

**“An Analysis of Communication In Development in The
eThekweni and Msunduzi Municipalities”**

By

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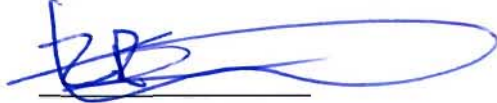
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ABSTRACT

The ushering in of the new democratic government came with high expectations from all South Africans in terms of how development processes were to unfold. The previous system had made it virtually impossible for people on the ground to be informed of all developments within areas where they lived. This resulted in great suspicions on the part of communities as they only saw things just happening, in many instances such activities had no direct impact on their lives. The new government, as elected by the people, had to address this matter in order to ensure that all development processes had a meaning to the daily lives of ordinary South Africans. This assumes that for development to be meaningful, such development should be based on a realistic understanding of the needs of the people. Such needs can only be determined through a process of consultation, and in that process communication between government, other development agencies and communities is vital. Institutions of local government have been seen as critical pillars in the process of uplifting the standards of living of people in South Africa, and therefore this sphere of government is critical for government to be seen as making a positive contribution to people's daily livelihoods. The ability of this sphere of government to address the needs of local people is therefore dependent upon the extent to which communication with residents would be prioritised, and the level at which communities would be accorded an opportunity to make contributions to local development initiatives.

DECLARATION

I, Zwelithini Rassendyll Hulane, declare that this thesis, unless specifically indicated to the contrary, is my own original work. It has not been submitted before, for any degree or examination at any other University.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized initials and a long horizontal flourish.

ZR Hulane

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Zwelithini Hulane

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The process of change and development in South Africa has been characterized by a number of challenges and difficulties. There has been a concerted effort on the part of government to transform the key institutions of our society, at the same time also attempting to speed up service delivery on the ground. The challenges that government has been faced with have mainly been due to historical factors, given the apartheid history of country. What has become one of the most important and major challenges that South Africa faces, as contained in the constitution, is that of delivering services to the citizens based on principles of equality, while at the same time addressing the imbalances of the past. This is being done through various agents or organs, and one such organ is the structure of local government. For these local government structures to be able to implement developmental programs they need to be fully aware of the challenges and needs of their constituencies. This need for awareness presupposes that there is a mechanism in place through which developmental agents, and more specifically local government structures, are able to gather and disseminate information on development.

Mechanisms have been put in place by the government in terms of how the process of changing and improving the lives of the people ought to unfold. The legislation that has been enacted around local government has provided the basis upon which this study is to focus. This legislation has set the framework that guides the process of development at the local level. There will be a detailed discussion on the Integrated Development Plan as outlined in various local government legislation particularly legislation that is mentioned here, the Municipal Structures Act no. 117 of 1998, and the Municipal Systems Act no. 32 of 2000, as they all have a direct bearing on development and the extent to which the people ought to or can participate in such processes.

This study focuses on processes that are being followed at local government level in terms of the decisions to implement development projects and how such decisions are to

be reached. More specifically, communicative aspects of such processes form the cornerstone of this study, which therefore has meant that the focus is more on the Integrated Development Plan as outlined in Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act of 2000.

According to this Act, the Integrated Development Plan is the document in which all developmental initiatives and programs at a municipal level are to be outlined. This plan also details very specific targets and outcomes that developmental plans and programs ought to address. The process of formulating the IDP is envisaged to be a consultative process through which the community or beneficiaries of developmental projects would identify and prioritize their needs.

This thesis further focuses on an analysis of communication processes within the context of local development, and this will be within the broader framework of the Integrated Development Plan as outlined in the local government legislation. A strong and detailed focus is given to the role that structures, such as Ward Committees, can play in advancing development prospects for local communities.

This process of analyzing communication in development within the Msunduzi Municipality (formerly Pietermaritzburg City Council) and the eThekweni Municipality (formerly Durban Metropolitan Council) entails two case studies, which deals with the Integrated Development Plan of each Municipality.

The process of formulating Integrated Development Plans according to the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 has to be a participative process, where communities would be accorded a chance to identify and prioritize their needs, and for the municipality to draw its budget in line with those needs as prioritized by the people.

This therefore suggests that an analysis of the IDP processes for the Msunduzi and eThekweni Municipalities would be appropriate if one were to seriously consider the extent of community involvement in the identification and prioritization of their needs.

Important to note is the fact that for a very long time, communities never had a chance to participate in processes aimed at changing their lives. The Reconstruction and Development Programme developed by the African National Congress identified a need for a people-centered approach to development. The ANC's discussion document 'The Core Values of the RDP' in 1997 stated "The RDP people-driven approach is not an attempt to avoid the responsibility that we have for governing, but it is a recognition that being the overwhelming majority party in national government does not mean that the ANC has all power. Without the combination of effective government and the mobilization of millions of South Africans, the tasks of transformation will be impossible. The transformation of government itself requires an effort from within and without our government institutions," (<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/discussion/rdp.html>).

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Information flows have been cited as one of the key elements for the success of developmental or transformative processes. As Katz and Kahn have argued, “communication – the exchange of information and the transmission of meaning – is the very essence of a social system or an organization,” (in Barker & Kibler 1971: 81). The use of telecommunications infrastructure, for example, is one of the most important areas that determines the level at which communication matters are to be seen relevant in any development process. There has been a belief that information technologies have a role to play in fast-tracking processes of development as some authors, such as Singh (1999), have argued. In a book on the restructuring of telecommunications, it has been argued that “the phrase ‘leapfrogging development’ reflects the belief, especially in the 1980s, among policy makers and theoreticians that information technologies, especially telecommunications, can help developing countries accelerate their pace of development or telescope the stages of growth,” (Singh 1999: 4). This is the context within which questions of communications in development should be seen.

“Knowledge and information are essential for people to respond successfully to the opportunities and challenges of social, economic and technological changes, including those that help to improve agricultural productivity, food security and rural livelihoods,” (http://www.fao.org/sd/KN1_en.htm). The argument here is that for it to be useful, knowledge and information must be effectively communicated to people. The concept communication for development is even taken further where it is argued that it “encompasses many different media and approaches – folk media and traditional social groupings, rural radio for community development, video and multimedia modules for farmer training, and the internet for linking researchers, educators, extensionists and producer groups to each other and to global information sources,” (Ibid).

