UNIVERSITY KWAZULU NATAL

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY: CITIZEN HPARTICIPATION IN IMPLEMENTING INFRASTRUCTURAL PROGRAMS IN INGQUZA HILL MUNICIPALITY

BY
F. MPHAKO
212550227

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTERS OF COMMERCE IN LEADERSHIP STUDIES

Graduate School of Business and Leadership
College of Law and Management Studies

SUPERVISOR: DR. ABDULLA KADER

2013

DECLARATION

I, Fezekile Mphako, declare that

(i)   The research reported in this dissertation/thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research

(ii)   This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

(iii)   This dissertation does not contain other persons 'data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sources from other persons.

(iv)   This dissertation does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers.
Where other written sources have been quoted, then:
a)   their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;
b)   where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.

(v)   Where I have reproduced a publication of which I am author, co-author or editor, I have indicated in detail which part of the publication was actually written by myself alone and have fully referenced such publication.

(vi)   This dissertation does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the dissertation and in the References section.

Signed ………………………

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their contribution to the success of this project:

- Dr. Abdulla Kader, my supervisor for this dissertation

- My children, Qaqamba, Vuyo and Lonwabo for allowing me time to do the dissertation

- Hanzah Mayeza for being an inspiration for undertaking the study

The dissertation is dedicated to my late fiancée Nomonde Mayeza

I take this opportunity to thank all who contributed both directly and indirectly to the completion of the study and the finalization of the dissertation

;

ABSTRACT

The South African governance framework has, since 1994, been praised as the best model that has been designed in the 21st century. This is because of the creation and institutionalization of a number of principles that identify democracies from dictatorships. These principles include: the decentralization of power to enable local communities to participate in the affairs of government, the consultation of communities whenever there is development taking place in their area and the opportunity to choose their own government representatives. This research paper is mainly based on the local sphere of government, it is concerned with the interaction between citizens and government in the exercise of providing services. In the study, a clear distinction between the various spheres of government in South Africa is made and magnified. The study is of a descriptive nature as it explains the process of public participation and how it is implemented, in municipalities in particular, as demonstrated in the implementation of infrastructural programs in the Ingquza Hill Municipality.

At the core of the study is the examination of whether public participation processes, as currently being implemented, do contribute towards enhancing citizen involvement in the selection and prioritization of programs and projects delivered by municipalities. The question for consideration is whether these processes are adequate to enhance citizen participation and ownership in terms of their formulation and design.

After observing the implementation of infrastructural programs in the Ingquza Hill Municipality through annual reports and annual integrated development plans over three financial years, the study then formulates conclusions in terms of the extent to which the public participation system can be understood, and whether it enhances citizen participation in the delivery of services.

The study has found that integrated development planning in municipalities is the key process by which public participation is implemented. It has also been found that the system of public participation is compatible with the soft systems methodology. The study also concludes that although all municipalities have an obligation to implement the public participation system, they differ in the extent to which they implement it

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

1.0. <u>INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH</u>

1.1 <u>Background</u>

Among African democracies that emerged after the colonial era, South Africa has been rated as the most successful and progressive in terms of entrenching and institutionalizing basic principles like consultation, decentralization of power and participation in the affairs of government by citizens. The citizen participation also includes the right to vote and to have an input in matters that directly and indirectly affect their lives. This research paper is mainly based on the local sphere of government and will be concerned with the interaction between citizens and government in the exercise of providing services. In the study, a clear distinction between the various spheres of government in South Africa is made and magnified.

It is often said that communication with citizens is the cornerstone of democracy, and that the institutionalization of the process of communication and public participation can assist in the enhancement of the ownership, by citizens, of the various service delivery projects that are implemented by government. In the period from 2010 there has been an increase in service delivery protests in various municipalities, and a number of these protests point to a lack of communication and public participation in the delivery of services. It is often observed that the protests could have been avoided had citizens been timely informed of the programs and the timeframes for delivering the services that the citizens often complain about.

The South African legislative environment is filled with pieces of legislation that are aimed at guiding public participation processes between municipalities and communities, but observation suggests that communication and public participation remains a big challenge. The Local Government Municipal Systems Act (2000) puts an obligation on all the municipalities to institutionalize the participation of citizens in their affairs. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa as amended (2011), echoes this in section 152 where it identifies the fact that one of the objects of local government is the involvement of communities in the affairs of municipalities.

This study believes that, for some municipalities, it is a challenge to fully realize the implementation of the public participation system. This is because of the reluctance to engage the communities for fear of

public scrutiny by those who deliver inferior quality of services, the reluctance to participate by communities because of their low levels of education and poverty making it impossible for them to travel to community meetings held at distant venues, the disorganization and lack of coherence among communities, mixed messages from the politicians tasked with the co-ordination of service delivery programs resulting from conflict of interests perpetuated by political immediacy. The study will investigate the implementation of the public participation system by municipalities, in particular in the Ingquza Hill Municipality, and will apply the soft systems methodology to determine whether an understanding of this system can be obtained.

1.2. Motivation

Current legislation requires municipalities to undergo a process of public participation when a decision concerning citizens is to be undertaken. In many instances this requirement is often not adhered to by these institutions, resulting in situations where citizens feel they have to make their point by embarking on protests and strikes, which may be violent at times. A study of the various methods municipalities use to involve and communicate with citizens, becomes necessary as it is the view of this paper that these are not adequately implemented and need to be evaluated and improved upon. The effectiveness and efficiency of the public participation processes and methods, in the conversations between the municipality and its citizens, requires scrutiny as it is interesting to note that, despite the plethora of legislative pieces that seek to institutionalize public participation, there are still areas where municipalities are experiencing civil protests, some of which originate from lack of communication and participation in the planning and implementation of service delivery programs.

The study of public participation in the delivery of services by municipalities is relatively contemporary and a lot of research still needs to be done, therefore this study will add to the body of knowledge that is already available. The study will further assist municipalities and their entities by suggesting recommendations for the improvement of the process of the involvement of citizens in identifying and monitoring programs, thus contributing to the ownership of projects that are aimed at improving the lives of communities.

1.3. Preliminary Theoretical Framework

Public participation in the delivery of services by municipalities can be described as an activity that is undertaken by human beings, and therefore is likely not to be understood easily as it does not follow a

well-defined pattern. This is despite the fact that there are government acts, policies and regulations that dictate the process to be followed in implementing it. Public participation, in systems thinking, is among those systems that are referred to as soft systems as it involves human activity which changes from time to time, depending on the context that obtains at a particular moment. This study is mainly focused on the understanding of the phenomenon of public participation as it is observed in the processes that lead to the implementation of service delivery programs by municipalities. In this regard, the implementation of infrastructural programs in the Ingquza Hill Municipality will be made a reference point. In an attempt to study and understand this phenomenon, a soft systems methodology will be applied.

The soft systems methodology owes its origins from the work undertaken by Checkland in the 1970s in his action research at Lancaster University. Checkland and Winter (2005) put the aim of the action research as that of getting a methodology that is grounded on actual life situations, and that which can be applied to get an understanding of these situations. The seven stages of soft systems methodology, as proposed by Checkland, will specifically be used to determine whether an understanding of public participation will be obtained, and whether the legislated processes contribute adequately to cause citizens to own the service delivery programs implemented by municipalities.

In the general systems thinking understanding, there is a differentiation between the hard and soft systems. Checkland (2010) makes a distinction between these two systems by first categorizing them into physical and natural systems on one hand, and what he refers to as human activity systems on the other. The first category can collectively be referred to as hard systems, like engineering systems, information technology systems and transportation systems, to mention just a few. The second category is what is understood to be soft systems and these are characterized by the fact that they are ill-structured and are not easy to understand. The system of public participation is neither a natural nor a physical system and, as such, cannot be categorized as a hard system; it is a soft system. It is the contention of the study that public participation in service delivery can better be understood if it is treated as a soft system, and a soft systems methodology is the best methodology to employ in an attempt to understand it.

Human activity systems, by their nature, are dynamic and do not follow any established pattern, hence it is prudent to apply a soft systems tool to enhance the understanding of their behaviour. To this extent, Jacobs (2004) comments that the value of the soft systems approach is anchored on the fact that it considers all possible influences including attitudes, perceptions, cultural orientation and organizational ethics in coming to the understanding of a system or a behaviour of a system. It is of great value to notice that these areas are not considered important in hard systems analysis. The implication of this to the study

is that, in trying to understand public participation, a holistic view will be taken and all contributing factors will be taken into consideration in order to arrive at an understanding.

1.4. Research Problem and Objectives

As mentioned in the introductory background, current legislation requires that all municipalities institutionalize public participation in conducting their affairs. The understanding of the study is that this statement means that each municipality must first design a process of citizen involvement in the planning of service delivery programs; secondly, the municipality has to have evidence that citizen involvement took place during the implementation phase of these programs. At the core of the study is the examination of whether the public participation processes, as currently being implemented, do enhance citizen ownership of programs and projects delivered by municipalities. The next question for consideration is whether these processes are adequate to enhance citizen participation in terms of their formulation and design. The study is also attempting to find out whether an understanding of the phenomenon of public participation can be obtained, and this will be done by applying the soft systems methodology as proposed by Checkland. Checkland's seven stage method will be applied with the objective of gaining more insight and understanding of the system of public participation.

The problem statement can be stated as follows:

Although all municipalities are legally obliged to involve citizens in the provision of services, it is not clear whether the guidelines outlined in the public participation procedures are adequate to enhance participation by communities. It is also worth testing whether the phenomenon of public participation can be fully understood.

The 4 objectives of the research can be summarized as follows:

1) To find out to what extent does the design of the public participation system enhance citizen participation in development programs in municipalities.
2) To get an understanding of the public participation system using the soft systems methodology.
3) To find out to what extent does the public participation system enhance citizen ownership of projects by comparing alignment between planning and implementation.
4) To understand to what extent public participation is implemented and maintained throughout the planning and implementation of development programs in municipalities.

It is the intention of the study that an analysis of the system is done with a view, not only to gain an understanding, but also to offer recommendations for the improvement of the systems where shortcomings have been discovered, and to highlight strengths that the system possesses.

1.5. Research Design and Methodology

The study will be of a descriptive nature as it explains the process of public participation, in particular, in the implementation of infrastructural programs of Ingquza Hill Municipality. An analysis of this process will be done as its relationship with established soft systems theories, especially the approach attributed to Checkland, is being established. In this area an inductive approach will be employed as an attempt will be made to identify stages in the implementation of citizen participation, moving from Checkland's seven stage approach, to the explanation of various features found in the legislated public participation process, and making an analysis as to whether there is semblance between the two; that is, the public participation process and soft systems methodology. A narrative analysis of local government legislation will be done in order to describe the public participation phenomenon and its inevitability in local government decision-making and project implementation.

The study will be secondary in nature and as such no participants will be interviewed in the process of data collection. In going about the study, an extensive range of literature will be used, like books, government publications, government websites and local government legislation, papers on local government, journal articles and council-approved documents from Ingquza Hill Municipality. Books and journals will mostly be used to give background information on the soft systems theories, and an application will be done on the South African local government scenario, specifically public participation. Government publications and local government legislation will be employed particularly to establish, analyse and document legislative and constitutional basis for public participation and service delivery as it applies to municipalities. Documents from Ingquza Hill Municipality will be used in order to put the whole study into its practical context and to give the study its location.

