriages which were reported to be serious in the community. Participants 6 and 4 summarised the empowering effect of MDT in the following manner:

Participant 6

*This school is a donation from the Trust, the Trust meets the parents who cannot afford to take their children to school halfway by paying 50% of their fees and it has donated these many teaching aids you see on the wall and around the classroom... It is reported that children who attend pre-schools perform very well when they get to primary schools.*

Participant 4

*The Men's Only Group was formed in 2017 and we have fifteen members. This is where men are grouped to share their experiences and offer support to one another because we are aware that men are not able to share their grievances, they find it hard to go to health centres, sometimes they find it hard to take their HIV and AIDS medication and they end up dying due to the virus. The programme helps men to fight against child marriage which has been common in this area.*

The same sentiments were shared by participant 5 during focus discussion with the Men's-Only Group who explained that with the help of MDT they realised that males were dying in larger numbers than females. They, therefore, decided to form a group that would consist of men only after realising that they were not open and cooperative when they were with females. *"They can decide not to attend meetings or just keep quiet during the discussion whenever ladies are there."* He explained.

Data from other focus group discussions revealed that beneficiaries of the MDT CSR projects were empowered. It was clear that beneficiaries had formed their groups to take opportunities offered by tourism in the area. They were able to conduct their pony trekking activities. Some youth who have been benefiting from tour guide activities were empowered to form their tour guide groups. Participant 3 from the boys hiking guides explained what he managed to achieve as a result of the support from Malealea lodge and MDT:

*"I have managed to buy my hiking equipment. Before we used to get all equipment from the lodge but at the moment I have my tent and other equipment. Besides, I have managed to form my hiking group that consists of boys and girls."*

Besides, Participant 1 from the focus group on pony trekking described their achievements based on the empowering effect of Malealea lodge and MDT thus:

*"I started as a tour guide. I used to take long distances but now am focusing on horse trekking. Many people in this village have horses. Mrs Mokotso has three horses, yes that lady who was selling vegetables. Mr Mahlasela has five or six horses. There are many horses. This means MDT has empowered people to run tours. The lodge does not have horses, horses come from the community."*

The data revealed that numerous other groups were empowered through the CSR activities of MDT in collaboration with the Malealea Lodge. One notable activity which was hosted at the lodge was the cultural dances for the tourists. Different cultural groups in the community were showcasing their skills and bravery to perform for the tourists.

The findings here suggest that CSR activities at MDT have been empowering the beneficiaries in different ways. Participants 2 and 6 showed that the educational programme provided by the Trust has been valued in the community because it empowers children in the community with pre-primary and vocational skills. Similarly, participant 4 showed that MDT managed to form a men's-only group to help them share their problems and deal with gender issues including child marriage. The youth who participated in tour guides were empowered to form their tour guide with their competent staff and they were training the young tour guides to treat tourists. This suggests that to have foreign tourists, the beneficiaries were empowered to protect the natural features that attract tourists to their places. There were numerous accounts of personal and community empowerment through MDT.

The findings are supported by the literature reviewed for this study that to reduce poverty in rural areas through CSR the less fortunate members of the society like women, children and people living with HIV should be empowered (Zeng and Wang 2019). Though the literature on empowerment shows that women need to be empowered (FAO 2013), the findings here show that CSR activities at MDT were empowering men as well which is consistent with the views of Connell (2005) that men need to be empowered too to achieve maximum gender mainstreaming. Besides the findings here are consistent with the livelihood framework used in this study that when livelihoods have improved there will be more income, individuals would be empowered resulting in efficient use of natural resources.

## 8.4 Rural tourism and gender relations in Malealea

### a) lack of gender policy

The present study sought to assess the effect of CSR initiatives on gender relations and the analysis of the various transcripts revealed that MDT did not have a formal policy though gender issues were addressed at various levels. Participants 1 and 2 elaborated that the Trust did not have a gender policy that guides it. Participant 1 explained that it was by coincidence that employees of the Trust were 50% female and 50% males. *“We just employ eligible people without considering whether they are males or females.”* He further explained that beneficiaries were not considered based on their gender. He summarised how the Trust works thus *“We do not have a gender policy; our mandate is to give help where it is needed without necessarily putting gender into consideration.”*

All other participants stated that the Malealea lodge MDT did not have an official policy on gender. They explained that when they went out to the beneficiaries, they did not follow any specific policy. *“We base ourselves on the needs of the communities without following any gender policy. For instance, we help old people regardless of whether they are males or females.”* Participant 8 said. In the same manner, participant 5 said *“We enrol anyone who needs to acquire computer skills whether they are males, females, or school children without considering whether they are boys or girls.”*

The different focus group discussions revealed that there was no official gender policy that they were following. Most participants in the focus group discussion with the support group explained that they were all females in the group not because they were using any formal policy. *“We have only one male in our group not because there is a policy that men should not join. We encourage anyone to join but men in this community are reluctant to join support groups.”* They explained.

### b) Gender initiatives at community and individual levels

Despite the apparent lack of a formal gender policy, the data revealed that the Trust and majority of beneficiaries believed that MDT’s CSR was addressing many gender issues. In recognition that men do not participate in many activities, the Trust established a Men’s-Only Group that addressed their issues alone such as failure to attend to health problems and as they related with their partners. Participant 4, who was responsible for this group of beneficiaries explained thus: *“This is where men are grouped to share*

*experiences and offer support to one another because we are aware that men are not able to share their grievances, they find it hard to go to health centres when they are sick, they bottle up things which results in them not being able to get the necessary help. The other programme in the Men's Only Group is the fight against child marriage.'* Participant 4 who was working with the local community on various development projects, explained that during the work they normally discussed gender issues that relate to men's relationships with their spouses, HIV and AIDS as well as other issues of concern within the community. He elaborated in this manner: *"The community here is rural and the main challenges are early marriages, violence perpetrated against women and children, refusal of men to deal with sexually transmitted diseases. The Men's Only Group discusses these concerns and we encourage them to spread the message in their villages."*

Participant 4 explained that the initiatives were not based on an official policy for the MDT but he volunteered to form the men's-only group following his observation concerning challenges facing men as a group in his community.