The essence of the communication for development model is that people and communities share information amongst themselves as gathered from various sources including the grapevine, television or radio, government officials and many other sources. The critical part in this process is that there is a sharing of information and knowledge, which is essential if development was to be meaningful to local communities.

The South African government has seen institutions of local government as very important structures in terms of the provision and delivery of services to the people in various communities. The role of local government is seen within a context where communities are to have a say in terms of what the service is to look like, both in terms of needs and delivery. The Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, no. 117 of 1998 notes in its preamble that:

Whereas there is fundamental agreement on the importance of local government to democracy, development and nation-building in our country; Whereas past policies have bequeathed a legacy of massive poverty, gross inequalities in municipal services, and disrupted spatial social and economic environments in which our people continue to live and work (this suggests a need for the upliftment and development of the people); Whereas there is fundamental agreement in our country on a vision of democratic and developmental local government in which municipalities fulfill their constitutional obligations to ensure sustainable, effective and efficient municipal services, promote social and economic development, encourage a safe and healthy environment by working with communities (again this preamble links well with the hypothesis of this study because of this recognition of how development should unfold, i.e. work with communities) in creating environments and human settlements in which all our people can lead uplifted and dignified lives;

The Act provides for the establishment of structures that are to assist government in its vision of creating an environment of equality, democracy and development. This Act also

assumes that there will be a process through which communities should participate in development activities that are to take place in their areas. The Act envisages that this process would take place through the establishment of Ward Committees whose objectives, among others, would be “to enhance participatory democracy in local government,” (South Africa 1998: 52).

The issue of participatory democracy is that of ensuring a process whereby communities are consulted and that they participate in decision-making processes on matters that are of relevance to them. For this process to be a success there is a need for leadership. It has been argued, “Leadership is the process of influencing people to direct their efforts towards the attainment of particular goal(s). This process by its very nature requires the use of effective communication skills. Of course, the effective manager must be more than just a communicator, but without the ability to convey meanings and without follow-up to see that desired results are achieved, the manager will fail to fulfill his or her basic responsibility – getting things done through people,” (Gibson & Hodgetts 1991: 177). This suggests, in the context of local government, that there can be no success in program or service delivery without the involvement of the people and their leaders, in a structured process of communicative interaction.

The Act suggests that institutions of local governance are seen as important pillars to enhance the participation of communities in deciding issues that are of relevance to them. It has been suggested “any genuine development ensures participation of the people in a mutual learning experience, involvement in decision making, resource control and planning and implementation of project initiatives,” (Otachi 1999: 14).

The same author has seen the notion of participation as having three interpretations: participation as empowerment, participation as a contribution, and participation as organization (Otachi 1999). For some authors the question of civil society participation is now back on the agenda, for example the theoretical framework underpinning Uzodike’s (1999) ideas on this subject. For a very long time, the participation of citizens in development initiatives had not been seen as a priority. Development processes were

mainly decided by donor agencies without the necessary consultative process on the ground. This attitude to development processes therefore shaped the thinking of a number of authors on the role that beneficiaries of development ought to play in development initiatives. It appears that mass participation is a critical concept that most scholars have spoken about. It has been argued, “meaningful development must be anchored on mass participation,” (Uzodike 1999: 86).

The effect of mass participation in local government is that of more accountability. For example the provisions of Section 152 of the Constitution states:

(1) The objects of local government are –

- a. To provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;***
- b. To ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;***
- c. To promote social and economic development;***
- d. To promote a safe and healthy environment; and***
- e. To encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of local government***

(2) A municipality must strive, within its financial and administrative capacity, to achieve the objects set out in subsection (1).

These objectives are seen as centered on the principles of a developmental local government, which is the basis upon which the Municipal Structures Act provides for the establishment of Ward Committees. Ward Committees constitute an essential site of ‘organized communication’.

Public organization communication has been defined as “the activity that allows an organization to exchange messages with its publics. This communication activity involves identifying the organization’s publics and evaluating their attitudes and behaviors. The goal is to execute programs of action that will create understanding and / or acceptance of a message,” (Wilson 1986: 197). This process again gives an indication

that any communication process, be it in the private or public sector is about establishing what will be acceptable to the target market or beneficiaries. In the case of government activity, a communication process would not only be about government informing its constituency about what it is doing but also involves a process through which the state establishes needs from its citizens.

Government began a process of rolling out infrastructure, in the form of Multi-Purpose Community Centers, throughout the country to enable citizens to access government and other vital information. Government identified Multi-Purpose Community Centers “as the primary vehicle for the implementation of development communication and information programmes as they can serve as a base from which a wide range of services and products can reach communities. The aim is for communities to access such services and engage in government programmes for their own empowerment,” (<http://www.gcis.gov.za/mpcc/about/whatare.html>). This is what the Municipal Structures Act is hoping to achieve, especially through the establishment of Ward Committees.

There have been a number of projects that have either succeeded or failed as a result of poor communication or good communication strategies (Benjamin 1999). The major rationale for an integrated communication strategy at the level of project planning is that there will be reduced chances of failure on the basis of there being no need for a service or program. It has been noted by Peter Benjamin (1999) that the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council engaged, at some stage, in programs that were designed to enable communities in its area of jurisdiction to access information about the services it offered. This process was envisaged so as to allow the public to use information communication technologies as well to place requests and pose questions about the programs of Council. The problems that were encountered with this project were that people still preferred to obtain information directly from other people (Council Staff), and the other problem was that some staff members also preferred to interact directly with the public. What this signifies is that the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council could have saved a lot of money and time had it consulted the people on how best they would want to receive information,

and to check with their staff about mechanisms of availing specific service information to the public.

Clearly there was no consultation of the communities; hence the council had to abandon the project (Benjamin 1999). This is in line with what has been suggested by Uzodike (1999) that the failure of many development projects in Africa was frequently related to the exclusion of target populations by outside agents from the conceptualization, design, and implementation phases of the programs.

In a book on running community development projects, Anthony Davies has argued, “it is the problem that comes first,” (Davies 1997: 1) as he addressed the question on what it is that comes first between a community development group and a community development project. This argument presupposes that before anything, communities have got to have a problem that needs to be addressed before any agency can come up with a development project because the aim of that project would be to address the specific problem, as it would have arisen. The author goes on to argue that once the problem has been identified, the next move then becomes the question on addressing the problem (how is it to be solved?). He suggests here that a decision has to be taken, and it has to be taken through a process where the community has to identify solutions (Davies 1997).