This study will be designed to follow a sequence of five chapters that will logically cover and address the research questions that are the basis of the study. After the introductory chapter one, literature review related to the topics and concepts in the study will be done. As the chapter undertakes this review, the main emphasis will be put on the main concepts. In other words, the chapter will undertake literature review basing it on the major concepts that underline the study. An extensive explanation and contextualization of the main concepts of the study will also be made in this chapter. This will be done mainly for the purposes of putting them into the context of the local government sphere of government. It is necessary to mention that this study is mainly focusing on the local government area within the South African governance system. It is, therefore, the main concept in this sphere which will be used in the study, hence there is a need for them to be explained and understood. The context in which they are used

will therefore be explained upfront. The concepts include public participation, service delivery, developmental local government and integrated development plan (IDP). Other concepts, those that relate to the theoretical basis of the study, include soft systems methodology and systems thinking. Literature review will, therefore, be done in relation to each and every concept as its meaning and value, together with its relevance to the study, is explained and justified.

To get an understanding of the legislative and constitutional basis for public participation in the affairs of local government, pieces of local government legislation and the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, will be briefly introduced. The pieces will include, among others, the Local Government Municipal System Act, the Local Government Municipal Structures Act and Local Government Finance Management Act.

The next phase of the study will contain the methodology that will be used in the study. The methodology will include the outline of the theoretical basis for the study, as well as the establishment of areas of convergence between public participation and soft systems methodology theoretical approaches. This will be done in chapter 3.

Chapter 4 will involve the presentation of the research findings emanating from the analysis of the data obtained, using the methodology outlined in chapter 3. The findings will be centred on public participation in the South African local governance framework. In this chapter, findings on public participation will be presented and discussed with a view to portray it as a tool for the implementation of democracy, as envisaged in the constitution and the identified legislative pieces that include the municipal structures act and the municipal systems act.

Chapter 5, on conclusions and recommendations, will contain the consolidation wherein the main focus will be on the process of public participation as it is applied in the local government and, in particular, in the implementation of infrastructural programs in the Ingquza Hill Municipality. The analysis will first be made as to whether the system, as it is currently designed, meets the criteria suggested in the soft systems approach and whether it contains all the necessary features that can lead to improving and enhancing the ownership of programs delivered by municipalities. The second area of analysis will be whether the system can be improved, and this will culminate into suggestions and recommendations. The last part of the study will be the conclusion that will provide highlights of the study from chapter two to chapter five. This section of the study will also contain recommendations that have been developed during the analysis of the system of public participation.

1.6. <u>Study Location</u>

The study will be located in the Ingquza Hill Municipality in the Eastern Cape.

CHAPTER 2

2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

2.1. Introduction

The local sphere of government, as symbolized by municipalities, is not a new phenomenon, in fact, it is historically believed and accepted as the earliest form of government that came into existence even before provincial and national governments were conceptualized. In the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), municipalities are defined as institutions that are established to provide basic services to communities in a sustainable manner. In doing so, municipalities are required to make sure that there is participation of citizens in the provision of such services. Municipalities represent government which is operating closer to the people and therefore they are the first point of call when it comes to government services. For this reason, the institution of the municipality is central in addressing the needs of the people nearer to where they live. The importance of the local sphere of government is further emphasized by Van de Waldt (2007) when he asserts that the three spheres of government are distinct and equal to each other, and no one sphere has dominating power over the other. The municipality, as government closest to the people, is tasked with the function of providing basic services to enhance the wellbeing of its citizens.

Having outlined the plan for the study in chapter one, it is necessary to define, outline and understand the main concepts upon which the study is based, and this will be done incorporating literature review related to the main concepts. This is done in order to establish the context upon which these concepts are used and understood in the study, as it is common that a concept may be understood in a number of ways, depending on the context in which it is applied. The main concepts that will be dealt with in this chapter are public participation, integrated development planning, developmental local government, service delivery, systems thinking and soft systems methodology.

2.2. Public Participation

The concept of public participation is relatively new in the South African governance system. It is part of the package of reforms that were brought about by the transformation of the system of government after the 1994 democratic elections. From the end of the first decade and the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, the system of public participation has been so entrenched in South Africa in that it has become very difficult to implement any development program without first implementing public participation. For municipalities, it has become a blueprint without which every initiative by government

would lend itself to necessary negative public scrutiny and delays. One issue that tends to influence choices in the delivery of services is the choice between whether the criterion should be the quality or the quantity of service. This notion is taken further by Van de Waldt (2007) when he notes that in traditional white communities, where services were adequately provided, the emphasis is more on the quality of the service to be provided rather than the quantity, whereas in traditionally black communities the opposite obtains. This suggests that public participation takes various viewpoints in different communities as a result of the previous orientation of the community currently engaged in the task of choosing and prioritizing projects for implementation.

In the context of the study, public participation refers to the active involvement of citizens within the municipality in choosing projects that must be implemented to stimulate and sustain development. Furthermore, public participation is understood to mean a structured participation, and not just calling a series of public meetings. Structured participation means that the process of the implementation of projects will involve organized formations that have mandates as well as observable lines of accountability. As has been noted earlier, the manner in which the principle of public participation is applied, differs from one municipality to the other, depending on the type of community that is being serviced by that particular municipality. Public participation involves constant and sustained exchange of information between the municipality and citizens. In his commentary, Currie (2002) notes that the Promotion of Access to Information Act obligates all public institutions, including municipalities, to make available information about their activities to their citizens. Whilst it is a matter of governance prudence to communicate with citizens in the process of implementing public projects, it is also a legislative obligation that municipalities engage their communities in conducting their business. This includes implementation of projects.

In bigger municipalities where there are big population numbers, it can be very difficult to achieve direct participation by all citizens within the municipality, therefore a representative type of participation would be necessary, whilst in smaller municipalities with small population numbers, a mixture of direct and representative participation would be applied effectively.

2.3. Integrated Development Planning (IDP)

The concept of integrated development planning owes its consolidation and prominence, in South Africa, to the emergence of the idea of centralizing development in the local government as a consequence of implementing developmental local government by municipalities in their areas of jurisdiction. In his

article, Paycroft (1998) is of the view that integrated development planning originated from the 1998 White Paper on Local Government which established it as a blueprint for developmental local government. At this point it is necessary to note that integrated development planning is a process that results in the compilation of a document which becomes a guiding document for managing development in a municipality. According to the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (2000), the process of compiling this document takes no less than 10 months before the start of a municipality's new financial year.

The South African government administrative framework, with its tripartite structure of national, provincial and local spheres, is very prone to maladministrative practices, like duplication of services and lack of clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities assigned to each level of government. The type of planning afforded by the integrated development planning is chiefly designed to eliminate these problems. In the context of the study, the legislative requirement to implement the IDP is aimed at the decentralization of the management of service delivery implementation to the citizens rather than being the preserve of the ruling elite.

Local government, compared to other spheres of government, is strategically positioned to be in the centre of developmental planning. This is so because it is the government that is closest to where people live. Citizens spend much of their economic lives in suburbs, cities and metros, and these are areas where local government becomes the first sphere with which to interact. Taking this to account, integrated development planning can be defined as a process by which local government or municipalities prepare strategic development plans for a five year period. In enhancing this definition Todes, Sithole and Williamson (2010) adds that integrated development planning is the process by which municipalities come up with a strategic planning document as a result of engaging stakeholders, and coming to a consensus regarding future development in their area of jurisdiction. These plans are reviewed each year in order to ensure that all the changing needs of the citizens are accommodated in this planning document. In section 152 of the South African Constitution as amended (2011), it is required that all municipalities plan and manage their affairs so as to enhance provision of basic services, involvement of citizens and promotion of economic development. In the second decade of the existence of municipalities, it has been shown that economic development is linked to infrastructural development, hence the greater part of this study is anchored on citizen participation in the implementation of infrastructural programs.

Todes et al (2010) in their IDP critique, identifies three main areas where the compilation and the consolidation of the views of citizens usually encounter some problems, thus resulting in the omission of some views from critical stakeholders that make up communities. The first of these is the challenge of

involving the broader spectrum of the community involving distinctive sectors, such as women, people with special needs and the minority groups. The IDP legislation is less specific about the involvement of these groups. The second area pertains to the people who are tasked with the work of compiling the needs, namely, the bureaucrats and the public representatives - specifically the ward councillors. The credibility of the process and the end product depends largely on the commitment of these officials in reaching all sectors of society. The third one is the extent to which the process of planning is institutionalized in the particular municipality, which is shown by the extent to which the process is structured and documented.

2.4. Developmental Local Government

The concept of developmental local government is relatively new in the area of local government governance. It owes its origins from the desire to fundamentally transform municipalities from being institutions for the extension of central and provincial governments, to institutions that are at the centre of development for citizens within a defined municipal area. In his observation, Koma (2012) has noticed that the purpose of municipalities has changed over the years as ruling regimes changed in the history of South Africa. He observed that the role of municipalities over the years has changed in line with the philosophy of the government of the time. The example of this is demonstrated by the fact that during the period of the Union of South Africa, municipalities were only extensions of the central government. During the Apartheid era, municipalities were maintained in order to legitimize and perpetuate the policy of separate development, hence there were different municipalities for different racial groups even in the same localities.

Koma (2012) has gone on to identify features that distinguish 21st century municipalities from those that operated in the periods mentioned above. One prominent feature is the developmental nature of the constitutional mandate of municipalities. He attests that developmental local government is identified by four main features; namely, focusing on social development and economic upliftment of the community, promotion of local democracy through institutionalization of public participation, providing leadership and capacitating citizens, and co-ordination and integration.

The four features outlined above provide the basis for the understanding of the concept of developmental local government. The first feature, which is the focus on social development and economic upliftment, means that the municipality is required to provide citizens with enough access to services like the provision of road infrastructure, electricity and environmental health by collecting refuse on a regular basis. These are but few of the services that are expected to be performed by municipalities as agents of

developmental local government. The emergent form of municipalities is a result of the integration of both traditional towns and townships in some areas, and towns and rural areas in other areas. The municipalities that emerged as a result of these mergers are expected to be responsible for development of the areas within, their jurisdictions, in an equitable manner.

The second feature, on the promotion of democracy by municipalities, relates to the obligation to involve citizens in the affairs of local government. The most common tool to implement this is the institutionalization of public participation. Public participation involves a number of activities that relate to communication tools between the municipality and its citizens. These tools include public meetings, mayoral road-shows, council report-back sessions, petitions by communities to the municipality, information sessions, door to door campaigns by councillors and political parties represented in the municipal council. Local democracy is enforced, in the main, by legislative pieces like the Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, Local Government Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1999 and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996.

The third feature that distinguishes municipalities, with the developmental local government agenda, is the obligation to give leadership and to build capacity among citizens. The municipalities are expected to encourage learning from global best-practices with the intention of implementing those best-practices locally. The implication of the concept of developmental local government is that the municipal council should be able to lead the community in the process of improving their lives. This leadership is provided by establishing structures of public participation within communities so as to listen and respond to the needs of municipal citizens.

The type of municipality envisaged by the concept of developmental local government is the one that initiates and co-ordinates all developmental activities that take place within the municipality. The main purpose for the existence of the municipality is to improve living conditions of all the communities without giving preference to any particular race group as was the practice in the era before the advent of democracy in 1994. In concluding, the idea of developmental local government carries in it the social and economic development of communities spearheaded by municipalities. In the context of the study, this development is a result of interactions between the municipality and its citizens, and projects that are identified are a result of the public participation process wherein communities express their views in terms of which projects need to be implemented first.

2.5 <u>Service Delivery</u>

The term 'service delivery' has, for a number of times, been used in different contexts in the description of the relationship between government and citizens in the process of the provision of services to citizens. The quality and the sustainability of the services is the major determinant of whether the government of the day is adequately providing its citizens with required services. These services include social, economic and infrastructural services. Taking this point further, Holtzhausen and Naidoo (2011) believe that there is a link between the quality of service delivery and the manner in which governance is conducted in public institutions. The assertion continues to indicate that if an institution has executive and administrative weaknesses, there is a great likelihood that there will be little or no service delivery capability.