Women and girls are normally disadvantaged regarding health, skills and they lack knowledge concerning their rights. CSR activities at MDT address these issues. Participant 2 elaborated how MDT addressed these issues. She explained that the Trust had established a group of young women and girls to equip them with knowledge about their rights and skills such as dressmaking and catering. Besides, participants from the hiking guides explained that on their own volition, they address issues that affect both males and females. Participant 3 explained *"When we take tours and it happens that we have females among us, we talk to them about their needs and ensure that they are catered for. We tell our male counterparts that they should be aware that they are travelling with ladies so we should take care of them and their needs."* This assertion was confirmed by Participant 5 from that group who was a lady who explained that the male hiking guides take care of them and they were not afraid to travel with them.

The findings in this study suggest, like much of the literature in Lesotho, that the country is still far behind in addressing gender issues and gender mainstreaming (Epprecht 1996; Makoa 1997; Fogelman 2017; Ramakhula 2019). However, the findings further suggest that gender issues are being addressed at the community and individual levels per what some literature suggests. Some studies suggest that where problems are serious specific programmes should be established to address women's needs in particular (FAO 2013;

Madsen 2016 FAO 2017) and that to achieve meaningful gender mainstreaming men should be part of the changes (Connell 2005). The findings in the present study suggest that CSR at MDT has gone a step further to include men's projects which are ignored in many studies because men are considered the perpetrators of gender violence and inequality. The findings suggest that MDT through the CSR initiatives is promoting the empowerment of both genders through skills development. This is consistent with the literature and theoretical frameworks used in this study (DFiD, 2002; Connell 2005; Das & Chatterjee, 2016).

### **8.5 Success factors of CSR initiatives at Malealea Development trust**

When the participants were asked about the factors that made these CSR initiatives at the MDT successful several categories emerged under the main theme: success factors. This section presents analyses and interprets them.

#### **a) Effects of projects' monitoring**

The success of the project as a result of monitoring became a common theme that ran throughout the interviews. More than half of the participants in the one-on-one interviews alluded to monitoring as the source of success for most of the CSR projects undertaken under MDT. Participant 2 like others credited the role of monitoring to the success of the CSR projects, highlighting that the projects were monitored in all stages:

*“The Trust used two field workers to monitor the projects from implementation to the final stage. Again we have a social worker that goes out to the community and monitors the beneficiaries of the HIV/AIDS programme, ensuring that they take medication. The beneficiaries of the education programmes are monitored in all stages of their education and for the orphans and vulnerable children; our social worker visits their homes to inspect how they are treated.”*

Participant 3, while acknowledging the role monitoring plays on the success of the CSR projects, added that MDT policy that beneficiaries should commit 50% of the projects ensures that the projects become a success due to the commitment on the side of the beneficiary and also the monitoring of the projects. He stated that: *“...my focus is also on small projects, where people come and ask for assistance in agricultural inputs to implement their projects that will enhance their livelihoods. For example, planting trees, rearing chickens and commercial farming and we as the field workers monitor those*



*projects to ensure that they are successful. This is where the Trust takes care of the 50% of the projects and the owners of the projects take care of the other 50%."*

The findings here suggest monitoring of the CSR projects played an important role in their success. The findings are supported by what literature has argued that many factors lead to the success of CSR initiatives but in particular Jerono (2018) has argued that the involvement of the local community, the culture of assessment and consultation of the project beneficiaries are among critical factors for the success of CSR initiative.

#### **b) Motivation and sense of satisfaction**

Going through the transcripts, one of the categories that emerged to support the theme on success factors of CSR initiatives at Malealea lodge, implemented by MDT was motivation and a sense of personal satisfaction expressed by most participants. Participant 2 said *"I can happily say the Trust's mandate is successful because we used to get funding from abroad before COVID 19 so that funding has helped us to deliver help to the people of Malealea. Again the management here is very supportive to the staff which results in achieving satisfying outcomes."*

The sense of personal satisfaction which motivates the staff to work harder for the CSR initiatives was expressed through what the participants believed to have achieved in various aspects of the work and during the hard times of the COVID 19 pandemic as well as the satisfaction they experienced when they were able to provide for the vulnerable members of the community. Participant 2 expressed a sense of satisfaction with what MDT had achieved in the area of HIV/AIDS that the infection rate had decreased dramatically in the area since the implementation of the health programme. She reported that the beneficiaries were effectively taking their medication because the Trust was providing food supplements. One of the problems concerning HIV/AIDS is stigma. Participant 2 was happy that with the help of the support group HIV and AIDS stigma had dropped resulting in the acceptance of the disease in the community. She stated thus *"One of the problems with HIV/AIDS is a stigma but our intervention has improved the situation in this community. Our beneficiaries take their medication without any fear and they encourage others they know to take their medication without any fear."*

Most participants from the support group's focus group discussions were happy and expressed a sense of satisfaction concerning their work. They believed that stigma, HIV

and AIDS infections and deaths had dropped since the implementation of support groups in the community. *“The way we deal with issues of HIV and AIDS have improved the lives of the beneficiaries. We use many tactics to make people aware and accept the disease; we use drama which makes even young children and the illiterate comprehend and internalise the message.”*

Members of the support group attributed the success of the health project to the tactics that they used and they were so happy and motivated that they promised to engage with other support groups to help them deal with the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS.