It has, up to now, been argued that “agencies involved in rural development are aware that rural development projects are likely to fail unless beneficiaries are actively involved in the formulation, planning and implementation process of such projects, and resources are made available on a timely basis,” (Otachi 1999: 9). The same author has also suggested that in terms of the experiences of Non-Governmental Organizations, community involvement in identifying and prioritizing their needs suggests a greater likelihood of project success.

One of the key problems that has been identified as a possible cause of the failure of developmental projects has been the lack of community participation. Otachi has argued that the incorporation of human efforts in such projects suggests a higher possibility of

success, and he further argued “development is seen as a process of humanization, where people are expected to be central in any form of development process,” (Otachi 1999: 14).

Some of the problems or limitations that have been identified have included, among others:

- the domination of participative processes by the elite;
- the marginalization of the poor;
- the cultural factors (especially in rural areas) where traditional authorities are still in place;
- poor literacy levels which lead to people’s inability to contribute because of a lack of understanding of issues; and
- the fact that participative processes are often cumbersome and time-consuming which might result in delayed development.

These are some of the issues that are discussed later on in this paper as raised by some of our respondents.

What has been noted thus far is that information is indeed vital for development project success. The various scholarly works that have been reviewed so far, however diverse in terms of perspective, have all come to a point where information is seen as vital. The overwhelming majority of the literature under review has been material developed through qualitative research methods. The nature of the issues that are under discussion necessitated a qualitative approach to gathering information, which has ultimately been used to conclude on these very important and challenging social issues around development and the empowerment of communities.

This piece therefore seeks to contribute towards the growing body of knowledge in the communication and development sphere. The introduction of the new institutions of local government has therefore provided an opportunity for the author to engage legislation on the various key provisions on the role of municipalities in promoting development in local communities. This study is not conclusive, and as such interviews were conducted

with a selected group of people who have a considerable influence on matters of local government.

The qualitative research method where data was collected through Intensive Interviews with our respondents informed the author's approach to the subject. This method was identified precisely because it allows for more information to be elicited from the respondents, and also gives us a chance to question further the views that might be expressed. The following have been identified in <http://don.ratcliff.net/qual/expq1.html> as some of the key strengths of qualitative research, which significantly informed the approach that this thesis took in addressing the question of development communication within the South African setting:

- Depth and detail--may not get as much depth in a standardized questionnaire
- Openness--can generate new theories and recognize phenomena ignored by most or all previous researchers and literature
- Helps people see the world view of those studies--*their* categories, rather than imposing categories; simulates their experience of the world
- Attempts to avoid pre-judgements (although some recent qualitative scholars disagree here--we always make judgements, but just don't admit it--choice of one location or group over another is a judgement)--goal is to try to capture what is happening without being judgmental; present people on their own terms, try to represent them from their perspectives so readers can see their views, always imperfectly achieved--it is a quest.

Chapter 3

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION

The Government of the Republic of South Africa has, since the democratic breakthrough in 1994, taken seriously the question of transforming institutions of governance and service delivery. This has mainly been done through the legislation that has been enacted to give effect to the realization of a vision of democracy, equality and development. The White Paper on Local Government, in its introduction, notes the effect that the system of apartheid has had on “social and economic environments in which people live” and further notes the significant and important role that institutions of local government have got to play in ensuring that the legacy of apartheid is addressed.

The question that is being addressed here is that relating to processes of developmental project decision making at a municipal level. The legislation that is under discussion here seeks to address this very question of municipal decision making in relation to development projects. The nature of our society requires that there be frameworks within which transformative processes ought to be confined. The challenge that South Africa faces is that of serious inequality (socially and economically). This manifests itself in various forms especially poverty and illiteracy, and therefore it becomes essential for processes seeking to address it to be guided by very specific guidelines and frameworks.

3.1. Local Government: Municipal Structures Act

The Municipal Structures Act of 1998 addresses the need for structures and bodies to be put in place for the purposes of realizing the vision of a truly developmental local government. This legislation, among others, makes provision for the establishment of ward committees, which have been seen as a vehicle or mechanism for community participation in municipal affairs. Community participation is in essence a process where communities are consulted and are able to make meaningful contributions towards processes of developmental decision-making. The Act provides that the object of a ward

committee is “to enhance participatory democracy in local government,” (South Africa 1998: 52) and this Act further states that the functions and powers of ward committees may include “making recommendations on any matter affecting its ward to the ward councilor or through the ward councilor to the metro or local council,” over and above powers and functions that may be delegated to it by the metro or local council (South Africa 1998: 52-53).

This is representative of a significant shift from the previous thinking on local government, which mainly conceptualized the role of local government as that of governing rather than that of bringing development to where the people live. The dominant paradigm of development has for instance believed that “in order to guide and speed up the process of development, planning should be centralized and controlled by economists and bankers,” (Melkote 1991: 57). This kind of development thinking had no regard for the beneficiaries of such development being consulted, not only in terms of strategy, but also in terms of need.

There is a school of thought that has argued that the concept of ‘participation’ can be given various interpretations that can either frustrate or make a positive contribution towards development processes. Otachi (1999) has argued that there can be three interpretations of participation: participation as empowerment, participation as a contribution, and participation as organization. The question that arises here becomes that of the extent to which the establishment of ward committees, in terms of this Act, addresses itself towards the three interpretations that Otachi has identified.

The conception of participation as empowerment suggests that there is a greater degree of influence that communities or beneficiaries would have in development initiatives. This is a process where individuals or a group is given the necessary information, skills, and power to make decisions in terms of issues that affect them.

The Integrated Development Plan, as envisaged by the Department of Provincial and Local Government, is a framework whose bases were developed within the context of participation as an empowering process.

3.2. Local Government: Municipal Systems Act

The Municipal Systems Act of 2000 seeks to put in place mechanisms through which development can become a reality in communities where people live. This Act provides the basis upon which municipalities can operate, so that the structures that have been put in place in terms of the Municipal Structures Act cannot become redundant.

The concept or notion of Integrated Development Planning (IDP) is introduced by this legislation. The concept of the IDP has since become one of the most important exercises that municipalities have had to engage with in terms of developing their areas. One of the major principles behind this concept of development is that there has to be an active involvement of the communities in terms of development planning and implementation. The process of developing an Integrated Development Plan, that municipalities have to follow, is outlined in chapter five, section 29 of this legislation. One of the provisions here states that municipalities should actively engage communities through community structures that have been established in terms of the Municipal Structures Act.