Local government, represented by municipalities, has been identified as the weakest sphere of government compared to the national and provincial spheres when it comes to the provision of services to citizens. Although municipalities vary in terms of their weaknesses, there is a general belief that a large percentage of them experience challenges with regards to good governance and service delivery. In support of this notion, Holtzhausen and Naidoo (2011) reflect on the 2009 report on the state of the municipalities by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs which confirmed that municipalities in South Africa were in a state of crisis. Among other causes for the paralysis, the report listed the lack of understanding of local government demands by councillors, inadequate systems to manage finances and enhance accountability, the inability to distinguish between legislative, administrative and executive powers, and how to exercise them to promote good governance in the desire to make sure that the wishes of the citizens are taken care of when delivering services.

The concept of service delivery, therefore, is better understood when it is associated with the public institutions and the manner in which these institutions are managed and governed. The constitutional arrangements in South Africa make it an obligation for government and government institutions to exist mainly for the provision of services to communities, whether this is done directly or indirectly. In order to get more understanding of service delivery, two concepts need to be separated and understood differently from each other. These concepts are government and governance. The public administration dispensation in South Africa consider the institution of government as the organ of state that is responsible for making policy and laws which must be used to manage the state. Governance is the manner in which these laws and policies are administered. Therefore, governance has to do with how the state and state institutions are managed, and government has to do with who manages these institutions. The process of delivering

the services is heavily dependent on both government and governance. In further agreeing with this assertion, Holtzhausen and Naidoo attests that government, through the municipalities as delivery entities, has an obligation to promote the welfare of its citizens so as to uplift their social and economic wellbeing. From the discussion above it becomes clear that government and governance are the pillars upon which service delivery is anchored. The better the governance, co-ordination and integration, the faster and qualitative the service delivery.

The South African service delivery scenario is such that some areas of the country were underdeveloped while others were adequately developed. It is generally accepted that the policy of Apartheid was largely responsible for this state of affairs. The effect this unequal development has on service delivery is that development of some areas has to be accelerated in order to achieve equity and equal treatment of all citizens, as espoused in the South African legislative arrangements.

2.6. Systems Thinking

Systems thinking is an approach consisting of various methodologies that attempts to explain or gain an understanding of various situations. It is a fact that our universe is a bigger whole made up systems of one nature or another, and these are either natural systems or systems that are a result of human creation and interactions. In the daily interactions with the world, human beings are always engaged in some kind of system or another. The various examples of these systems can be found in every aspect of life. The most common systems are banking systems, railway systems, information and technology systems, schooling systems. The list is never exhaustive.

Systems thinking originated from the desire to understand problem situations, especially those that have elements of human behaviour. This approach to understanding phenomena advocates a method that takes into consideration all possible influences that are at play in any particular situation. When a situation is to be understood, a variety of causes are taken into consideration before a determination is done in terms of the behaviour of a phenomenon. In relation to traditional disciplines, systems thinking is still developing its body of knowledge as it has not been in the scientific circles for a very long time. In his research on evolution of ancient and contemporary systems thinking, Jere Lazanski (2010) notes that system thinking, as a discipline, has recently been revived and it became very prominent after the Second World War. Taking this comment into consideration, it is possible to note that there were other approaches that functioned as predecessors of systems thinking. These are listed as:

Logical Thinking

Casual Thinking and

Reductionist Thinking

Systems thinking can be very useful in providing an understanding of complex situations which are otherwise very difficult to comprehend, using, for example, the approaches mentioned above. Senge and Sterman (1992) expand on this assertion by saying that in order for systems thinking to be of any use, it has to develop and provide tools that must be used to provide solutions and build capacity of the beneficiaries of the system. The tools that the system must provide must have undergone a process of validation through being tested in organization and real life problem situations.

One approach that dominated before systems thinking was reductionism. The reductionist approach believes that a system has to be broken into various components and each component has to be analysed in isolation of other components and, out of this exercise, an understanding is made. Systems thinking came as a direct response to the limitations of reductionism, as isolation of components was no longer providing a useful tool to understand complex situations, particularly those that involved human behaviour. In his understanding, Flood (2010) says the development of systems thinking was accelerated by reductionists' lack of ability to provide an adequate understanding of the behaviour of living things.

The study is anchored in systems thinking and one method within this discipline is used to get an understanding of the public participation system. A soft systems methodology has been chosen as a scientific methodology to be employed in the quest to get a more understanding of this human activity system. A systems thinking approach is therefore the most relevant approach as it would be very difficult to get an understanding of the public participation system using approaches like reductionism, logical thinking or casual thinking. In his comment about the development of systems thinking, Jackson (2001) attests that the ability to develop tools for use to understand complex phenomena, with problems involving human beings who have different viewpoints, was what consolidated this approach as a scientific tool.

2.7. Soft Systems Methodology

The discipline of systems thinking has, over the years, developed many branches and approaches that, when combined together, form a group of approaches that make up systems thinking. One of these is soft

system methodology. This approach takes the view that in order to understand the behaviour of any system, it is necessary to consider all possible influences that interact within it. This consideration is not limited to any group of influences. The behaviour of any system is chiefly driven by all agents that interact within that particular system, and therefore, for one to understand the behaviour of a system, one needs to take into account all the elements or agents that are part of that system.

Studies indicate that this methodology was among the last to be introduced in systems thinking, having become more recognizable in the seventies. It is mainly associated with Checkland's action research conducted at Lancaster University. In their attestation, Checkland and Winter (2005) point out that the motivation for the action research was to come up with a methodology that has principles adapted from problem situations experienced by organizations in the process of conducting their business. It has to be noted that the development of soft systems methodology came at a time when hard systems like engineering and technology systems were dominating the space of problem solving. These systems were very effective in dealing with problems that needed predetermined answers for anticipated problems. These systems, however, experienced challenges when they were employed to solve complex situations involving behaviours associated with humans. Checkland refers to this group of problems as unstructured, and therefore it can be very difficult to use hard systems methodologies to understand and deal with them.

Systems that fall in the category of hard systems have weaknesses when they have to deal with unstructured problem situations, they are found wanting as the situations usually exhibit unusual and unexpected behaviours. In his comment, Checkland (2010) revealed that in the process of finding a methodology that is effective, he looked for the one that would help organizations not only to identify and understand complex situations, but to be able to deal with those situations. He continues to say that he looked for a system that would be able to assist in turning around these situations and to help organizations as they go about their daily operations.

Checkland (2010) believes that in order to fully understand soft system methodology, one needs to distinguish between the natural systems, physical systems and, what he calls, human activity systems. The soft systems methodology has more value in dealing with the human activity systems. In the context of the present paper, the public participation system is identified as a human activity system, hence the soft systems methodology is used to understand it.

The methodology is based on the notion that before a complex situation is dealt with, three conditions have to exist. The first one is the acknowledgement that there is a problem situation and that this situation

needs to be turned around. The people benefiting from the turned around situation are usually called clients in the soft systems methodology terminology as they had identified the situation in the first place and made the first attempts at looking for the turnaround strategies.

The second one is the existence of people who make themselves available to lead the process of finding solutions for dealing with the situation. As problem solvers, this group sets out to design a process to be followed in the quest to find solutions. These people may be professionals in the field, they may be consultants or may be volunteers.

The third condition is that there has to be a group of persons who function as owners of the situation. These are the people who possess power to influence the intervention. Their influence is so significant in that they have the capability to stop or promote the intervention. Checkland and Winter (2005) goes further to indicate that sometimes this group can be invisible, and individuals within this group may not even be aware that they possess such power.

The benefit of this methodology is that it is a very useful and effective tool to employ when dealing with human activity interactions that are problematic for organizations. In his analysis, Jacobs (2004) points to areas where the approach has demonstrated its worth. In doing this he refers to its ability to explain situations that are active and can influence organizational change. The influences may be human behavioural activities like attitudes, perceptions and assumptions.

Another technique within the soft systems methodology is the use of rich pictures to describe and brainstorm a complex situation. In this methodology the process of looking for various influences to the problem situation is never ending, thus making it possible to explore a number of interventions to turn the situation around. To drive this point forward Khisty (1995) believes that the process of inquiry has no prescribed ending as it can continue after the problem situation has been addressed.

CHAPTER 3

3.0. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Having given an extensive review of literature and conceptualized the main concepts of the study in chapter 2, the next stage is the outline of the methodology that was used in gathering information and collection of data. This is done in order to show the scientific method employed, as this forms a basis for the results that will be presented in chapter 4. The study is located in the Ingquza Hill Municipality, situated in the Oliver Reginald Tambo (OR Tambo) District of the Eastern Cape. Being a local municipality, Ingquza Hill is divided into 31 wards, which makes it the second largest municipality in the district. According to the 2011 census report conducted by Statistics South Africa, the municipality has 278 481 inhabitants. The main economic activity in the municipality is subsistence farming, and most of the people of active economic age are working outside the municipality in places like Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal, specifically in Johannesburg and Durban. The majority of the population is heavily dependent of social security. Less than 4% of the households have piped water supply inside their dwellings. The road and communication infrastructure is poorly developed with some villages becoming inaccessible during rainy seasons. The study attempts to find out to what extent the system of public participation has been implemented in these communities.

In going about the process of data collection, the study has chosen to use various service delivery reports that have been generated over a period of three financial years (2009/2010, 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 reports) so as to demonstrate whether the process of public participation was being implemented consistently on one hand, and whether the views or the prioritization of the citizens are reflected on the type of projects that are reported as having been implemented, on the other. The implementation of the consultation process was verified by looking at the record of meetings, municipal events and council road-shows that were conducted. In addition to this, the enquiry looked at whether all the wards of the municipality were involved in the consultative and report back meetings. The alignment of prioritization and implemented projects was verified by comparing the list of identified projects in the annual planning document, the integrated development plan (IDP) with projects that appear in the annual reports, as being implemented. The study used Checkland's soft systems methodology as the underlying theoretical foundation upon which the study is conducted. The outline below is an elaboration of this methodology as used in the study.

3.2. <u>The soft systems approach as applied in the study</u>

The soft systems methodology has developed, over the years, to be one of the commonly used methods in an effort to understand complex systems. In emphasizing this point, Checkland (2011) writes that the soft systems methodology was designed to deal with wicked systems that the conventional scientific approach of his time was not able to deal with. The conventional approach he was referring to was the approach used in hard sciences like engineering and natural sciences. The study applied the version of the methodology as it was developed in the seventies. This model follows a series of seven stages that begin when the problem situation is identified, culminating in the stage when interventions are ready to be implemented to deal with the situation.

1) The first stage in the model is the identification of the situation, which comes as a result of noticing that a problem exists and that there is a need to put it right. The problem situation is usually identified by a group of citizens who take it upon themselves to notice the situation with the aim of seeking remedies to it. The process of the identification of the problem situation can either be structured or unstructured. By being structured it means that the identification is done in formally convened community meetings for dealing with the problem situation. The soft systems methodology identifies this as the stage where the first attempts at addressing the problem take place. For the study, this process took the form of gatherings in the form of meetings called by ward councillors to identify and prioritize development projects, council sponsored meetings to canvass the community views about coming projects and analysis of projects already implemented, protest marches to complain either about the quality of projects already implemented or non-delivery of prioritized set of programs.

2) Secondly, the methodology moves to a stage when the problem is expressed, and in expressing it, the true nature of the problem is exposed so that relevant tools to deal with it can be brainstormed and identified. Soft systems methodology recommends a few techniques that can be used to express the problem, and the most common one is the use of rich pictures. The value of the technique is that it encourages brainstorming and is a useful tool for instilling endless imagination. During this stage and in the use of the entire soft systems methodology, the process of finding solutions goes together with the learning process. All actors in the process become engaged in a process of learning in all the stages of the soft systems methodology.