The same sentiments were expressed by participant 5 from the one-on-one interviews who stated that:

*I can say we have been successful because our target was to raise five hundred thousand (M500 000) for COVID - 19 but we ended up raising about 1.3 million and we used that money for food parcels, training and stipends for volunteers who conducted training at the lodge and two villages. We supplied businesses and the chief's offices with sanitisers.*

Participant 5 revealed that he was personally satisfied with what he had achieved in making the CSR initiatives a success. He stated that he played an important role in helping the management and the board of trustees to hold virtual meetings and trained the teachers and school children computer skills that proved handy during the COVID-19 pandemic as the classes were conducted online during that time. He argued that the success achieved from dealing with COVID-19 could be attributed to the motivation and satisfaction that they achieved while dealing with HIV and AIDS and other challenges facing the community.

The findings indicate that most participants felt that they were successful in what they were doing because of the motivation and support they were receiving from the top management of the lodge and MDT. This line of argument is supported by the literature reviewed that whenever companies have financial resources and top management render support to the employees, the CSR initiatives will be successful (Zahidy, Sorooshian, and Hamid 2019).

### **c) The idea of independence and collaboration**

Most of the participants both from the one-to-one and focus group discussion stated that Maelea Lodge was successful in its CSR initiatives because of the good working relationship the lodge and the trust have established. They felt that the Trust was independent of the lodge but the two entities nicely collaborated in many important aspects to achieve the goal of enhancing the livelihoods of the beneficiaries. Participant 5 stated:

*As we speak the lodge does not have many contributions in terms of money but it has a programme where the visitors are put in the light about MDT and what it does as well as what we wish to achieve. So the Trust can get funds from tourists. Besides, the lodge used to run the hiking activities but it has recently shifted them to the Trust. The hiking guides benefit from these activities because the arrangement is that they get 65% of the money generated while the Trust keeps only 35% for the management of the Trust's activities.*

Participant 2 shared the same sentiments that the Health and Wellbeing programmes were one of the most successful programmes because of the harmonious working relations between the lodge and the Trust. According to her, the programme was the only one that had a permanent sponsor that was found through the help of the lodge. The programme was successful in providing food supplements for people living with HIV and AIDS and the programme was managing to provide for the needs of these patients during the COVID- 19 pandemic while other programmes were severely affected.

Participant 1, in the same manner, expressed that the working relationship between the lodge and the Trust was mutually beneficial and the beneficiaries were reaping good fruits of the relationships. He stated that before the lodge established the MDT, tourists' funds directed to the community were given to the hotel and that caused a problem as the funds were sometimes misallocated and caused confusion to the Lodge's management, MDT was set in motion as a result. Many other beneficiaries expressed a sense of working together and independence at the same time. The hiking and pony trekking guides explained how they were independent but supported by the lodge. *"The lodge does not have horses, when tourists need them, the community provides them... some members of the community have horses and they can run their hiking expeditions on their own."* Participant 4 from the focus group discussions with the pony trekking group explained.

The findings in the present study are supported by a wide range of literature that the success of CSR initiatives is anchored on good relationships among different stakeholders

(Sangle 2010; Adeyemo et al 2013; Kahreh et al 2013; Maatman and Reefman 2015; Bohrer 2016; Jerono 2018; Zahidy et al 2019).

#### **d) Training and personal experiences**

The data revealed that the success of MDT to enhance rural livelihoods depended on the training of the staff and beneficiaries as well as the experiences and personal attributes of the staff. The director of MDT, for instance, explained that before he joined the Malealea lodge and worked with the Trust, he was qualified as an Agriculturalist and had worked with communities in various projects. He felt that managing the Trust was easy because of the experience he brought to the projects

Participant 4, in the same manner, explained that though he was not educated, did not have a degree, his success in the CSR initiatives was anchored on his previous experiences and personal attributes. He stated that:

*I have worked with communities for a long time. I have worked with this Trust since 2013 and that is why I have developed the skill to handle challenges and overcome them. Another factor is that I am a farmer myself and being a farmer came in handy in the implementation of these projects because they are in line with what farming is all about. I am a very good listener, so that gives me that chance to make informed decisions. I am also very resilient in everything that I do and I can be committed and focused.*

Other participants, especially from the face-to-face interview, believed that these CSR projects were successful because of their passion for the work they were doing, citing the long experience they have gathered since MDT was established. Participant 5 believed that the education programme that he was handling was successful because of the training he received from the manager of the lodge, who has a professional skill in teaching.

The findings here, however, contradict and at the same time complement some literature that the success of CSR depends on a well-trained staff hence in the 1970s there were changes in the way CSR was viewed, organised and managed in which special offices manned with well-trained staff were established (Moura-Leite and Padgett 2011). In the case of Malealea lodge, a special trust was established but unlike what the literature purports it was not manned by educated staff, but the staff that was passionate and dedicated to the job. On the other hand, the findings are further corroborated by a wide range of literature on CSR that the success of CSR initiatives depends on the skills and

dedication of the staff with experience of the work they were doing (Maatman and Reefman 2015; Zahidy, Sorooshian, and Hamid 2019). Further, the findings convey that the director of the MDT was able to influence employees and acted as a champion. Similarly, the employees of the MDT were able to influence the beneficiaries to achieve the intended goals of the CSR projects. This is in line with what Maatman and Reefman (2015) assert that the role of a champion is important for the success of CSR, the champion should be able to influence employees and encourage favourable reception of the CSR strategy.