The vehicle that is seen as imperative in terms of driving the process of community participation in the formulation of Integrated Development Plans is the Ward Committees. Ward Committees are a critical element in terms of facilitating processes of development in communities. It is through these committees that communities are in a position to make a contribution towards their own development. These committees facilitate interaction between the community and the various development agents including, but not limited to, the various municipalities.

Chapter six of the Municipal Systems Act also makes provision for the establishments of a Performance Management System for municipalities which are expected to help

municipalities measure their performance in terms of the implementation of their IDPs. The Act envisages that the communities shall be involved in the development of the municipality's key performance indicators and targets.

Chapter 4

A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF THE INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS

The manner in which the government of the Republic of South Africa has viewed the notion of development has been such that development has to be people-centered and people-driven, especially when looking at the provisions of Section 152 of the Constitution. Development processes over the past years have never given any specific role to the people on the ground in terms of contributing towards solving developmental problems and challenges they faced at the time. This, therefore, became one of the major challenges that institutions of local governance were to face in terms of bringing change and development to their areas.

Since the African National Congress, when it took control of the country in 1994, promised the citizens of this country more rapid changes in terms of the manner in which services were to be delivered for the benefit of all South Africans, it therefore had to develop systems and mechanism to make ‘a better life for all’ a reality. Various government departments were therefore tasked with developing such systems and processes, and the overall strategic objective that such systems would embody was the notion of mass participation by citizens in processes of their own development. Linked to this, government then developed a model to be known as ‘Integrated Development Plan’, which was to be used both as a strategic planning tool and a mechanism to fast track service delivery through consultative processes.

The Department of Provincial and Local Government has defined the Integrated Development Plan as “a process through which municipalities prepare a strategic development plan, for a five year period. The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is a product of the integrated development planning process. The IDP is a principal strategic planning instrument which guides and informs all planning, budgeting, management and decision-making in a municipality,” (<http://www.local.gov.za/DCD/dcdindex.html>).

The manner in which the IDP is defined is in such a way that more recognition is given to the IDP being a product of a process of integrated development planning. This implies that there is a role that people outside the institutions of governance are to play in terms of setting out their priorities for development. This is what makes the IDP a product of a process because it involves an element of consultation with the communities for the benefit of all stakeholders.

There is also an element of the IDP, which necessitates the inclusion of a range of issues and needs that communities would identify. The notion of this being an 'Integrated' plan suggests that development is not viewed in isolation from other factors that would have a bearing on the prospects of such development. This integration also suggests that the development initiatives that would take place at a local level would not be single-issue based.

In terms of the Municipal Systems Act of 2000, it is compulsory for all municipalities to develop their own Integrated Development Plans. The IDP does not only benefit the municipality, it also benefits the communities, as they would be able to influence the direction that their municipality would take in terms of their developmental needs.

"The Intergovernmental Forum for Effective Planning described integrated development planning as: a participatory planning process aimed at integrating sectoral strategies, in order to support the optimal allocation of scarce resources between the sectors and geographical areas and across the population, in a manner that promotes sustainable growth, equity and the empowerment of the poor and marginalized." (Coetzee 2000: 13). This clearly indicates that the IDP is a plan that seeks to address the challenges people face as a result of the separate development practices of the previous system of apartheid.

The previous system of development planning was characterized by its lack of community input, and as a result has led to a number of failed development initiatives that appear to be a trademark, especially in the continent of Africa. Very scarce resources

were put to highly unproductive uses in many instances in the name of empowering or developing the local community.

Because of this poor planning, which led to serious backlogs in terms of development in various locales, there has also been a challenge on the part of the democratic government to speed up change and development. The government's view has therefore been the heavy reliance on an integrated development planning process that involves, intensively, the local communities as direct beneficiaries of development.

The participative nature of this integrated development planning process obviously enhances and strengthens democracy at a local level because municipalities can therefore be held accountable during this process. This process also enables communities to identify and prioritize their needs, which makes the previous practices of municipalities and other development agencies unilaterally deciding on behalf of the people meaningless and out of line, as a more democratic process is now in place. The participation of local communities in the development and formulation of their municipalities' IDP is envisaged to take place within the broader context of ward committees that are to be, and are already, established in most municipalities.

Monty Roodt has argued "participation by a broad spectrum of the population in local governance is an ongoing objective of development practitioners in many parts of the world. Participation is seen as one of the ingredients necessary to promote sustained development," (Roodt 2001: 469). The importance of community participation, as argued by Roodt, can lead to sustainable development, an objective that the democratic government of the Republic of South Africa is so desperately in pursuance of. The role that ward committees will play in this regard is vital. Participation alone can never be said to be enough, there will still be a need for organized processes and resources for people to benefit from participative processes. Sustainable development, with the establishment of appropriate institutions, would mean that the challenge of poverty and unemployment would be addressed, and as such suggests that the participation of the people in the identification and prioritization of their needs will lead to positive results.

Community participation should also be seen within the context of an organized process that provides for the community, as an organized formation, to be central in all development initiatives within their area. In this regard, the Municipal Structures Act, No. 117 of 1998 has made provision for the establishment of Ward Committees whose object is “to enhance participatory democracy in local government.”

Uzodike’s (1999) argument further strengthens the importance of ward committees in the development process, as they make room for the involvement of communities in developmental decision-making processes locally.

This form of community participation, through ward committees, could also empower people to be critical thinkers about all issues relating to their development and all its associated processes. Roodt (2001) argues, from a perspective developed by Paulo Freire, that there is another view to participation that is far more radical. This conception, he argues, sees participation as a transforming act for the participating person or group.

For a very long time the oppressed were made to believe that it was correct that some of them, the oppressed, were rich while there were those who were poor. Thus participation that is seen as a ‘transforming act’, according to Roodt (2001: 472), which “leads to a process of self-actualization, which enables oppressed people to take control of their lives, simultaneously challenging the dominating classes and their regime” becomes critical.