3) The third stage involves the formulation of the project statement and, according to the soft systems methodology terminology, the proposition of the root definition. In the root definition, a

number of players and their roles are identified and the manner in which they are to undertake the function is outlined. This is done in a single sentence or paragraph. In his analysis of this stage, Jackson (1994) identifies a practical approach to making a practical project statement, also referred to as the root definition in soft systems methodology. This statement identifies the clients, actors, transformation process, world view and an environmental scan (CATWOE). The effectiveness of the intervention program depends, to a larger extent, on how the root definition is crafted. An example of a root definition or a project statement, and the one directly related to the study at hand would be crafted as follows: A SYSTEM BY THE INGQUZA HILL MUNICIPALITY TO IMPROVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION BY CITIZENS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INFRASTRUCTURAL PROGRAMS AIMED AT MAKING BETTER THE QUALITY OF THEIR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIVES IN LINE WITH THE DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT IMPERATIVES. In this root definition, it is possible to dissect the various elements of the CATWOE model as follows:

- Clients are the citizens
- Actors are citizens, municipality, consultants, professionals, municipal officials
- Transformation process is signified by the alignment with developmental local government
- World View is represented by the improvement of the social and economic lives of citizens
- Owners are represented by the municipality and funders of the intervention
- Environmental scan is indicated by public participation which is a cornerstone of local democracy, as mentioned earlier in the study. Public participation is a sign that the environment in which the system is implemented is the democratic one where consultation of municipal citizens is valued and implemented.

4) The next stage is the formulation of the conceptual model, which is done by the experts who may either be government officials, consultants or a group of individuals taken from within the community. The stage of the conceptual model, like the root definition stage, is done outside the system; in other words, people who design the conceptual model divorce themselves from the system and begin to work objectively. This approach assists in the elimination of hindrances to the success of the intervention, in that it is possible to identify obstacles which would otherwise not be possible to detect by people who have an interest in the success or failure of the system. These refer to the cultural orientation of the various players within the system. It is the argument of the study that the culture of the people in which the intervention is to be implemented has a

huge impact on the type and shape of the conceptual model that is going to be used as part of the intervention.

To relate this to the public participation system, it is possible to notice similarities in that. For example, the public participation system's conceptual model was developed by government in order to guide all the municipalities in the process of consulting their citizens when they undertake developmental programs, in particular, infrastructural programs intended for community upliftment. The conceptual model for the public participation system is located in the government guidelines for compiling the integrated development plan which is regarded as a blueprint for all municipalities in their process of service delivery. The compilation, implementation and review of the of the integrated development plan, represent various stages that can be likened to the soft system methodology as originally promulgated by Checkland.

5) The fifth stage represents the beginning of the implementation of the intervention, and this starts by making a comparison between the root definition stated in stage 3 and the conceptual model in stage 4. The purpose of this comparison is to determine whether the implementation plan has captured all what was identified in the project statement. It is essential that what gets to be implemented, be what was identified earlier in the planning or the root definition. In the IDP this translates into the process of monitoring and evaluation, as to whether the municipality implements what was prioritized by citizens. The benefit of this could be the reduction of complaints by public which usually take the form of service delivery protests and handing of petitions to municipal councils. This paper is of the view that, if the municipality is consistent in involving citizens in its activities by implementing the public participation system, the citizens would be less likely to embark on service delivery protests.

Soft systems methodology suggests that, at this stage, the actors should consider as many options as possible in the effort to choose the most relevant and appropriate options for the implementation of the intervention. It is always important to remember that the underlying principle of the methodology is that learning is an integral part of each and every stage. At this stage, the actors have an opportunity to make choices that are realistic and are compatible with the real world, and to avoid cultural hindrances when the intervention is implemented. The choices should take into consideration attitudes and beliefs of all the actors so as to be as close as possible to the real world in which the system will operate.

6) Having brainstormed and chosen the most appropriate intervention strategies to implement, the methodology goes on to incorporate elements that will enhance the effectiveness of the chosen model. These elements include the determination of whether the intervention takes into account the needs of the clients, together with their cultural orientation, as failure to do so could easily stall the intervention. It is at this stage that the conceptualized model should be checked whether it conforms to all the expectations of the community for which it is to be implemented.

7) The seventh stage is where the various strategies and interventions chosen in stage 5 are being implemented. The choice of culturally relevant interventions are now put to the test as attempts are made to change the situation. In the case of a municipality, this is the stage of the implementation of projects as they were prioritized by citizens, and progress on them is monitored using reports that are generated on monthly, quarterly, half yearly and annual intervals. The relevance and effectiveness of the intervention is judged by the satisfaction levels of the clients and, in municipalities, this is symbolized by the reduction of public complaints and service delivery protests.

Having outlined the theoretical approach that was adopted, it is necessary to immediately relate it to the object of inquiry that is being dealt with in the study. Although the public participation system in municipalities is implemented in a number of ways, the paper chose to do a study of it in so far as it relates to the implementation of infrastructural projects in the Ingquza Hill Municipality. The soft system methodology, as chosen in this study, can be likened to the whole process of consulting citizens for purposes of selecting and prioritizing projects for implementation in a particular financial year. The consultation process undertaken by municipalities to determine community needs, the methodology to implement projects to satisfy the needs, and an evaluation of the success of the intervention is what, in the study, is referred to as the system of public participation. In a municipality, the system of public participation is largely driven by sets of processes, namely, the compilation of the integrated development plan document which serves as a strategic document for the municipality, and the production and presentation of performance reports that is done on a monthly, quarterly, half yearly and annual basis. The IDP contains the plans for programs that the municipality, in consultation with citizens, has identified and prioritized for implementation in a particular financial year.

3.3. Data on implementation throughout the financial year

The methodology of the study is designed to follow the process of the identification of projects, the compilation of the IDP document, the implementation of these projects and the evaluation of both the projects and of the system as a whole. In the process of compiling the IDP, the municipality and citizens embark on the identification of all what will be implemented by the municipality over the period of five years. These priorities are then reviewed on a yearly basis in an effort to align them with changing priorities of the communities. The study chose to focus specifically on the infrastructural programs in the form of municipal roads and community halls. The research tried to find out whether the information that appears in the planning document, the IDP, is also reflected in the reports that are generated as updates on the implementation of the IDP. At this stage it is necessary to mention that municipalities are forced to produce and present reports on the progress in the implementation of the programs and projects that have been identified by the citizens. In their commentary about the budget processes and compliance levels in municipalities, Dollery and Graves (2009) refer to these reports, noting that the South African Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act, in sections 71 and 72, forces municipalities to give monthly and half yearly reports to the provincial department responsible for municipalities. It is, therefore, mandatory that each and every municipality should give these updates as a matter of compliance, on one hand, and as a matter of good governance, on the other. The South African Local Government Municipal Systems Act as amended (2010) also forms the legal basis for generating and submitting reports on an annual basis, in that it states that all municipalities must prepare and submit annual reports reflecting their performance in the financial year, to the provincial department responsible for municipalities. It is true, therefore, that while the study is trying to find alignment between municipal plans and reports, legislative arrangements also make it a legal obligation to do these plans and reports as a process that must be followed in the delivery of services. The provision of these reports also assists the community in the monitoring and evaluation of the quality and the quantity of the projects delivered.

Ingquza Hill Municipality is located in the rural part of the OR Tambo District Municipality. From the location of the municipality alone, it is possible to realize that the citizens in this municipality are experiencing backlogs in terms of the provision of infrastructure projects in the form of roads and community halls. In recognition of this, the municipality has, over the past three years, allocated the bulk of its budget on capital expenditure that incorporates the construction of roads and community halls. The study has also attempted to analyse the budget spending to find out how the financial planning document, in the form of the budget, has translated into the actual construction of these infrastructural projects. In going about the inquiry, the study also investigated the internal administrative arrangements to find out

whether there is a dedicated unit or department that focuses on the implementation of infrastructural programs. It is the belief of the study that in order to effectively implement the IDP, the municipality must have enough financial, structural and human resource capacity. The presence of a dedicated unit will confirm that there is structural capacity to deliver the services mentioned above.

In looking at the reports, the study followed the process undertaken by the municipality in compiling the reports, and how the reports are eventually made available to the municipal communities. The internal processes that are followed by the reports were investigated, including looking at the stages through which the reports pass; these include the management of the municipality, the council of the municipality and ultimately members of the public including interested groups, until they are submitted to the provincial department responsible for local government. The manner in which the reports are evaluated was also the area of interest in the study. The evaluation of the report is very important as it is through this evaluation that an opinion is formulated as to whether the municipality is performing according to the expected standards. Within the public service, to which the municipalities belong, there are institutions that function as monitors of service delivery and governance. One of these institutions is the Auditor General's office which, on a yearly basis, is required to make an opinion as whether there is performance in the municipality, and whether municipalities adhere to prescribed governance standards. To this end, the study looked at the report of the Auditor General about the municipality for the three years under study. This was done to know and observe opinions about the extent to which the municipality fulfils its service delivery promises, as reflected in its planning documents. The second purpose was to look at the extent to which the municipality adheres to governance norms as set out by the national government through the national department overseeing municipalities and the national treasury department.

At the end, the study sought to respond to the objectives of the study that were identified and expanded on in chapter one. To give just a summary, these objectives were identified as: getting an understanding of the public participation using the soft systems methodology, to examine whether the public participation process enhances ownership of implemented projects by the citizens, and to find out whether the design and formulation of the process promotes citizen participation.

CHAPTER 4

4.0. PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

Chapter 3 outlined the process followed in gathering data for the study, and in it, it was demonstrated how the soft systems methodology was applied in an effort to get an understanding of the system of public participation in a municipal environment. The study, as was indicated in chapter 1, is located in the Ingquza Hill Municipality. Having dealt extensively with the methodology in chapter 3, the focus now is to provide results of the research that was undertaken and to present data obtained in the areas that were investigated. An examination of the public participation system reveals that it is one of those systems that determine whether a municipality is geared towards societal transformation as espoused in the legislative dictates of the South African government. As the presentation and analysis of results proves, municipalities are consciously aware of the obligations that are demanded from them, both from provincial and national government spheres as they practice oversight over municipalities on one hand, and citizens as recipients of services on the other.

The results presented in this chapter are based on the research done using a number of municipal documents, that have been generated and presented to the municipal council over the period of three financial years, from 2009/2010 through 2010/2011 to 2011/2012 financial years. This is the information that has undergone the process of the external audit by the Office of the Auditor General. The documentation used is made up of annual reports, integrated development plans and, where there is a need, a reference is made to monthly, quarterly or half-yearly reports. The research results are also based on the interactions that took place between the municipality and its citizens during this period. The interactions included meetings held between municipal officials and communities together with those between elected councillors and people in the wards from where the councillors were elected. The meetings were structured in that they were convened in order to fulfil a requirement in the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (2000) that seeks to promote and enforce public participation. In fulfilment of this piece of legislation, the municipality is expected to do ward-based planning in preparation for the identification of community needs to be included in the IDP document. It is also important to note that the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (2000) also requires that the municipality institutionalize the involvement of citizens in conducting its affairs. To do this, the municipal council is required to approve and adopt an IDP process plan which identifies specific time

frames where community meetings will be conducted, for the sole reason of identifying development projects that are to be recorded as needs for the ward.

4.2. Public Participation in the Planning Phase

As alluded to above, the planning phase in the implementation of developmental programs in the municipality is done through the IDP process which is legislated as the process that must be undertaken by all municipalities as they go about the process of planning for development. The IDP manual, as published by the then South African Department of Provincial Affairs and Local Government (1998), demands that the participation of citizens be institutionalized by providing for their input in the making and compilation of the IDP document. In the Ingquza Hill Municipality IDP process plan, this participation is provided for as early as the beginning of the cycle of the planning exercise. In the development planning observed in the three financial years, public participation is implemented by making use of IDP meetings, ward committee meeting, local newspapers, local community radio station and IDP representative forum.