**e) The role of financing policy**

The analysis of data showed that Malealea lodge and MDT had developed and implemented a policy to deal with the projects. The purpose was to deal with the failure and collapse of some projects and to enhance beneficiary commitment. The management and over half of the employees of MDT explained that they had adopted a policy that community and individual projects should be supported only when the owners had contributed 50% towards the cost of the project. According to different participants, the policy ensured that project owners work hard to sustain the life of the project. Participant 5 succinctly stated that *'....the owner of the project takes care of 50%, we do this strategy to ensure that beneficiaries stay committed to the project and reduce the dependency mentality.'*

Many participants explained that before this policy, many individuals would seek help from the MDT for their projects. The MDT would project the beneficiaries with water tanks, chicken and their shed and other equipment but within a short time, such equipment would be abandoned. Hence the trust introduced the 50% financing policy to promote commitment. This view was echoed by different participants especially the field workers who maintained that since the implementation of the 50% strategy projects that they monitor seemed to grow and maintain sustainability. They stated that before the strategy the community members would request, for example, support for poultry production or water tanks erection in their fields but within a short time such projects would collapse. This was confirmed by participant 2 who stated that:

*The Trust has achieved its mandate of reducing poverty because of the agricultural projects and also the skills' training and formal education have helped the community*

*and other members have ventured into successful businesses. We have people now who produce trees and are successful because of our 50% policy.*

The findings here are consistent with the literature that for the CSR project to be successful, integration of the stakeholders is very fundamental as it will help eradicate operational failures brought about by lack of commitment Sangle (2010). The findings are further supported by the stakeholder theory used in this study that for the success of CSR projects all stakeholders and not only the stockholders should be considered. (Friedman and Miles 2002; Freudenreich et al 2020)

## **8.6 Challenges and opportunities facing MDT's CSR initiatives**

Despite the success factors, the analysis of data revealed that nonetheless challenges and new opportunities were facing MDT in enhancing the livelihoods of the beneficiaries and adjacent communities. They were categorised under challenges and opportunities at MDT. Each of them is presented, interpreted and analysed using relevant themes and categories.

### **8.6.1 Challenges facing MDT's CSR initiatives**

#### **a) Lack of seriousness and motivation**

Lack of motivation and seriousness within the beneficiaries was a trending theme during data analysis. MDT's CSR projects were designed to enhance computer skills for teachers in the area. Adjacent primary and two secondary schools were enrolled on the programmes. Despite enthusiasm exhibited by some students, especially primary children, the findings revealed that teachers were far less motivated. Participant 5 explained that though he was able to train school children, *'...the challenge is that the people the training is intended for are not interested in learning computers. When COVID - 19 came they began to show interest but the challenge is that there are few computers and it is hard to conduct computer lessons within the parameters of the set protocol.'*

The education programme is a long term programme that needs commitment and hard work on the part of beneficiaries. The participants, on the other hand, complained that some students lacked seriousness with their studies and failed their grades dismally. The participants reported school children were committed to their study while they were in

primary schools but when they moved to secondary and high schools such commitment dropped.

Besides, the health programmes were reported to have people who were not committed to the programme. Men, in particular, were less motivated to join support groups for HIV and AIDS hence not motivated to take their medication properly. All the participants in the focus group (women support group) were concerned about the lack of motivation, especially among men. *“You can see we are all women in this group and only one man. He has been with us for over a year, others refused to join hence our work is hard when we have to deal with men in the villages.”* Participant 4 explained that when they noticed that men were less motivated in most projects, MDT decided to form a Men’-Only Group. The findings are suggesting that the programmes are overburdened with people who fail to show commitment. Men, in particular, were reported in other different projects to have low motivation and commitment where projects were related to agriculture, health and education. In addition, the findings indicate that teachers who were allowed to acquire computer skills, something very rare in rural areas, were very reluctant to seize the opportunity. As participant 5 argues, teachers did not take the opportunity to acquire computer skills till they were forced by the advent of COVID-19.

#### **b) Corrupt practices**

Several participants in this study were concerned that though the MDT and CSR initiatives were doing a great job, there were some corrupt practices in some programmes which were committed by some beneficiaries. Participant 7 noted that some beneficiaries and members of the community recruited undeserving children of their relatives into some programmes, taking space for vulnerable children in the village. In the same manner, some participants in the focus group discussion with the HIV and AIDS support group were complaining that some beneficiaries were enrolling some people who were not deserving of any help from the health programmes and they had since suspended some of the activities they were doing to help those who could come in person to collect their benefits. Participant 2 explained *“We used to help some beneficiaries who were too old to enrol into different programmes and we allowed our support group members to collect on their behalf but later we realised that people who did not deserve were getting benefits. We have since stopped the practice.”*

The findings here suggest that some beneficiaries were misusing the benefits that included education and health projects.

### **C) Loss of hope, jobs and income-generating activities**

All the participants expressed a feeling of loss and hopelessness induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. They felt that it had harmed their jobs and income-generating activities. Participant 1 from the focus group discussion with hiking guides showed that COVID-19 hurt their income generation activities stating that: *"Because of covid 19, we are not working because there are no tourists. Covid 19 has cost me my job. I am now helping my mother in the shop and she does not pay me"* She expressed a sense of hopelessness and desperation which had left young people of the community in disarray. *"My colleagues have since left to search for employment in Maseru while others have gone to South Africa for the same purpose."* According to this participant, the girls who had left were looking for anything that could keep them going. *"They are not looking for jobs not in the tourism sector only; they are looking for anything in any sector."* Almost similar feelings were expressed by participant 4 who represented male hiking guides. He complained that they had lost income because of the lack of foreign tourists. *"We were twenty-two tour guides in all but for now there are only two or three of us who remain in these villages. Others have left because of desperation. They have gone to look for jobs in other places including Kimberly in South Africa."* He further explained that they hardly get tourists to guide ever since the advent of COVID-19 and he recalled that for the last year he had only had one chance of hiking with local tourists for a short hiking route.

The same sentiments were expressed by the manager of the lodge who narrated how COVID 19 had affected jobs and employees. Before COVID, the lodge had over 26 staff members but as a result of the pandemic, most of them were laid off while others were given unpaid leaves. However, he stated that those who were still working conditions were not good for them. *"Given the nature of the sector, we get paid only when we have visitors but for almost a year now we did not have visitors. Occasionally, we get few local visitors. This means that we get paid only when we have visitors."* He explained.