The end to apartheid was achieved partly because of the active nature of the civic movements at the time. Vawda and McKenna (1997: 585) have argued “civics have been pivotal in shaping the debate about the end of the apartheid city”. Thus, the participation of the people in the civic movement must then have been a self-actualization process as envisaged by Freire. The civic movement, during the struggle against apartheid, provided people with the political education that eventually underpinned their participation in this movement, and this therefore suggests that the people were also empowered with the

necessary knowledge so that they could think critically about all the challenges they faced. This also does seem to be the case with the new dispensation, though in a different form. The new era brought a lot of changes in the institutional systems of governance, including major and increased emphasis on the need for communities to participate in all development initiatives where they live. During the days of the struggle against apartheid, South Africans participated in the fight against the system, and such participation was not entrenched in any government legislation. What, however, the democratic South Africa has done is that 'informal democracy' (community structures are now seen as critical and important role-players in developmental decision-making processes, which previously was not the case), has become part of our legislation. The fact that the establishment of ward committees as mechanisms of ensuring people's participation in their municipal affairs is an indication of the commitment to entrench democracy and participative governance in all our institutions.

The success, and the rate of success that saw the collapse of the system of apartheid surely must then suggest that the same could be possible with the development of local communities through such participative processes as the Integrated Development Plan. The IDP, which is seen as a development tool, has many variables that together make a comprehensive and carefully worked out plan to bring an end to poverty and creating sustainable development. For the current government to succeed in its challenge of poverty alleviation, it is critical that concrete plans are developed, like those plans during the anti-apartheid struggle, so that the march towards development can be a well-planned one.

One of the key provisions that the constitution makes, in relation to the objectives of local government, which were discussed in chapter two of this paper, is "to promote social and economic development." For municipalities to ensure that this objective is realized, their programs would therefore have to be geared towards the alleviation of poverty within their areas. In this regard, the White Paper for Social Development (1997) notes that the constitution makes provision for the devolution of welfare functions to local government level. Section 18(b) of Chapter three of the white paper states "local authorities will be

encouraged to make provision for the development of infrastructure and facilities for services, such as electricity, water, sanitation, transport, recreation facilities, economic development projects and job creation programmes. Liaison will also take place with local authorities delivering comprehensive primary health care.”

The Department of Social Development, in May 2002, released a report entitled ‘Transforming the Present-Protecting the Future’ which notes that “the barriers to access, especially in regard to the poor, remain administrative and institutional,” (pg 55). One of the key and vital mechanisms to address this problem, as identified in this report, becomes municipalities. The Portfolio Committee on Provincial and Local Government believes that “there is a need for the municipalities to be more developmental in character,” (Carrim 2003: 5). The developmental nature of municipalities, in essence, means that municipalities must be able to respond to the needs of their people and the challenges of poverty alleviation.

The Integrated Development Plans have therefore been viewed as strategic in government’s pursuits of its objectives of poverty alleviation, socio-economic development, and participatory democracy.

A booklet entitled “Democratic Local Government 2000-2001: A Guide for Councillors” published by the National Business Initiatives has listed some very important points to note about the IDP and these will be discussed here very briefly:

- the booklet looks at the IDP as a strategic framework for municipal governance. IDPs are said to provide a clear, objective and rational framework to guide development decisions and to create a basis from which to measure the performance of a municipality. The need to develop very clear and precise plans of what the municipality intends doing is informed by the importance of planning. For a very long time municipalities, and most institutions of local governance were operating without any long-term plans, and as a result there was very little, if any, development.

- the IDP can also be used as a yardstick for political accountability and continuity. The community may be able to utilize the IDP, which is a master plan for that community's development prospects to monitor the performance of all elected politicians. All municipal decisions, in so far as development is concerned, would have to be based on the IDP, and this therefore means that the IDP will be a guide for councilors in taking their decisions.
- it is also a vehicle for communication. The process of formulating an IDP is in itself a communication exercise, as it requires the active engagement of the citizenry and other stakeholders. The IDP is also a marketing plan or tool of the municipality as it clearly outlines its vision and a very clear program to realize it.
- the IDP is also an agent for transformation. Municipalities are expected to develop monitoring systems so as to ensure that their IDP is in fact implemented in an efficient and effective manner.
- the IDP can also be seen as a catalyst for socio-economic development. Part of the requirements of the IDP is that it must develop, after a thorough analysis of the economic potential of the area, a viable economic recovery or development plan aimed at creating a sustainable local economy. Municipalities depend heavily on the income generated from rates and taxes, which then makes it very important for a municipality to have a proper and well-functioning economy so that the people can then be able to afford such rates and taxes. The success of the local economy means that more people would be employed, and therefore that all the other challenges associated with a poor economy, like unemployment and poverty, would have been addressed.

Local economic development, as one of the components of the IDP is therefore a crucial and very important one. The IDP should also lead to sustainable development within a municipality, and therefore the IDP process should require

a thorough process of interaction with all stakeholders including the private sector if it was to be a success.

The IDP can also be used as a device to attract investment as part of the broader challenge of promoting local economic development.

- the IDP is also seen as a weapon in the fight against poverty. The imbalances in socio-economic terms that characterize the South African society are to be addressed through the Integrated Development Plans. Sustainable development, locally, can be achieved when the majority of the people are rescued from the poverty trap, and the integrated development planning process should help municipalities in this regard, as it is the most comprehensive document detailing all community needs and priorities.
- it can also be a mechanism to fast-track delivery of services to the community. Municipalities, through the IDP, are expected to develop mechanisms for the speedy delivery of all services to their constituencies.

Of all the issues that we have discussed above, in terms of what the IDP is envisaged to be, there is one very important aspect that has not been dealt with at this stage, and that relates to the performance management of municipalities.

The nature of the IDP is such that municipalities will develop plans with concrete time frames and very clear indications of the specific outcomes that should be realized within a given period of time. These plans and time frames give the community the power to know what to expect, and at what rate should that be expected. The community is therefore going to be empowered to hold the municipality and their councillors in particular, accountable.

One of the critical challenges that municipalities, like all other institutions in South Africa, have to deal with is that of HIV and Aids. Through the IDP, municipalities will be

expected to develop mechanisms and programs to deal with the spread of this disease. During the needs analysis stage of the IDP formulation process, all important and pressing matters will be addressed, and then municipalities are to develop their own comprehensive plans and strategies to deal with the effects and the spread of the HIV/Aids epidemic.