Over the three financial years that were examined, the compilation of the planning document followed a similar pattern, and this pattern was captured in the process plans that were adopted by the municipal council of Ingquza Hill Municipality every first quarter of the financial year (July to September), in all three years. The significance of the timing of the adoption is that it allowed the planning process to be finished before the start of the new financial year. It is necessary to note that the financial year for the municipalities starts in July and ends in June of the following year. By starting the planning process early in the preceding financial year, the municipality allows enough time to collect and document all the information from all the 31 wards. The timing also allows for enough time to put together and adopt the IDP document so that it becomes ready for implementation by the 1st of July, which is the first day of the new financial year. From what has been outlined so far in the study, it is clear that the system of public participation in the developmental programs is implemented, to a larger extent, by the process of integrated development planning. It is of great value to understand the process of the IDP formulation and to investigate in order to find out to what extent municipalities implement the legislated process. For the purposes of the study this was done by investigating the process as it is done in the Ingquza Hill Municipality.

The legislated process of doing planning in the municipality, which is enforced by the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (2000), proposes a cycle that must be followed by all municipalities and it is

within this cycle that important democratic values are expressed. The process guides that planning and implementation of development programs should follow a series of steps that entrench citizen participation, accountability, monitoring and evaluation. In the initial stages of integrated development planning, for example, it is demanded that the municipality should have the following structures in place for the institutionalization of the consultative process: the Ward Committee, the Representative Forum, the IDP Steering Committee, the IDP Manager and the Municipal Council. For the purpose of getting the views of the community members, the Municipal Council, through the Ward Councillor, is required to facilitate the meeting of the ward committees through which the priorities of the communities are channelled. In the IDP process, the ward committee collects community views and lists of community needs by conducting a series of ward meetings where ward-based planning is done. From these meetings, a list of projects that have been identified as priorities is compiled and submitted to the municipality.

The second tool used to implement public participation is the IDP representative forum. In this forum, all the interest groups that have a role to play in the governance and economic system of the municipality get a direct platform to put their views and priorities for consideration before the final document is adopted by the municipal council. The representative forum of the Ingquza Hill Municipality was, during the research period, deliberately open-ended and any organization or individual was allowed to join any time during the planning period. The study found this element quite interesting as it indicated that the municipal council recognized the fact that there may be interest groups that the municipality may not be aware of at a given moment, but those would also get an opportunity to participate in the development planning of the municipality. Another interesting element was that during the representative forum meetings, documentation was circulated in two languages, that is English and IsiXhosa, and this worked well for local communities who were not English speakers. This fact alone tended to broaden the scope and impact of the consultative process, in that, people were able to read and understand the planning process itself, the projects that are being lifted for implementation in a particular year, and those that will be implemented over a longer term.

The process of citizen consultation is an on-going exercise within the municipal governance system and it continues from the time the projects are identified, through their implementation, up to the time when the implementation has been completed and is being evaluated. As far as the finalization of the planning tool, the Municipal Systems Act (2000) specifies that all municipal council meetings dealing with the compilation and adoption of the IDP must be opened to the public, although the council remains the only structure that can adopt and make it to be a strategic document for implementation of the programs for the specific financial year.

4.3. Public Participation and Implementation

As the adoption of the IDP document marks the end of the consultative phase in the implementation of programs, it is also recognized as the beginning of the actual implementation phase of the projects. The Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act (2003) mandates that the IDP, and budget to support it, should be adopted 30 days before the start of the financial year. Except for 2009/2010 financial year, the Ingquza Hill Local Municipality has been consistent in complying with this legislative prescript. The finalization of planning before the start of the financial year means that the identified projects can be implemented as early as the first day of the new financial year. The involvement of citizens, at the implementation stage, takes the form of receiving reports that are designed to keep the community informed about implementation targets, together with challenges encountered, and how these are to be overcome. In the process of investigation in the Ingquza Hill Municipality, the study observed that the reports were generated by management and presented to the full council after having been discussed in council committees. The reports that are referred to here are monthly reports, quarterly reports, half yearly reports and annual reports. For 2009/2010 and 2010/ 2011 the council depended only on the officials for judging the integrity of the reports as it had no mechanism to verify and validate the reports, with the exception of the annual report which was the only report subjected for scrutiny by the Office of the Auditor General. In 2011/2012 the council inaugurated the Municipal Public Accounts Committee in order to monitor and verify the validity of reports before they could be classified as official council documents. Although the reports are verified by this committee and adopted by the council, there was, however, no evidence to confirm that the reports are taken to the communities as a means of reporting back on the implementation of the IDP. Reporting back to citizens on the implementation happened only on the annual report and it was not done in all the 31 wards of the municipality. The reports, however, were consistently submitted to the Provincial Department of Local Government and both Provincial and National Treasury Departments.

From the brief observations outlined above, a picture gradually emerges in terms of how public participation is being implemented in the delivery of development projects in the municipality. It has to be noted that, according to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the municipality must facilitate and ensure the involvement of citizens in its affairs. The involvement of citizens is understood to have no limits, and therefore progress on the implementation of municipal plans has to be regularly given so as to maintain high levels of community participation throughout the process of service delivery. In terms of the compliance with legislation in the production and presentation of reports, the study observed that the legal arrangements relating to the circulation of reports were observed. This is so because

legislative pieces, that regulate the production and submission of reports were generally adhered to. The major legal instruments that regulate reporting in municipalities are the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, for the production of the annual reports; the Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act, for the production of the monthly, quarterly and half yearly report. As it was noted earlier, the presentation of these reports to communities, to update them on progress, was found to be lacking. In further studying the reporting trends of the municipality, the study made an observation that over the three year period under study, the main report which was given prominence was the annual report, although taking it to communities was also insufficient. The study found that there was limited structured reporting to communities, as suggested in the IDP guidelines. Meetings to report on progress in the implementation were consistent only in so far as they related to the state of the municipality speech by the mayor, which is presented once every year at the beginning of the calendar year. This address is more related to the State of the Nation address by the President of the country rather than being a feedback to communities on the progress made on the adopted service delivery plans.

4.4. Public participation through meetings

Having observed the reporting framework, which was identified as one of the drivers for public participation, the paper will now begin to report on the manner and the frequency in which meetings were conducted. The observation will cover meetings that were held at crucial stages of the financial year, and these are at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the implementation of the IDP. The study is of the opinion that meetings are a tool that government can utilise to interact with communities in the process of information sharing about developments in their area of jurisdiction. Although there are different ways in which municipalities convey information to its citizens, like newspapers, website and radio, meetings remain the most effective and direct method of communication where conversations between the municipality and its citizens take place effectively. For the type of a municipality the Ingquza Hill is, that is, rural with high illiteracy levels and with limited access to most communication media, the use of meetings remains the most easily available conversation tool between the municipality and its people.

In the process of the investigation, it was noticed that there was consistency in holding certain kinds of meetings in the municipality. These include meetings that are conducted annually in the last quarter of the municipal financial year between the month of April and June. The main purpose of these meetings was, in all three years, to communicate the draft IDP and budget in all the wards of the municipality. The engagements in these meetings were mainly focused on the projects that have been identified by ward

communities to be included in the final IDP document. These meetings also served as the yearly updates on the progress made in the implementation of projects identified in previous years. Except for these meetings in the last quarter, there were no other meetings organized specifically for ward communities to report on implementation updates. This state of affairs prevailed for all the three years under study. The Local Government Municipal Systems Act (2000) directs that the council of the municipality must have ordinary council meetings at least four times a year. A reasonable expectation would be that the council would have a meeting at least once a quarter and the meetings, among others, would consider quarterly ;2reports. The reports would then form the basis of community meetings that could be done on a quarterly basis. These meetings would be used as tools and content for public participation in that communities would be afforded a chance to get information and to give suggestions where the municipality is experiencing service delivery challenges.

While the meetings for updates were only limited to the last quarter, it was noted that there were other set of meetings that took place consistently. These are the meetings conducted by ward councillors for the purpose of doing what has come to be known as ward-based planning. These meetings were mainly used to identify a list of needs that will be forwarded to the municipality as part of the ward needs audit and analysis. The needs audit is spearheaded by the ward councillor, working together with the ward committee. It was noticeable that these meetings did not have a specific time during the financial year; the prerogative was on the particular ward to make a decision as to when the meeting would be conducted.

4.5. Public Participation System and Soft Systems Methodology

One of the objectives of the study was to find out to what extent can the public participation system be understood and, in doing that, the study pointed out that the soft systems methodology would be applied to undertake this task. This stage of the paper will outline whether elements of the soft systems methodology were observed while the examination of the public participation system in Ingquza Hill Municipality was being undertaken. It will be remembered that the methodology was earlier identified as having seven stages and, at this moment, stages will be dealt with separately from one another.

The first stage of the methodology, as identified in chapter 3, is the realization by the clients that a problem exists and that something needs to be done about it. In the examination of research material it was observed that, on a continuous basis, the citizens identify the infrastructural shortcomings in their areas and these are taken to the municipality through the ward councillor. The ward councillor is the first point of call for communities in their desire for public services or service delivery. In the wards, it was

noted that the realization or the awareness about the need happened both formally and informally. It was formal in that the realization is expressed in formal meetings convened by the municipal council through the ward councillor. The realization is also expressed informally in that the information about the need could also be handed over to the councillor in informal gatherings. In all wards it was observed that at least one general meeting was organized to discuss cross-cutting issues, and it was in these meetings that problems were discussed and forwarded for the attention of government institutions and departments responsible for bringing services to the communities. It was also in these meetings where problems in the community would be identified and compiled to form the basis of the needs analysis and audit, which the ward councillor would have and forward to all meetings about community development and compilation of ward needs.

The next stage in the soft systems methodology is when the problem situation is expressed and in the methodology, the process is assisted by the use of rich pictures as one of the brainstorming tools. This phenomenon was well demonstrated in the debates in the ward meetings. The multiplicity of programs that are listed from those meetings is such that it became difficult for the ward councillors to reduce the number of projects to realistic levels. The minutes of meetings of this nature show some wards listing over ten infrastructural programs as needs that have to be addressed in a single financial year. As the IDP document gets to finality, however, it was noted that there was a noticeable reduction of programs that the municipality approved to be included in the final IDP. The observation of the planning process conducted over the period of three years in the Ingquza Hill Municipality shows that in 2009/2010 financial year only 12 roads were approved in the plan, in 2010/2011 financial year 11 roads were approved for inclusion, and in 2011/2012 financial year 8 roads were approved. These numbers are evidence that a lot of debates took place in the meetings and that some wards were persuaded to accept that they would not be having a road in a particular year and have to wait for their turn in the coming financial years. As it can be seen, the 31 wards of the municipality could all be covered over a three year period despite the ever-present need to construct the roads as soon as possible. The depiction of the social and economic landscape of the municipality, at the beginning of chapter 3, shows a municipality which is rural in nature with significant infrastructure backlogs and the 2011 census results shows a population that is largely dependent on government services, a fact that indicates a lot of debates, discussions and convincing before decisions were arrived at.