Participant 4 from the pony trekking expressed the same feeling of hopelessness and loss of income. He explained that since the beginning of COVID-19 which had run for two years, they had had less than five touring expeditions. *"I have been able to have one tour for the last two years. Foreign tourists are not coming because of the restrictions. I was*



*lucky to get local tourists. Some of our members have never had tourists this time around.”* He explained.

#### **d) Lose of production and morale/pessimism**

One of the themes which were prominent to COVID-19 was the loss of production and morale. Almost all the participants engaged in vegetable production using keyhole gardening complained that though they were able to produce vegetables for the whole year for many years and able to sell and give to their neighbours, the advent of COVID-19 had negatively affected their morale and enthusiasm to produce. Keyhole farmers indicated that: *“It was not easy to produce like in the past years due to COVID-19 because we were very discouraged with this whole thing because we did not know what it is and how long it will last. It affected our mental capacity, hence the lack of enthusiasm to do our work as farmers.”* Most of the participants demonstrated that the lockdown and stringent protocols associated with COVID-19 harmed the morale to work because they would not know when to go out and work and for those who were selling vegetable customers were not there and did not have money to buy.

The findings here suggest that COVID-19 had brought havoc in terms of employment and income-generating activities resulting in unplanned migration of youth out of the area. The findings are consistent with the emerging literature on COVID-19 and that of previous pandemics such as Ebola that have had a bad impact on the tourism sector resulting in unemployment (Mizrachi and Fuchs 2016; Rogerson et al. 2021; Joao 2021).

### **8.6.2 New opportunities at MDT**

#### **a) Ability to start new groups**

Although COVID-19 has had adverse impacts on the production, community's jobs and income-generating opportunities, it has also brought a change of the mind-set to the local people as indicated by the male hiking guide who clarified that the loss of their jobs as a result of a shortage of tourists has made them think beyond being employed by the lodge but rather opted to be self-employed resulting in their independence: *“We are a group of 4 males, we have opted to continue with guiding local tourists in order to sustain our lives, with the salary I was getting before COVID-19 I was able to buy all the necessary equipment for touring like camping tents, camping chairs and a sleeping bag, so I can say we are beginning to be self-employed now.”*

Similarly, the owners of the pony trekking horses have come together to form an alliance to continue their business with the local tourists to sustain their lives. *“We are aware that the lodge does not have visitors anymore due to COVID-19, and the business is not, as usual, however, we as horse owners have come together and agreed to continue with the local tours independently because we need the income, but so far we have only got one tour from local people, however, we are still hopeful that with proper advertising we will get more tourists”.*

These participants show that unlike in the past when they used to rely on the groups initiated by the Lodge and MDT, COVID-19 forced them to form new groups and work differently. The new groups were no longer relying on foreign tourism.

**b) Mobilising local resources [local tourism, partnership with local companies]**

Various participants explained that COVID-19 had forced them to work differently and mobilise local resources. The manager of the lodge explained that they were handling things differently at the lodge. *“In the past, only one person was assigned for all the bookings. We used to wait for visitors to confirm their booking but now we have changed. We work together as a team. Every staff member is responsible for all the bookings. We all communicate with our visitors and we currently follow up with our visitors to confirm their booking.”*

Besides, the data showed that the lodge had changed the strategy of relying on international tourists. It was currently mobilising local tourists using different strategies. Participant 7 explained this way: *“We are currently advertising the lodge to local tourists and when they come we give them discounted prices. The lodge is currently using different media platforms to advertise such as the internet, Facebook, Whatsapp and local radio stations.”*

Participants from the MDT explained how they have been mobilising local resources. Participants 1 and 2 explained that because all along they were relying on international tourists to support some of their projects, COVID-19 made them look locally to partner with local business people to support some of the projects. The same sentiments were shared by Participant 5 who said *“Concerning the education project, especially the computer training aspect, MDT is busy sourcing funds and partnership with local companies. So far we have signed an agreement with one mobile telephone company in*

*the country (the name withheld). They are going to donate twenty computers and provide a building for the computers and training workshop.*

These findings suggest that MDT and the beneficiaries were beginning to do things differently after realising that over-dependence on foreign tourists was facing new challenges.

**c) Renewed commitment**

One of the categories that emerged during data analysis was that COVID-19 had led to renewed commitment among the beneficiaries. It gave them a new impetus to deal with the pandemic itself and HIV/AIDS which was ravaging the community. Participant 5, explained that beneficiaries of the education programme who were all along hesitant to enrol in the computer training showed renewed enthusiasm as a result of the pandemic as teachers and school children began to value the computer training offered by MDT. He further explained that because of their previous experiences with other diseases including HIV/AIDS, they were motivated to deal with COVID-19. The following excerpt captures the enthusiasm:

*I can say we have been successful because our target was to raise five hundred thousand (M500 000) for COVID - 19 but we ended up raising about 1.3 million and we used that money for food parcels, training and stipends for volunteers who conducted training at the lodge and two villages. We supplied businesses and the chief's offices with sanitisers.*

The findings here indicate that the beneficiaries devised different strategies to deal with the challenges facing the tourism sectors. As the finding shows they were mobilising local resources and forming new groups to deal with the effects of COVID-19 on tourism. The findings are consistent with the emerging literature on tourism and literature on the impact of a pandemic such as SARS and Ebola where it is reported that the sector responded in different ways including mobilising local tourism given that tourists are sensitive about health and other risks when they decide on travelling (McKercher and Chon 2004; Chen, Janng, and Kim 2007; Mizrachi and Fuchs 2016; Maphanga and Henama 2019).