The theoretical basis underpinning the Integrated Development Planning process is Habermas' critical theoretical approach. Norma Romm (2001: 148) has argued, "according to Habermas, expert decision-making (to tackle all social problems/issues) is not the inevitable accompaniment of the process of development towards modernity". Habermas, according to Romm, believed that "the human species has capabilities which allow it to organize in an alternative fashion; a fashion wherein more scope is provided for truly discursive goal-making," (Ibid).

The comprehensive nature within which the IDP deals with all social, economic and environmental challenges facing society makes it a unique tool for development. The debates around sustainable development have missed one very important element, and that is integration. This, however, during the World Summit on Sustainable Development was one of the key issues that countries like South Africa argued for quite strongly. The integration in the IDP calls for a plan that deals with all issues that a municipality is faced with. The IDP is therefore not like the modernization approach to development whose focus is mainly around singular issues.

The duration of five years that IDPs are expected to project also makes space for the debate around sustainability. What accompanies this duration is that during that period municipalities shall periodically review their plans so that they can always be relevant to the needs of their constituencies. This provision, therefore makes it possible for municipalities to have IDPs that can be sustained, and therefore make the project of sustainable development a reality.

The Integrated Development Plan is therefore a project that will make sustainable development within municipalities a reality, and also keeping municipalities and elected officials accountable to their electorate, as they will know what are the programs that their municipality is engaged in. The IDP will also help municipalities deal with the sometimes-unrealistic expectations that people would normally have. This is a plan that will detail specific programs and time frames whilst also giving the financial implications of those, i.e. a municipal budget will be developed in line with the IDP and this therefore makes it possible for the people to know where their funds went and thus eliminating unnecessary conflicts around financial matters.

Chapter 5

CASE STUDIES

In order to make comparisons with practices from other parts of the country, this section first analyses the current situation in the eThekweni and Msunduzi Municipalities with regards communicative processes. This analysis is based on the provisions of the various local government legislation, particularly as they relate to community participation and the formulation of the IDP.

The author also had some interesting discussions with some influential people in the Msunduzi Municipality and one renowned local government specialist who gave an analysis of issues that local government institutions countrywide ought to deal with. There is also an analysis of the Ugu and Kgalagadi District Municipalities' Integrated Development Planning processes. These case studies are intended to assist develop a clearer understanding of the issues in reality, which should then inform the conclusions of this study.

The two district municipalities were selected purely on the basis of available material. Communication in development, especially at a local level, is still a relatively new field that still needs to be developed further. There was a serious lack of documentation during the time research was conducted, which therefore limited the author's ability to select municipalities on the basis of any scientific or sociological process.

5.1. Case Study One: eThekweni Municipality

The transformation of the institutions of local governance saw the establishment of even bigger municipalities with very large populations. The eThekweni Municipality (former Durban City Council) was therefore accorded the status of being a metropolitan council, which in terms of the Municipal Structures Act suggests that it has a large rates base, and that its economy is relatively big.

The Municipal Structures Act no. 117 of 1998 states that there are different categories of municipalities (category A-C), and the eThekweni Municipality was given the status of being a category A municipality. Section 2 of the Act provides that “an area must have a single category A municipality if that area can reasonably be regarded as:

- (a) a conurbation featuring-
 - (i) areas of high population density;
 - (ii) an intense movement of people;
 - (iii) extensive development; and
 - (iv) multiple business districts and industrial areas.
- (b) a center of economic activity with a complex and diverse economy;
- (c) a single area for which integrated development planning is desirable; and
- (d) having strong interdependent social and economic linkages between its constituent units.

The criteria, for a municipality to be categorized as an A municipality or a metropolitan area suggests that the eThekweni Municipality is a big center of economic activity with added challenges in terms of its development priorities.

Part of this transformation process also entailed the incorporation of rural areas into the much bigger urban cities to form single municipalities. This added challenge has resulted in municipalities having to provide services to historically un-serviced areas, which also lacked or had no infrastructure at all. Mr Kenneth Mngadi, Liaison Officer for the Durban Metro Housing, believed that “one of the key issues that we have to deal with is

contributing towards the improvement of the lives of people living in informal settlements and those in rural areas. You must remember that these rural areas were not part of this council before the new dispensation came into effect. The challenge for us, again, is to ensure that we cater for the needs of all these people in an equitable manner,”.

The IDP process in the eThekweni Municipality began with the formulation of the Long Term Development Framework (LTDF) in May 2001 as the municipality believed that “the conventional methodology of IDP formulation may be well suited to smaller municipalities, not the larger, more complex ‘category A’ municipalities,” (eThekweni Municipality 2002: 3). The LTDF gives a strategic plan for the municipality for a period of twenty years, and they have therefore seen the five-year IDP as a management tool that will help the municipality realize its twenty-year vision.

The process of formulating the municipality’s LTDF was a very thorough and rigorous consultation process with all relevant stakeholders within the eThekweni Municipality’s area of jurisdiction. The municipality conducted a ‘customer needs assessment’, which was to inform the strategic direction the municipality was to take.

The municipality held Ward needs assessment workshops where communities were afforded an opportunity to identify their needs. The provisions in the Municipal Structures Act informed this and the Municipal Systems Act which ensures that communities/citizens should play a role in the establishment of their needs and priorities. Community participation in local governance forms the cornerstone of all legislation dealing with matters of governance at this level.

There were also separate workshops for small, emerging and organized business to identify their needs and concerns in relation to the development of the local economy. Citywide stakeholders were also consulted through a workshop, and the municipality’s philosophy behind these consultative workshops was that they had to “ascertain real needs, rather than projects,” (eThekweni Municipality 2002: 4).

These consultative workshops led to the identification of four priority areas that the municipality was to focus on for the next five years. The four areas identified in the draft IDP document are:

- (a) residential community support – housing, social infrastructure and physical infrastructure;
- (b) business community support – regeneration, business support and flagship projects;
- (c) strategic/platform infrastructure – bulk services; and
- (d) operations support – plant and equipment, new buildings and strategic internal infrastructure.

There are also issues that were identified in the final IDP that have an “impact on the quality of life of citizens in Durban” (eThekweni 2002: 4). These issues are unemployment, crime, poverty and HIV/Aids. The municipality has acknowledged that these four issues are not only challenges for the local sphere of governance, but are issues that all three spheres of governance have to deal with including the private sector.

This has therefore suggested that for the eThekweni Municipality’s IDP to be truly responsive to the needs of the citizens then it would have to address these four challenges thoroughly within the context of the four strategic or priority areas that were identified in the draft IDP.