The third and fourth stage in the methodology is when the root definition and the conceptual model are done. In the system of public participation the two stages can be grouped together and understood to complement one another. The making of the root definition is equated with identifying the different

players in the system and confirming their roles in the process. The process of planning in the municipality is centred on the compilation of the IDP document. The study noted that, as a legal requirement, the process of IDP formulation is always preceded by the adoption, by the municipal council, of the IDP process plan. Within this document, all the participants and stakeholders in the process of development are identified and their roles are spelt out. It was observed that the contents and the design of the IDP process plan follows that of the root definition in that the roles of all players are defined and explained upfront. It is interesting to note that the process plan is the preserve of the technical members of the participants. Soft systems methodology literature suggests that the root definition is done by experts or consultants or capable people extracted from the community. In the Ingquza Hill Municipality this was done by municipal officials. The process plan for the municipality has a list of all participants that have a role to play and these are identified and included in the planning for the implementation of development projects. These include the council, management, business people, churches, non-governmental organizations, political parties, government departments, traditional leaders.

At this stage in the cycle of municipal planning, a similarity can also be observed with another stage in the soft systems methodology. This is the stage of the formulation of the conceptual model. Looking at the IDP documents for the three years under examination, it was noticed that the document itself can be regarded as a project document as it is used as a tool for implementing development projects and, in the process, facilitating public participation. The design of the IDP document follows a sequence of chapters that resemble the stages in the soft systems methodology. The chapters are introduction and background, where the context of planning in the local government is established, and the institutional arrangements for the IDP where the municipality shows how it has provided the administrative support for the process of planning. In this chapter the municipality mentions the identification of an official to function as IDP Manager and the Portfolio Committee on development to provide oversight to the process. The next chapter is dealing with roles and responsibilities of participants in the development process. After this chapter, the next one is on mechanisms and procedures for participating and alignment where the context of public participation is given meaning. The chapter also establishes how individual IDP forums and committees will function and the stages that the document must go through before it is finalized and adopted by the council. The document goes on to give a situational analysis of the municipal area as a whole, looking at all the influences that may impact on the development, such as, geographical, environmental, economic, cultural and social. The last two chapters relate to the actual implementation of projects in that one chapter is dealing with strategies and objectives, and the other one is dealing with project phase where all the projects approved for implementation are categorized and listed.

In the fifth stage of the soft systems methodology the conceptual model, arrived at in stage 4, is compared with real life and is subjected to the test of whether it is realistic and whether it is possible to implement it. In the public participation system of the Ingquza Hill Municipality, it was observed that there was a set of meetings that were convened by the municipality after each and every IDP chapter was finished and a new one was to be started. It has, however, been noted earlier in this chapter that public participation was very strong and consistent in the planning phases, but was not carried over and done in the implementing stages. It was observed, for example, that when the implementation plan is being monitored during the financial year, reports were not consistently taken back to the citizens for information sharing, monitoring and evaluation. The practice of conducting meetings after each chapter, had an effect of providing a window for citizens to test whether suggested strategies were aligned with realities of the municipality in terms of the situational analysis that was done in one of the chapters of the IDP document. In the examination of the compiling and documentation of the IDP chapters, it was noted that the chapter on the strategies and objectives resembles what is done in the 5th stage of the soft systems methodology in that in the meetings dealing with this chapter a lot of debates revolve around the implementability of the strategies. The debates resulted in some strategies being done away with as they didn't appear to be in line with the realities in the municipality. The cultural dynamics prevailing in the municipality are also an important part of the choice of strategies to be employed in the implementation. The presence of traditional leaders ensured that this ;2aspect is always taken into consideration in whatever approach is adopted for implementing development. This is more explicit in stage 6 of the soft systems methodology where various choices are explored resulting in the most appropriate implementation option being chosen.

The 7th and the last stage is the action to improve the situation, which in the public participation system, IDP and project implementation, involves the actual implementation of the projects approved in the IDP process. Public participation at this stage is implemented through the report-back meetings between the municipality and citizens held at different intervals within the financial year. Earlier in the chapter it was noted that while examining reports, it was observed that the municipality was very consistent in making the annual report available for scrutiny by the municipal communities. It was also observed that the annual reports were presented in the municipal state of the municipality address in a once-off meeting that takes place once a year. The examination also revealed that the municipality also avails the report in municipal libraries and municipal public access locations like the municipal website, and in the offices of the Mayor and the Municipal Manager. Having made that observation, the study found that the annual report was not taken as a stand-alone item to all the wards except as part of the IDP outreach program that happens in the last quarter of the financial year. Another observation in the reporting regime of the municipality was that the quarterly reports were only considered and evaluated internally within the

municipal structures, there was no evidence pointing to the fact that the reports were taken to all the wards of the municipality to provide opportunity for public participation in the tracking of progress in the service delivery implementation.

The findings presented above do make the point that there are commonalities between the soft systems methodology as proposed by Checkland and the public participation system as it is applied in the municipalities in their implementation of development programs. The next set of findings for the study to consider are those that attempt to get into the content of the reports to find out whether there is a relationship between the reports and the IDP document. The study will also seek to incorporate the findings and audit opinions of the Auditor General in so far as they relate to the performance of the municipality.

4.6. Annual Reports and IDP

One of the areas of interest identified in the study is the relationship between the integrated development plans and the annual reports in as far as infrastructural programs are concerned. This relationship forms the basis of the performance audit of the municipality, as it shows whether the municipality follows the plans that were agreed upon with the citizens regarding the choice of projects to implement in a particular year. As it has been pointed out that quarterly reports were not consistently taken to communities, the alignment between these two documents would provide confirmation to communities that their programs are implemented although they do not get quarterly updates.

To confirm the above relationship, the IDPs of the three financial years, were looked at in terms of planning targets and reports on the construction of roads in the municipality. Earlier in the chapter it was noted that the municipality had planned for the construction of 12 roads in the 2009/2010 financial year, 11 roads in the 2010/2011 financial year and 8 in the 2011/2012 financial year. The annual reports of these three financial years confirm that these roads were completed within the time frames identified and were handed over to beneficiary communities. The other service that the municipality is providing to communities is the construction of community halls. While examining the documents it was discovered that two IDPs, that is 2010/2011 and 2011/2012, are very explicit in terms of recording the exact numbers that were planned for, in those financial years. For 2010/2011 financial year, the municipality set out to construct three community halls, namely Joe Slovo Community Hall, Thobile Ndabankulu Community Hall and Hombe Community Hall. In the 2011/2012 financial year the municipality planned for 7 community halls. In looking at the reports, it was confirmed that the 3 community halls planned for in the

2010/2011 financial year were indeed constructed and finished. The reports also confirm that the 7 community halls planned for 2011/2012 financial year were also completed.

Out of the above data the study found that there is performance in the municipality, as what is contained in the planning document is also reported as having been completed in the report for that particular year. So although it may be said that communities are not regularly updated during the implementation phase which takes place within the financial year, performance against agreed targets was confirmed in the Ingquza Hill Municipality. The study also noticed that the process of the IDP and annual reporting is a continuous process in the municipalities as it is alluded to in the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (2000) which directs that the process of integrated development planning must be done for a period of five years and it must be reviewed annually. The Act continues to say that after the 5 year term of the municipal council has expired, the new council should either formulate a new IDP or adopt the existing one. So there is no period when a municipality is functioning without an approved IDP, even during the transition times immediately before and after municipal elections. This type of scenario makes it possible that an infrastructural project may be started in one financial year and be completed in another, it may be started in one IDP period and be completed in another, and it may also be started by one council and be completed by another during election periods.

The synergy between the planning and implementation was also observed when the municipality did the performance management which is the process of measuring the extent to which the performance report of the financial year matches the annual performance plan that is taken directly from the IDP. The study found that during the 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 financial years, performance measurement was still being designed in the municipality and therefore not much was done in this regard. In the 2011/2012 financial year the council undertook an evaluation of the performance of its officials and councillors in so far as the implementation of projects is concerned, specifically infrastructural projects. The process was undertaken by the oversight committee which was established specifically to validate and confirm performance reports submitted to council for adoption. In its report to council, which is part of the 2011/2012 annual report document, the oversight committee expressed its satisfaction with the manner in which the annual report was aligned to the planning in the IDP. The committee also stated that it had gone to visit the projects that were reported as completed in the annual report and had validated their existence and completion. For the study this is a very important observation especially coming from a committee that could be trusted with objectivity in the way in which it is designed and mandated. The investigation of the relationship between planning and implementation revealed that the municipality had made efforts to translate planning into practice. During this reporting period, what the public participation process

directed in the form of the IDP and performance plans, became the blueprint for implementation. Observations conducted revealed that the public participation system had an influence in the manner in which development was done and in the actual selection of projects to be implemented. The above findings also point to the fact that the municipality had confidence in its public participation system in that it did not deviate from what was agreed upon in the interactions with communities.

As part of the annual report, it was observed that another institution has expressed an opinion in terms of how the municipality is performing and managing its affairs. The Auditor General, as it is a legislated requirement, had also audited the municipality. The study looked at the opinions expressed in the three years that are being examined. In the 2009/2010 financial year, the Auditor General expressed a qualified opinion which, in the audit language, means that the governance of the institution meets the minimum standards but the institution can still improve. The opinion suggests that there are still areas on which the municipality should still improve. For the subsequent years of 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 the audit opinion was an unqualified outcome. The finding here is explicit in its expression of the availability of good governance in the municipality. It must be noted that the Auditor General makes a finding about governance in the municipality after it has looked at various governance requirements for municipality. These aspects include the performance of the municipality against targets which are recorded in the IDP. The performance of the Ingquza Hill Municipality, in terms of the completion of identified projects and the alignment of planning with implementation, has been found to be sound when measured by national norms administered by the office of the Auditor General.

While the above findings relate, to a larger extent, to the Ingquza Hill Municipality, there is no doubt that they can be generalized to other similar municipalities. This is the case because municipalities are subjected to similar governance and legal requirements by the national and provincial spheres of government, whose roles are to provide oversight upon the municipalities. The main purpose of this chapter was to present the findings of the research done according to the methodology outlined in chapter 3. The next chapter will be doing consolidation of the whole study and giving meaning to the findings presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

5.0. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapters the study dealt with the methodology used in getting the information that responded to the objectives of the study as they are outlined in the first chapter. Chapter 4 presented the results of the research as they were obtained using the methodology in chapter 3. This chapter is intended to be the consolidation of the research findings while at the same time giving an interpretation of the results as they were presented. While giving meaning to the findings outlined in chapter 4, this chapter will also attempt to develop logical conclusions as yielded by the findings of the research conducted and reported on in chapter 4.

As the chapter begins the consolidation and interpretation, it is worthy to remember that public participation is a system that is used extensively in almost all the sectors in the country. The system is mandatory for public institutions; for example, when parliament is making and amending laws, when state-owned enterprises are electing their boards of directors, to mention just a few. The study concentrated on public participation as it is applied to local government and, specifically, as it is implemented by municipalities in the implementation of service delivery programs. The Ingquza Hill Municipality was chosen as location of the study and its implementation of the system in the provision of infrastructural programs was examined as an example. It is also important to note that the legislation to which the Ingquza Hill is subjected is also applicable to other municipalities and municipal entities across the country. This means that what has been found in the Ingquza Hill Municipality, during the process of the research, can be taken as being the case in other similar municipalities, whether to a larger or to a lesser extent. The national departments of treasury and provincial government have designed compliance mechanism for municipalities such that it is easy to measure all municipalities using the same tools. This is the reason why it is possible for the Auditor General to express an opinion about levels of governance for all municipalities and municipal entities.

This chapter is designed to follow a sequence where consolidation of results will be done first. The consolidation will take the form of establishing whether the study was able to respond to the objectives listed in chapter 1. The consolidation will be followed by recommendations which will have been conceived as a result of shortcomings and challenges noticed during the study. The last part of the chapter

will be a concluding section where the pivotal parts of the study will be commented upon. It has always been the belief of the study that local government is a highly regulated sphere in the South African governance framework. It is also a fact that there is a piece of legislation that regulates each and every activity that takes place in the municipality. As it has been noted throughout the study, there are a number of legislative pieces for public participation in the implementation of development programs in municipalities. The study has proved that the IDP is the most basic and important instrument that serves as a tool for public participation, especially in the planning phases of development in municipalities. For this reason, the IDP will be used throughout the chapter in areas that relate to the planning of development programs.