## **8.7 Chapter summary**

This chapter began with the presentation of the profile of the key participants of the study to make the reader familiar with the status of the participants. Following this presentation, the chapter has presented the findings of the study based mainly on the research questions outlined in chapter 1. In each of the research questions, relevant themes that were established during data analysis are presented. For research question 1, the chapter presents two main themes: enhanced community livelihoods and empowering effects of MDT; for research question 2, two themes emerged: lack of official gender policy and the presence of gender initiative at the community and individual level. For research question 3, several themes emerged that included motivation and a sense of satisfaction as some of the factors responsible for the success of CSR at MDT. Besides, since the study employed thematic analysis, some themes emerged which were not based on the predetermined themes. They fell under the main theme labelled challenges and opportunities of MDT CSR in enhancing beneficiaries' livelihoods.

## **Chapter 9: Summary of the key findings, conclusion and recommendations**

### **9.1 introduction**

This chapter presents the key findings of the study and based on the key findings, conclusions are drawn. Since studies are conducted to address a particular concern, it is always imperative to suggest further studies that could fill a knowledge gap. Hence this chapter will suggest some further studies to be conducted in the areas of rural tourism, CSR and gender.

### **9.2 Summary of the key findings**

The findings in this study were generated from three main research questions and related research objectives presented in chapter 1. The sub-questions were developed and discussed with the participants. In response to the question, several themes emerged under each main research question. The summary of the main findings is therefore presented in this section.

The study has revealed that Malealea Lodge in collaboration with Malealea Development Trust, an entity created to implement CSR initiatives contributed significantly to the livelihoods of the beneficiaries. The findings revealed that there were two main ways in which they contributed to their livelihoods. The first was that the entities were creating paying and sustainable employment. Almost all the participants indicated that Malealea Lodge was responsible for employing local people who have been working in the lodge for years since its creation. This was considered a significant contribution and part of its CSR. The data revealed that with time, the lodge was overwhelmed by the tourists' contributions in the form of donations towards its CSR initiatives. A decision was then made to establish an entity that will organise and run all the CSR activities. Participants maintained that since its creation over twenty years ago, MDT has been contributing to the livelihoods of the beneficiaries through employment creation in the form of employees working in the organization and through projects that it has been initiating. One prominent example was the pre-schools that have been employing local teachers over the years.

Secondly, the lodge and MDT were hailed for creating income-generating opportunities for the beneficiaries in different ways. They included financing personal projects where

beneficiaries contributed 50% towards the implementation of their projects, creating income-generating opportunities for the youth in the community through hiking tours that MDT and the lodge organised as well as helping some members of the community to organise themselves into pony trekking groups that have been generating income for years.

The study further revealed that CSR initiatives at MDT have not improved gender relations as was envisaged by research question 2. The findings indicated that there was no formal gender policy within the lodge and MDT itself. However, the findings revealed that gender issues were discussed at individual levels and in their groups. Some participants narrated how they engaged in issues of gender within their groups. For example, he narrated that MDT created a men's'-only group to encourage men to discuss and handle gender issues and some participants from hiking guides explained that they were considering gender issues.

The study has also revealed that several factors are responsible for the success of the CSR initiatives of MDT. It has been indicated that monitoring of all the CSR initiatives has played a pivotal role in their success and according to the findings; all projects were monitored throughout all the stages. Motivation and a sense of satisfaction among the beneficiaries also contributed to the success of the CSR projects. Almost all the participants indicated that they were highly motivated in what they were doing and when they had achieved their objectives they felt satisfied which made them excel in what they were doing. Other participants felt that the idea that there was a sense of independence and collaboration at all levels made the CSR initiative successful. For example, they noted that MDT and Malealea lodge were two independent entities but they collaborated in many different respects towards the success of the projects. In the same manner, beneficiaries expressed that they were independent in their projects but at the same time there was collaboration between them and MDT for example, hiking guides and pony trekking worked independently but there is collaboration between them and the lodge in many other cases.

Despite the successes of MDT, the study revealed that there were challenges and opportunities presented by prevailing circumstances. Some of the challenges were that COVID-19 escalated some fraudulent cases that have always existed. For instance, beneficiaries were more tempted than before to enrol people who did not qualify for the

CSR benefits. Furthermore, COVID-19 became a challenge by itself as it became harder to finance and support most of the CSR initiatives due to the reliance on international donors. It, therefore, became very difficult to access funding due to a huge restriction on international travel which led to the loss of jobs and income-generating activities.

The findings revealed that nonetheless, there were opportunities that were brought mainly by the advent of COVID-19. It resulted in motivating the beneficiaries to think out of the box. They started mobilising local resources to form new groups and involving local tourists as they realised that the over-dependence of international tourism was a risk. In addition, the findings revealed that the computer training project was not received with enthusiasm by its beneficiaries. However, COVID-19 which dictated that people should work from home renewed beneficiaries' especially teachers' commitment to the project.

### **9.3 Conclusion**

The first objective of the study was to assess the impact of MDT on the livelihoods of the adjacent communities through CSR initiatives. Based on the data and findings, it is concluded that CSR initiatives at MDT have significantly contributed to the livelihoods of the local people. The beneficiaries were given jobs and some of the jobs were sustainable in the sense that they were long-term. The CSR projects were able to create income-generating opportunities and most of the participants maintained that they were able to survive because of those activities.

The second objective of the study was to evaluate how CSR activities at MDT had impacted gender relations. It is concluded here that they have not made a significant impact for the reasons that there was no formal policy on gender and for individuals groups that were dealing with gender issues, they were ad hoc initiatives not sanctioned by any policy.

The third objective of the study was to assess the success factors for the CSR initiatives. It is concluded that MDT was successful and many factors were contributing to the success. These included the policy on financing community projects, monitoring of the projects, and sense of motivation and satisfaction among the beneficiaries and the staff of the projects.