The central and most critical challenge that the vision of the eThekweni Municipality is seeking to attain is the improvement in the quality of life of the people within its area of jurisdiction. The draft IDP states that in order to realize or achieve this “it has been agreed that seven key challenges must be addressed. These are:

- (a) creating economic growth, jobs and income;
- (b) meeting basic needs;
- (c) alleviating poverty;
- (d) developing our people;
- (e) managing the HIV/Aids pandemic;

- (f) ensuring a safe and secure environment; and
- (g) striving for sustainability (economic, financial and environmental),” (eThekweni Municipality 2002: 5).

The draft IDP further states, “As an African City, this vision draws on our rich and strong social heritage and the principle of ‘ubuntu’, which places great emphasis on reaching out and caring for each other. Success in our municipality needs to result in a measurable improvement in the quality of life. It is intended that on an annual basis the change in the quality of life of citizens be measured by a quality of life index. This index will be generated from clear indicators and this process will be highly participatory,” (eThekweni Municipality 2002: 5).

The emphasis on the participation of the people on all processes related to the IDP indicates the underlying philosophy that characterizes governance in South Africa. This vision of the eThekweni Municipality emphasizes the principles outlined in the IDP that citizens should participate in their development. During the previous dispensation, the era of apartheid, citizens were never given a chance to participate in decisions and processes around their own development. This has subsequently been changed with the introduction of legislation that promotes people’s participation in decision-making processes.

The participation of communities at the level of specific and individual projects has also had some of its own shortcomings. The problem of delivering services on time to the people has been one of the key challenges that community participation has to contend with. Some people, as argued by Yunus Carrim have tended to see community participation as getting in their way. He argues “there are councillors and officials who would not want them to be aware of these rights – as they see community participation as holding back their work” (Carrim 2002: 3).

According to Sarah Charlton, Project Manager at Durban Metro Housing, project or development communication occurs at various levels depending on the nature and the objective of the project, and also that there is a need for both beneficiaries and

neighboring communities to be consulted when decisions are to be taken. She argues that with regards to beneficiaries, “the involvement of the people has got to be empowering. I come from an NGO background where a lot of the involvement of the community in the project was mainly around capacity building. We were not telling people about things that were to happen, but people were also involved in the project at the level of taking decisions.”

She has also argued that because of the demand for housing in the eThekweni Municipality, “projects in the Durban Metro have not had that empowerment side of things as a specific focus. Our mandate or agenda is on the technical side of things, i.e. delivering houses to the people.” The question becomes the extent to which this might be a limitation on the ability of communities to be involved as stakeholders in specific development projects? This is what has made it impossible for communities to be involved during the implementation of projects. Often, there will be conflicts that might arise during the implementation stages of the projects, which would need the community to deal with, and this becomes impossible. Development projects in many parts of the country are also seen as possible job creation mechanisms for local people. Communities, therefore expect that they will get jobs in the process of project implementation. This would therefore call for a more rigorous process of consultation with communities so as to ensure that the process becomes open and transparent, a view that Mr Mngadi concurred with. The implementation stage of a project should also not be misconstrued to suggest that the need for the local people to be kept abreast of developments vanishes; instead during this period regular feedback sessions become necessary so that the contractors can also be held accountable.

The final Integrated Development Plan has also made provision for the management of the municipality’s performance in relation to the implementation of the IDP. The municipality through its IDP has five areas through which their performance will be managed, and these are measurement of developmental outputs and equity, efficiency and sustainability within which they provide services, the accountability and involvement of citizens through publishing the key IDP targets and annual IDP ward/stakeholder/unicipity

wide workshops, the signing of performance agreements by senior staff, the sustainability management system to ensure that there is a balance between social, economic and environmental needs of the municipality, and the annual reports.

This is a clear indication of the significance of the Integrated Development Planning process in ensuring and promoting community participation. Clearly, for people to participate in the eThekweni municipality's affairs, there has been a heavy reliance on the IDP process, which has become a framework for community participation.

It has become clear that the creation of the new and bigger municipalities, in terms of the Local Government: Demarcation Act of 1998, has created more challenges for municipalities. In the case of the eThekweni Municipality, some of the areas incorporated into its jurisdiction had a serious lack of infrastructure.

The legislation makes provision for the involvement and participation of communities in matters of local government, and this has created some tensions in the eThekweni Municipality where challenges of speeding up service delivery now have to compete with legislative requirements. There was a feeling that consultation can sometimes be a delaying factor in addressing challenges communities face.

Issues around HIV and Aids, unemployment, poverty alleviation and fighting crime were all identified as some of the challenges of the municipality. These challenges were identified and agreed upon on the basis of some thorough consultative processes.

5.2. Case Study Two: Msunduzi Municipality

The Msunduzi Municipality, formerly known as the City of Pietermaritzburg, is situated along the N3 highway at a strategic point in terms of the industrial corridor between Durban and the city with a very close proximity to other industrial areas of Gauteng. The location of the Msunduzi Municipality is also at a strategic point in relation to its influence on regional channels of investment in the Midlands, and the municipality is also the economic hub of the Umgungundlovu District Municipality.

The transformation of the institutions of local governance also saw the expansion of the municipal area within the Msunduzi Municipality with the incorporation of other local councils and rural areas. This therefore suggested that the municipality had some added responsibilities and challenges in its quest to bring about development and prosperity for the people within its area.

With a population of approximately 523 470 people (Msunduzi 2002: 24) the Msunduzi Municipality engaged in a thorough process of identifying community needs and prioritizing them. The population distribution is such that the majority “64% are people between the ages 16-65,” (Msunduzi 2002: 24) and this is the age group where most economically active people are to be found. The municipality engaged in workshops throughout its area of jurisdiction where various stakeholders had an opportunity to make an input on the challenges they face in their areas. “Four consultative meetings were held with various stakeholders in order to gather information on needs, issues and problems. These include a Representative Forum workshop, a workshop with Youth and Women representatives, a workshop with Heads of Divisions and a workshop with Environment Forum. Information on Wards needs was also gathered from Ward Councillors,” (Msunduzi 2002: 10).

The process of formulating the IDP began with some very intense consultations with the communities in the municipality. The Municipal Systems Act of 2000 provides that there should be stakeholder participation in the formulation of the IDP and this should be done

through mechanisms like IDP forums or ward committees. The Msunduzi Municipality therefore appointed a firm of consultants that was to facilitate the establishment of ward committees in accordance with the Municipal Structures Act of 2000.