5.1.1 The Imperative of the IDP

Upon the examination of legislation governing development and looking at research documentation in the Ingquza Hill Municipality, the study made a finding that the process of the IDP can never be overlooked when implementing development. It is a process through which all municipalities must move in their business of implementing programs and projects. The process of planning for development is so entrenched in the legislation, that there is even a requirement in the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (2000) that a municipality must adopt a process plan for doing the Integrated Development Plan. The same legislation continues to direct that this process must be done 10 months before the start of the financial year to which the IDP applies. In simpler words, the process plan is the document that facilitates planning about planning. This is the document that outlines the process of planning, the timeframes for consulting citizens and compilation of the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) document. In the process plan all the participants in the in the IDP process and their roles, together with timeframes for their activities, are documented.

The imperative of integrated development planning as a tool for public participation has been so recognized in that a set of regulations and guidelines have been developed to make sure that all municipalities do their development following processes that promote the involvement of citizens. As has been alluded to above, the process of the IDP is unavoidable in the planning process, but the manner in which a municipality implements it determines the extent to which it promotes public participation. The innovation of availing documents in the local language was found to be a major facilitator of information sharing in the Ingquza Hill Municipality. It had an effect of enhancing the understanding of the process and to promote ownership of the planning process. When looking at the process of institutionalization of the public participation, it is hard to miss the fact that in the IDP process plan there is provision for the

IDP representative forum. Among various committees participating in the planning process, the IDP representative forum is the biggest one as it is made up of all the stakeholders involved in the planning process. It is the most representative platform where public participation is expressed in the manner espoused in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The diversity of the municipality is clearly shown in this forum. This, however, does not in any way devalue other committees in the IDP process. The other important committee in the planning process is the IDP Steering Committee. The IDP Steering Committee is a committee made up of the officials of all government departments and private sector enterprises who bring technical reports to the planning process. In the planning stages, the Ingquza Hill Municipality can be confirmed, in the study, as one of the municipalities that are intensively implementing the public participation system. This is further confirmed by the series of recorded meetings pertaining to the management of the IDP consultative process.

For the study, it was important to investigate whether there are steps taken to provide funding for projects that are agreed upon in the planning. To this end it was found that the process of the IDP formulation is very much linked to the budget process to the extent that the two are adopted at that same time. The two documents are adopted 30 days before the start of the new financial year as it was indicated in the presentation of research results. This requirement is from the Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act (2003) that regulates local government activities pertaining to the management of finances.

5.2. Conclusions on Study Objectives

This section of the chapter connects directly with the objectives of the study as they were listed in page 4 in chapter 1. The exercise is intended to give an account of whether the research was able to focus on what it intended to do and whether it is able to give answers to questions that are the foundations of the study. Chapter 1 listed 4 objectives and these will be commented upon separately from one another.

5.2.1. Study Objective No.1

The first objective was to find out if the design of the public participation system does contribute to enhance the participation of citizens in the implementation of developmental programs in municipalities. In the quest to respond to this objective, the study established that the compilation and adoption of the integrated development plan is recognized as a tool through which public participation is implemented in the planning phases of development programs. The legislative pieces applicable to municipalities point to the fact that the public participation system is mandatory in the management of development in the local

government sphere. All the data examined in the study confirm that the design of the system is such that all municipalities follow a similar process in the implementation. The implementation of the public participation system permeates all activities in the municipality. All stages in the service delivery provision are required to be characterised by this system. The reason for this is that municipalities are a sphere of government and all their activities are regulated by democratic principles that recognize people as the centre of governance. The implementation of the system enhances the participation of the people who, by democratic arrangements, are the owners of government. All the documentation examined in the Ingquza Hill Municipality indicated that public participation is taken as the requirement in all the stages of implementing development programs. The system is designed such that it drives all development stages involving planning, implementation and evaluation of projects.

In the planning stages, the system is implemented using the IDP as a tool and, within the legislation, it is specifically stated that public participation must be institutionalized. It is in the design of the IDP that public participation must be explicitly provided for in the process plan so that it becomes an integral part of development. Upon scrutinizing documentation the study found that public participation was central in the preparation of the IDP for all the financial years considered in the study. The design of the system is such that during the implementation of developmental programs, public participation is driven mainly by reports. These are the reports generated for purposes of giving updates about progress in the implementation. The reports are developed at various intervals within the financial year. They are generated monthly, quarterly, half yearly and annually. It is also noticeable that the generation of these reports is legislated through a set of laws enacted specifically for municipalities. In the study these pieces of legislation are identified as the Local Government Municipal Systems Act and Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act. Upon examining the above reports, generated over the three year period, it was noticed that the municipality was consistent in generating all the required reports. The municipality, however, was not consistent in reporting back to communities using these reports. Whilst the municipality was compliant in terms of generating and presenting the reports to the municipal council, the reports were not taken to communities to update them about progress in implementing the programs. This area was found to be a shortcoming in the implementation of the public participation system during the implementation phases of development.

The evaluation of the development programs is also linked to the process of the IDP formulation. While introducing the concept of the IDP, it was stated that the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (2000) directs that the Integrated Development Planning must be reviewed on a yearly basis. It is during the period of reviewal that the implementation of the projects in the previous IDP is evaluated. Besides

the evaluation done during the reviewal of the Integrated Development Plan, the implementation is also evaluated by the Office of the Auditor General as an external assurer, and the Municipal Public Accounts Committee as an internal assurer. The reports from both of these institutions concluded that the manner in which development was implemented in the municipality was satisfactory. While the citizens of the municipality were not adequately participating in the implementation and evaluation stages of developmental programs, there was an assurance from these institutions that the development was being managed in a satisfactory manner.

5.2.2. <u>Study Objective No.2</u>

The second objective was to find out to what extent the system of public participation can be understood using the soft systems methodology. The theoretical foundation of the study is on the soft systems methodology as proposed by Checkland in his action research in the 1970s. Chapter 2 and 3 of the study elaborated on the main propositions of the theory and how it has been applied to get an understanding of the public participation system. In the presentation of research results it was established that the seven stages of the soft systems methodology can be likened to the public participation system. It was established that, when a municipality implements the public participation system, there are a series of steps that are mandatory to be followed in the process of implementing development projects. The steps are arranged such that they maintain participation of citizens throughout the process of development. Participation begins at the identification phase which, in the methodology, involves the first two stages, that is, the identification and stating of the problem. In municipalities, these are the stages when the service delivery need is being identified by communities and the beginning of the integrated development planning. The next two stages are the formulation of the root definition and the making of the conceptual model. The IDP formulation is the main process that drives public participation at this phase in the municipality. This is the stage in the IDP where the process plan for the planning process is compiled. The process plan and the IDP document can be regarded as conceptual models. The process plan is the conceptual model for making the IDP document whereas the IDP document is the conceptual model for the developmental projects themselves. Within the completed IDP document there is a chapter on the situational analysis of the municipality. This chapter can be likened to the fifth stage of the methodology that requires that various alternatives be explored including environment, culture and social orientation of the people for which the intervention is to be implemented. This is the area that identifies the soft systems methodology as the most relevant theory that can be applied to get an understanding of the public participation system.

The last two stages in the methodology can be compared with the implementation phase in the service delivery provision. The study has, through the outlining of the soft systems methodology and the public participation system, arrived at the conclusion that the two are compatible with one another. The methodology can be used to examine and get an understanding of the system. It is also necessary to note that the findings about the system of public participation and the soft systems methodology are not at all exhaustive, but are enough to prove the compatibility of the two.

5.2.3. Study Objective No.3

The third objective was to understand to what extent is citizen ownership of projects enhanced by public participation. The ownership of projects by citizens is the most important goal of public participation in the service delivery exercise. The efforts made to ensure their participation are aimed at improving the alignment of projects to the needs of the community. The projects that are implemented after adequate consultation with communities has been done are more likely to be of the envisaged quality because their implementation is monitored on a continuous basis by the community. Monitoring of project implementation is made possible because the community has a good idea of the project milestones as they were present when the projects were conceived. The study moves from a premise that if the municipality implements what was agreed upon, the citizens would be more satisfied and their ownership of the programs would be enhanced. During the presentation of research findings it was reported that there was alignment between the IDP and the annual reports, this alignment was observed in all the three years covered. The roads that were planned for, in the integrated development plan documents, were found to have been completed in the annual reports. The alignment between planning and implementation was established in the areas that the study was considering, namely, the provision of roads and community halls. For the study, this alignment is of great significance as it indicates that the process of citizen participation had an influence in the service delivery of the municipality. It is the belief of the study that if citizens are involved in all the stages of development, like planning, implementation and evaluation of projects, there is less likelihood that they may disown the projects.

The legislative pieces like the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the Local Government Municipal Systems Act are very explicit in directing that the municipality must ensure the participation of citizens in its affairs. This direction applies to each and every area that pertains to development in the municipality. The two legislative pieces also expect the municipality to exhibit this public participation inclination in all its governance systems. The design of the governance structure of the municipality is such that citizens are put at that centre of activities. The Local Government Municipal Structures Act

(1999) recognizes the structure of the municipality as consisting of a council which is elected by the people through the process of municipal elections. The municipality also has the administrative component which is established by the council. The last component is the people who, by law, are an integral part of the municipality. This brief outline is done to demonstrate the centrality of the citizens in the business of the municipality. Public participation, therefore, serves to ensure that the central component of the municipality has ownership of all the programs that are implemented.

5.2.4. Study Objective No. 4

The fourth and the last objective was to find out to what extent is the systems of public participation maintained throughout the service delivery provision cycle. The theme of the study from beginning to the end is the implementation of the public participation system in the delivery of services by the municipality. The presentation of findings in chapter 4 noted that the system was intensively implemented in the Ingquza Hill Municipality in the planning phases of developmental programs. It was noticed that the engagement of citizens was consistently maintained in the IDP formulation which represented the planning phases of the program implementation. In the data collection stage, the study gathered that the IDP process plan made provision for the institutionalization of the public participation. The municipality created structures that promoted community participation during the planning stages. These structures were the IDP Representative Forum, the Ward Committees, IDP Steering Committee and members of the public in general who attended meetings either on regular or irregular basis. It was further found that the whole process of planning was driven forward by deliberations of these committees. Having made that finding, the study discovered that, during the implementation phases, the reports were not provided to the citizens on a regular basis. So while the Ingquza Hill Municipality implemented and sustained public participation in the planning phases, it did not consistently maintain it during implementation phases. This was noticed by observing that reports during the financial year, that is, quarterly and half yearly reports, were not provided to the citizens on a sustained basis.

The above findings were made on one municipality and, therefore, may not be regarded as applying to all municipalities in the same manner. This observation implies that there may be other municipalities that sustain the public participation system throughout the service delivery cycle. In other words what the findings suggest is that in South Africa, the manner in which municipalities implement public participation differs from one municipality to the other. This can be used to explain why municipalities get different audit outcomes when they are audited on performance by the Office of the Auditor General. The legislation governing public participation, while explicit on the process to be followed, does not give

a detailed point by point manual about what the municipality must do in order to implement public participation. The legislation only gives guidelines in order to help with the identification of critical stages to observe and criticize stakeholders to include in the planning process. Within this framework, municipalities find space to use their creativity in implementing the system.

5.3. Recommendations

Having given conclusions on the objectives of the study, it is time to make recommendations that can improve the implementation of the public participation system by municipalities.