## **9.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the present study makes the following recommendations:

- The study has revealed that though there was no gender policy, employees and the beneficiaries of the CSR were considering gender issues. It is therefore recommended that Malealea lodge and MDT implement their gender policy.
- The study has revealed that MDT's CSR initiatives have been facing challenges. It is recommended that it strengthens measures to address the Corruption tendencies from the beneficiaries,
- Malealea lodge should focus on promoting local tourism along with international tourism and promote activities that would enhance the morale of the beneficiaries at all times.

## **9.5 Suggestions for further research**

The present study makes the following suggestions for further research:

- The study has rightly shown that rural tourism is capable of enhancing rural livelihoods. This has been demonstrated through the use of one case study, Malealea Development Trust, an entity under Malealea lodge. It is therefore recommended that comparative studies could be conducted on similar topics using different rural tourism facilities in the country. This will limit sample bias that may have been encountered by using one case study.
- This study has used a single methodological approach, a qualitative case study which may have its merits and limitations. It is recommended that similar studies could be undertaken in the same area using different methodological approaches that may include mixed methods.
- Further, studies could be conducted on the opportunities and challenges of rural tourism in enhancing rural livelihoods based on health and other pandemics. This study has demonstrated that though the challenges and opportunities were not part of the initial aim of the study, the thematic analysis has revealed that COVID-19 has presented challenges and as well as opportunities at MDT.



It was beyond the scope of this study to investigate why Malealea Lodge engaged in CSR. Literature seems to suggest that there are benefits for doing so hence this study suggests further investigation why companies in Lesotho including rural tourism enterprises engage in CSR.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1 Mail exchange between MDT Director and research

Liteboho Tlali

P. O Box 122

Mohale'hoek 800

01<sup>st</sup> April, 2021

The Manager

Malealea Development Trust

P. O Box 263

Motsekuoa

Dear Sir/Madam

#### REQUEST FOR INFORMATION IN RESEARCH TOWARDS MY THESIS IN PURSUATION OF MY MASTERS DEGREE

I hereby request your esteemed organisation to grant me permission to collect primary data which is based on a research topic which I am currently pursuing as a prerequisite to complete my Master's Degree with the National University of Lesotho.

My research topic is 'The Gender Dimension of rural tourism in enhancing rural livelihoods through Corporate Social Responsibility. I have chosen Matelile Development Trust Community Project as my case study.

I hope your organisation will give me the opportunity to have the necessary insights that will help me understand to the core how community projects function to enhance the livelihoods of the rural community, problems and opportunities that the local community and project initiative are faced with in achieving their development goals.

Attached herein is the University Letter concurring my request.

It would be an honour if I am offered such an opportunity.

Kind regards

Ms. Liteboho Tlali

Malealea Development <info@malealeadevelopmenttrust.org>

Tue, Apr 6, 12:25 PM

to me

Dear Liteboho,

I am writing on behalf of Malealea Development Trust (MDT) which is housed on the premises of a tourist destination Malealea Lodge who are the founders of the trust. The trust is happy to work with you on your research agenda on the understanding that you are going to share the outcome of your findings with the trust. Secondly, that you are finding your own accommodation should you need to stay for the duration of your research. Lastly, that you will use your own means to reach people you wish to conduct.

Please advise us on your schedule so that our team may plan accordingly.

Sincerely

Tello Moeketse

Project Manager

## Appendix 2 Urkund Plagiarism Report

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## Appendix 3 Interview schedule

### Workers/Employees of the CSR projects

**Research question1:** What has been the socio-economic impact of Malealea Lodge's CSR projects on beneficiaries?

1. How does MDT contribute to the social-economic lives of the beneficiaries? (Education, health, community projects, employment, Marketing products, how does help members to deal poverty)
2. What strategies does MDT use to help the beneficiaries to improve the socio-economic lives? [In education, for example, how do you address issues relating to classroom space, issues of more girls than boys in schools and any other key areas where government is unable to cover? [Molai primary, school, Lebona primary school and Village Pre-school] = Education beneficiaries What strategies does MDT employ to help in the area of health in particular on issues of HIV and AIDS? What about the elderly? Mapakiso Kelepa – Social worker and Mateke Rakojoana – Scholarship officer.
3. What the challenges that MDT faces when trying to improve the socio-economic lives of the beneficiaries?

**Research Question 2:** What has been the impact of CSR initiatives on gender relation in the rural community of Malealea? Or how has rural tourism through CSR affect gender relations in Malealea / [Empowerment]?

1. Does MDT have a policy on gender?
2. What does MDT do to improve gender relations among the beneficiaries? (Does it make sure that both men and women participate? Does it workshop/training beneficiaries on gender issues? Do the projects take into consideration the needs of both men and women when improve socio-economic lives of beneficiaries e.g. in education, health, employment, poverty

3. What challenges does MDT faces related to gender issues? (Do men and women participate in the projects willingly e.g. education, HIV and health in general, crop productions)

**Research Question3:** What factors make the CSR projects successful in improving the lives of men and women at Matelile?( Community participation, management style, communication etc)

1. What factors make MDT to be successful in enhancing the lives of the beneficiaries?
- 2.

### **Beneficiaries**

- What has been the socio-economic impact of Malealea Lodge's CSR projects on men beneficiaries?
- What has been the impact of CSR initiatives on gender relation in the rural community of Malealea?Or how has rural tourism through CSR affect gender relations in Malealea/[Empowerment]?
- What factors make the CSR projects successful in improving the lives of men and women at Matelile?( Community participation, management style, communication etc)

### **Board Members**

**Research question 1:** What has been the socio-economic impact of Malealea Lodge's CSR projects on men beneficiaries?

1. What/which areas does MDT help the community/beneficiaries improve their lives?
2. What strategies does it use in each case to ensure that beneficiaries improve their lives?
3. What challenges does MDT faces in each of the areas when trying to improve the lives of the community/beneficiaries?
4. How does it deal with such challenges?

**Research Question 2:** What has been the impact of CSR initiatives on gender relation in the rural community of Malealea? Or how has rural

tourism through CSR affect gender relations in Malealea / [Empowerment]?

1. Does MDT have a policy on gender?
2. What does MDT do to improve gender relations among the beneficiaries? (Does it make sure that both men and women participate? Does it workshop/training beneficiaries on gender issues? Do the projects take into consideration the needs of both men and women when improve socio-economic lives of beneficiaries e.g. in education, health, employment, poverty)
3. What challenges does MDT faces related to gender issues? (Do men and women participate in the projects willingly e.g. education, HIV and health in general, crop productions)
4. How does it deal with the challenges relating to gender issues?

**Research Question 3:** What factors make the CSR projects successful/not successful in improving the lives of men and women at Matelile

1. From our discussion, it clear that you consider MDT successful/not successful in improving the lives of the beneficiaries, in your opinion what factors make it successful?(Community participation, management style, communication, availability of resources, staff dealing with the project etc.).

## Appendix 3 Sample described data

Interview with the finance and admin

Me; I have about 3 main questions that I need clarity on, however there are small questions that will help us answer these main questions. the main focus of this study is to find how does the MDT contribute to the livelihoods of the local community.

F; I do not work only as a finance and admin personnel but I work closely with the health and wellbeing programme, my main focus being to distribute the food supplements (e-pap) to about 700 community members who live with HIV/AIDS

Me; what challenges are you faced with to achieve your desired goal of food supplement distribution?

F: the main challenge is the price, its price keeps escalating and due to the prevailing situation of covid 19 it is very difficult to access it as we import it from South Africa, so the logistics to get it here seem to be very tiresome because of the opening and closing of the borders. This becomes a problem to us and the beneficiaries because they sometimes take a month to get their supplements due to the clearing process in the Maseru boarder post.

Me; in your perspective, how Does the MDT with its four dimensions help improve the livelihoods of this community?

F; the MDT helps the local community by seeing to it that their livelihoods are improved, through meeting the local farmers half way with agricultural equipment and seedlings for both subsistence and commercial farming purposes. The educational programme assists the less fortunate children in this community by taking them to school and helping them with their needs thereof in order to drive them to their independence in the future. For those that have failed to finish their academic studies, the trust has a programme that helps those people with vocational schools and training to equip them with skills that they may need in order to improve their livelihoods. Like carpentry, dressmaking, hair dressing, catering and the likes. With regards to the wellbeing of the local community, the food supplements help to boost the immune system of the sick people ensure that people take their medications effectively and not on empty stomachs. The MDT again helps in terms of transport for sick people to go seek medical attention in hospitals where the community clinic falls short.

Me; How does MDT ensure that its projects achieve their desired goals?

F; The trust with its two field workers monitors the process of the project, from the implementation to the final stage. Again we have a social worker who goes out to the community and monitor the HIV victims by ensuring that they take their medications effectively and also the beneficiary of the educational programme be closely monitored at schools by the social worker to ensure that their school needs are met. For the orphans and vulnerable children the social worker visits their homes to inspect how they are treated.

Me; what can you say are the challenges the trust is faced with generally?

F; the main challenge the trust is faced with is money, it is true we have a steady donor on the health and wellbeing program through HIV/AIDS but other programs like the orphans and vulnerable children does not have a steady donors. Again the performance of the lodge has an impact on the performance of the MDT as the two are paired, and with the prevailing situation of Covid which has resulted in the poor performance of the lodge the MDT suffers too because there are no donations from the tourists which is the main source of income of MDT. Another challenge is that the beneficiaries of the educational projects do not take their school work seriously and a large percentage performs poorly at schools. With regard to the community development, the community lacks the enthusiasm to engage in community development projects mainly males. The community will start off as enthusiastic as ever but during the course of the project the number of participants keeps deteriorating.

Me: in your view, do these project help in promoting gender relations between males and females in this community?

F; These projects help in the promotion of gender relations between males and females. we have a support group that helps in issues relating to Health and Wellbeing, the support group was designed to incorporate both males and females, however there is only one male participant in that program. The office then decided to establish a program that is designed to incorporate males support group but there is still few men who take part in that program. We also have a young women and girls support group that is intended to equip them with knowledge of their rights and equip them with skills like dressmaking, catering, and hairdressing in order for them to be independent so as to reduce early marriages, women and girls' vulnerability towards males and combat issues of women and girls abuse and poverty as women are the most poorer in this community.

Me; Does MDT have a policy on Gender that guides it as a trust?

F; No the trust does not have a gender policy that guides it.

Me; Can you say the trust is successful in its mandate of community Development?

F: I can say the Trust has been successful in its mandate, mainly on the Health and wellbeing because the death rate of people that were infected with HIV has decelerated drastically, as people now are able to take their medication effectively having eaten something due to the provision of E-pap food supplement, again with the help of the support groups the trust has implemented, the HIV stigma has dropped resulting in the acceptance of the disease and people living with it in the community. The trust has also achieved its mandate of reducing basic poverty because of the agricultural projects it has helped other members of the community to establish and also through the skills training and formal education it has offered members of this community, such that other members have even ventured into successful businesses because of the help from the trust. We have people who now produce trees and are successful with the help from MDT with our 50% help programme where community members are assisted with the 50% of inputs they need for production.

F; I can say the trust's mandate is successful because we used to get funding from broad prior to covid, so that funding has helped us to deliver help to the people of Malea lea. Again the



management here is very supportive to us as the employees towards achieving the satisfying outcomes.

Me; Can you consider your work here as the employee successful and that makes it successful if it is successful?

F; I can say I am successful in delivering here, and I can say I am successful because of the trainings I get time and again towards what I do again there are supplies that help me do the work.