1. One of the areas that were looked at in the Ingquza Hill Municipality was the implementation of the public participation throughout the financial year. As far as this is concerned, it was observed that reports, that is, quarterly and half yearly reports, were not taken to communities on a consistent basis. The study recommends that the municipalities should have at least 4 outreach or report-back meetings where quarterly and half-yearly reports will be presented to the community as a means of giving updates on the Integrated Development Plan. The report-backs sessions can be the structured into a package that involves using the community radio stations and local community newspapers to advertise. The meeting should be conducted in all the wards of the municipality, making use of the ward councillors accompanied by members of the council executive committee.

2. The second recommendation relates to the planning process undertaken in the ward at the beginning of the IDP process. The municipality should formalise and document the meetings that are identified for the ward-based planning. These are the meetings where members of the community meet and list all their development needs that are intended for inclusion in the final planning document for that particular financial year. To make sure that the meetings are conducted successfully they must be funded from the budget of the municipality. Minutes of these meetings should be kept and made available as evidence that a meeting was held and needs of the ward were identified. The records should contain the official list of the needs and every interested member of the community should be aware of the list. In the context of public participation, the meetings represents the first step that should be a foundation for all the planning that will be conducted later in the IDP process.

3. Thirdly, municipalities need to strengthen the process of reporting at the end of the financial year. Earlier in the study, it was noted that the presentation of the annual report to municipal communities is not being done on a consistent basis. After the end of the financial year, when the annual report has been generated and considered by the municipal council, a program should be designed to take the annual report to all the wards of the municipality. This must be done with the intention to get an evaluation of the performance of the municipality by citizens. In these meetings the municipality must be open to criticisms as long as they relate to the performance as documented in the annual report. As it was recommended for the quarterly reporting, ward councillors should spearhead the convening of the meetings with the municipality providing logistical resources. The provision of logistical resources by the municipality has a special relevance in the Ingquza Hill as the municipal citizens are characterised by high levels of poverty with a huge percentage of the people not working.

4. Fourthly, a register containing all the legislative pieces that relate to public participation should be compiled and updated regularly. The municipal environment is extensively regulated to such an extent that it may be difficult to remember all public participation sections in all legislation. It would benefit the municipality if a separate register, where all the sections together with complying timeframes for processes are kept. This register should also contain a step by step manual of the activities undertaken during the implementation of the public participation system. This will assist the council and employees on one hand and the Auditor General and the Municipal Public Accounts Committee on the other, in checking whether the implementation of public participation is done according to the legal requirements. The compliance register will also help to standardise the implementation process while serving to provide a checklist of all the steps to be followed in the management of the public participation system.

5. Lastly, the study recommends the compilation of the public participation handbook. The handbook will assist in educating all the participants about the system, how and when it is implemented. Included in the handbook should be the public participation framework and policy, timelines for the implementation, reporting processes in the system and evaluation of both the programs and the system as a whole.

5.4. <u>Conclusion</u>

The local sphere of government in South Africa is the one that is closer to the people and as such a lot of experiences that people have with government are associated with it. The sphere is represented by municipalities who operate as agents for the implementation of service delivery programs by government. In delivering these services, municipalities are required to ensure that there is participation of citizens in all their operations. The governance of the municipalities is arranged such that it includes three actors and all these are centred on the citizens. The municipality consists of the council that is elected by citizens through the municipal elections that are conducted on 5 year intervals. The council then appoints employees who form the administration of the municipality. The administration facilitates the delivery of services to the citizens. This means that everything that happens in a municipality has to be centred on citizens and, therefore, their participation in the affairs of the municipality becomes obligatory. In order to ensure that this participation takes place, municipalities undergo a process of incorporating the public participation system in their programs, in particular, in implementing infrastructural programs. The study has, however, shown that municipalities differ in the manner in which they implement public participation. The study sought to find out whether the system of public participation can be understood. In seeking to understand the system, the study used the soft system methodology as a foundation upon which research is anchored. The study proved that the system of public participation is compatible with the soft systems methodology. This means that a better understanding of the public participation system can be obtained using the methodology.

The manner in which the system is designed makes it possible for communities to have a say in the governance of the municipality. In addition to the design, there is a plethora of legislative pieces that compel municipalities to implement the system of public participation. Having made the above assertions, it must be noted that the system of public participation is mandatory for public and private institutions. These institutions range from the legislatures, through government departments and public entities, to the private entities. In providing services to communities, one of the obligations of municipalities is to involve citizens. The legislative framework suggests a structured way by which this involvement must be managed. It is also an observation that although municipalities differ in the intensity in which they implement the public participation system, they all use the same framework.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALEXANDER, P. 2010. Rebellion of the poor: South Africa's service delivery protests–a preliminary analysis. *Review of African Political Economy,* 37**,** 25-40.

AMOATENG, A. Y. & KALULE-SABITI, I. 2011. Local governance and spatial distribution of resources: The need to harness traditional leadership for service delivery in South Africa. *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies-Multi-, Inter-and Transdisciplinarity,* 6**,** 36-54.

AYLETT, A. 2010. Participatory planning, justice, and climate change in Durban, South Africa. *Environment and planning. A,* 42**,** 99.

CHECKLAND, P. 2010. Researching real-life: Reflections on 30 years of action research. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science,* 27**,** 129-132.

CHECKLAND, P. 2011. Autobiographical retrospectives: Learning your way to 'action to improve' - the development of soft systems thinking and soft systems methodology. *International Journal of General Systems,* 40**,** 487-512.

CHECKLAND, P. & WINTER, M. 2005. Process and content: two ways of using SSM. *Journal of Operationl Research Society,* 57**,** 1435-1441.

CHIKULO, B. 2013. 35 Developmental local governance and service delivery in South Africa: Progress, achievements and challenges. *Journal of Social Development in Africa,* 28**,** 37-64.

COBBETT, W., GLASER, D., HINDSON, D. & SWILLING, M. 2010. South Africa's regional political economy: A critical analysis of reform strategy in the 1980s.

CURRIE, I. K. J. S. A. H. R. C. 2002. *The Promotion of Access to Information Act, commentary,* Cape Town, Siber Ink.

DOLLERY, B. & GRAVES, N. 2009. An analysis of budget compliance measurement in South African local government best-practice financial management technical assistance programs, 2001—2003. *Public Administration and Development,* 29**,** 101-116.

DEPARTMENT OF PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT .1998. *Integrated Development Planning Manua*l. Pretoria: Government Printer.

FLOOD, R. L. 2010. The Relationship of 'Systems Thinking' to Action Research. *Systemic Practice & Action Research,* 23**,** 269-284.

FRÖDIN, O. 2011. Generalised and particularistic thinking in policy analysis and practice: The case of governance reform in South Africa. *Development Policy Review,* 29**,** s178-s198.

GOLDMAN, I. & REYNOLDS, K. 2008. Rural Local Governance. *Consolidating Developmental Local Government: Lessons from the South African Experience***,** 131.

HARRISON, P. 2001. The genealogy of South Africa's integrated development plan. *Third World Planning Review,* 23**,** 175-193.

HARRISON, P. 2006. Integrated development plans and third way politics. *Democracy and delivery: urban policy in South Africa***,** 186-207.

HOLTZHAUSEN, N. & NAIDOO, G. 2011. Effective Governance as an Approach to Promote Service Delivery by Local Government in South Africa: The Case for Soul City. *Journal of US-China Public Administration,* 8**,** 735-747.

JACKSON, M. C. 1994. *Systems thinking : creative holism for managers,* Chichester, J. Willey.

JACKSON, M. C. 2001. Critical systems thinking and practice. *European Journal of Operational Research,* 128**,** 233-244.

JACOBS, B. 2004. Using Soft Systems Methodology for Performance Improvement and Organisational Change in the English National Health Service. *Journal of Contingencies & Crisis Management,* 12**,** 138-149.

JERE LAZANSKI, T. 2010. Systems Thinking : Ancient Maya's Evolution of Consciousness and Contemporary Systems Thinking. *AIP Conference Proceedings,* 1303**,** 289-296.

JUTA, L. Local government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 & regulations. Juta Law.

KHISTY, C. J. 1995. Soft-systems methodology as learning and management tool. *Journal of Urban Planning & Development,* 121**,** 91.

KOMA, S. B. 2012. The Evolution of Developmental Local Government in South Africa: Issues, Trends and Options. *Journal of US-China Public Administration,* 9**,** 53-67.

LEOPOLD, E. & MCDONALD, D. A. 2012. Municipal Socialism Then and Now: some lessons for the Global South. *Third World Quarterly,* 33**,** 1837-1853.

LEVESON, N. G. 2011. Applying systems thinking to analyze and learn from events. *Safety Science,* 49**,** 55-64.

MSIBI, F. & PENZHORN, C. 2010. Participatory communication for local government in South Africa: a study of the Kungwini Local Municipality. *Information Development,* 26**,** 225-236.

PARNELL, S. & PARNELL, S. 2002. *Democratising Local Government: South African Experiment*, jutaonline. co. za.

PYCROFT, C. 1998. Integrated development planning or strategic paralysis? Municipal development during the local government transition and beyond. *Development Southern Africa,* 15**,** 151.

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA (RSA) 1998. *Municipal Structures Act, Act No. 117 of 1998*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA (RSA). 2000. *The Municipal Systems Act, Act No. 32 of 2000*. Pretoria: Government Printer

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA (RSA). 1998. *White Paper on Local Government*. Ministry Of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development. Pretoria: Government Printer.

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA (RSA). 1996. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996*: Government Printer.

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA (RSA). 2003. *The Municipal Finance Management, Act No. 56 of 2003*: Government Printer.

REYNOLDS, M. & HOLWELL, S. 2010. *Systems approaches to managing change: a practical guide*, Springer.

SENGE, P. M. & STERMAN, J. D. 1992. Systems thinking and organizational learning: Acting locally and thinking globally in the organization of the future. *European Journal of Operational Research,* 59**,** 137-150.

SIKHAKANE, B. & REDDY, P. 2009. Local government restructuring and transformation in South Africa with specific reference to challenges faced by Buffalo City Municipality. *Administratio Publica,* 17**,** 232-250.

SILVER, H., SCOTT, A. & KAZEPOV, Y. 2010. Participation in urban contention and deliberation. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 34**,** 453-477.

SOUTH, A. & JUTA, L. 2011. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996,* Claremont, Cape Town, Juta Law.

SOUTH AFRICA, J. L. S. A. S. A. 2010. *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 ; Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 ; Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, 5 of 2000 & regulations,* Cape Town, Juta Law.

TODES, A., SITHOLE, P. & WILLIAMSON, A. 2010. Including Women? (Dis)junctures Between Voice, Policy and Implementation in Integrated Development Planning. *Urban Forum,* 21**,** 69-84.

TSATSIRE, I., TAYLOR, J. & RAGA, K. 2010. Local service delivery enhancement–attitudes: a case study of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality.

TUROK, I. 2013. Transforming South Africa's Divided Cities: Can Devolution Help? *International Planning Studies,* 18**,** 168-187.

VAN DER WALDT, G. 2007. *Municipal management : serving the people,* Cape Town, Juta.

VAN DONK, M. 2008. *Consolidating developmental local government: Lessons from the South African experience*, Juta and Company Ltd.

27 June 2013

Mr Fezekile Mphako 212550227
Graduate School of Business and Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear Mr Mphako

Protocol reference number: HSS/0448/013M
Project title: Public Participation and Service Delivery: Citizen Participation in Implementing Infrastructural programs in Ingquza Hill Municipality.

NO- RISK APPROVAL

In response to your application dated 22 April 2013, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Deputy Chair)
Humanities & Social Science Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Dr Abdulla Kader
cc Academic Leader: Dr E Munapo
cc School Admin.: Ms Wendy Clarke