Ward Committees were then established throughout the Msunduzi Municipality's area of jurisdiction although this process encountered some problems especially in the Vulindlela area, which is a rural and tribal area. In the urban areas or townships these committees were established with the full participation of the community, while also there were some allegations of political manipulation of the process.

The Msunduzi Municipality appointed Lavender and Associates as consultants to facilitate the process of establishing ward committees throughout the municipality. This team of consultants then went on a roadshow (mobile vehicles where information was provided to residents) in all wards to empower communities with the necessary knowledge on the role and significance of ward committees, and people agreed that they were ready to participate in the actual establishment of these committees. Follow up meetings were then arranged where elections were to take place. One of the key issues that had to be agreed upon with the communities was that there was a need for ward committees that were representative of the community, including gender and geographical conditions of the ward. It was at these meetings that communities voted for their ward committees. This proved to be a serious challenge as there was more interest from communities than originally anticipated which made counting a very daunting task.

As a result in certain wards people felt that the facilitators and the councillor undermined them as they felt strongly about the manipulation of the process. The Democratic Alliance was one of the most critical voices against this process alleging that the African National Congress wanted to take over the control of all ward committees.

The situation in the Vulindlela area was even more complex with the traditional leaders vehemently opposed to the establishment of ward committees as these were seen as another attempt by government to take away more powers from the institution of

traditional leadership. Traditional leaders in this area were also not of the idea that there be elections for the new ward committees, but they wanted to keep the existing development committees which were never elected but appointed sometime back, before the local government elections in 2000. The politics behind this resistance was that most of these traditional leaders are aligned towards the Inkatha Freedom Party and therefore the existing development committees were also appointed along those lines, thus these committees were seen within these communities as more biased towards the Inkatha Freedom Party.

Development committees in this community emerged during the days of the Indlovu Regional Council before the 2000 local elections. The political situation in this area, which was predominantly IFP with the ANC gradually making inroads, made the existence and functioning of these committees highly unique. Political parties engaging in a fierce battle to win control of the area also had to fight for dominance over these committees, which ultimately depended on the political alignment of the local chief.

In the ANC dominated Nxamalala area the situation was a bit different, the development committee was more 'progressive' compared to the other areas. This committee was able to meet with the community and develop programs that eventually led to highly significant development projects to benefit the community. Those areas that fell under the leadership of an IFP aligned chief had to suffer, as there was often no consultation. Instead, community meetings would be called where no debate would take place, as it was not acceptable for ordinary people to debate with the chief. These committees therefore became redundant more than anything. The new municipal boundaries implied that there were going to be changes, as envisaged in the Municipal Structures Act.

In this Vulindlela area there are nine wards, the Inkatha Freedom Party leads five while the African National Congress leads the other four. The establishment of ward committees through a democratic process would have led to a radical power shift in the area either in favor or against the status quo. Traditional leaders were therefore not prepared to run the risk of losing out on the smallest power left to them. Some people

within the traditional leadership circles felt that the disbanding of development committees suggested that their powers were being eroded.

After a very long process of discussion and negotiation a settlement to the dispute was reached with all parties agreeing that the development committees be disbanded and the new ward committees be established. These committees were to be constituted as follows: five members from the outgoing development committee and then another five to be elected democratically in a community meeting.

The process of consultation began with ward meetings where the communities were given an opportunity to raise issues that were of significance and importance to their needs. The population distribution in the Msunduzi Municipality is such that “60% of the city’s residents live in the Edendale and Vulindlela areas,” (Msunduzi 2002: 25). It therefore suggests that the bulk of the needs would come from these areas.

The two areas have a history of a very poor infrastructure or no infrastructure at all, and Vulindlela in particular being a rural area is very backward. The needs in this area are likely to be around the provision of physical infrastructure like roads.

Through this rigorous community and stakeholder participation/consultation process a number of issues were identified as deeply affecting the communities in the Msunduzi Municipality, and these were:

- (a) low income and lack of economic opportunity (including unemployment);
- (b) HIV/Aids;
- (c) Substance abuse and related issues;
- (d) Availability and affordability of basic services (free basic services);
- (e) Availability of information and education;
- (f) Health and related service issues (e.g. sanitation, water and refuse);
- (g) Crime, rape, substance and child abuse;
- (h) Accessibility and travel (roads and transportation systems); and

- (i) Access to and affordability of community facilities e.g. halls and recreational facilities.

With regards to economic development, the Msunduzi Municipality's IDP (Msunduzi 2002: 52) has noted the following issues:

- There have been significant job losses in the footwear industry over the last few years with many factories closing down. This has resulted in the emergence of a number of small footwear manufactures.
- The rapidly increasing unemployment rate has resulted in a burgeoning informal sector, which is seen as a threat especially to retailers in the formal sectors in terms of the problems that are associated with informal trade.
- Key financial institutions and businesses, who have traditionally operated in the CBD, have moved to suburban locations creating a whole range of problems for the CBD, or have located to other cities.

These issues have been identified as areas that need to be worked on to improve the chances of the local economy growing. There have also been more specific projects that were identified as having a potential to promote growth in the local economy such as the development of the inner city housing in conjunction with commercial and taxi related activities. The development of the Oribi Airport was also one of the projects that were identified as likely to yield positive results in terms of developing the economy of the municipality.

The need for an integrated approach towards planning has also been further amplified by the municipality's IDP where it states "The IDP will ensure that housing development is based on integrated planning and allow for national and provincial government to align development with the performance of local government. The Municipality is required to

take on the role as the developer and appoint implementing agents to drive the delivery process of each housing project,” (Msunduzi 2002: 58).

The involvement of the communities throughout the IDP process also enables the people to be aware of the development projects that will take place in their areas so that all the unnecessary expectations are to be addressed. The fact that communities now have access to information, in terms of S 160 (7) of the constitution which states that “a Municipal Council must conduct its business in an open and transparent manner, and may close its sittings, or those of its committees, only when it is reasonable to do so,” is a clear indication that any form of misunderstanding is unlikely to occur, and therefore the relationship between the council and the community would improve. Previously people used to get information through the ‘grapevine’ about development projects and in many instances these have been untrue and as a result conflict situations would emerge between the authorities and the people.

The IDP process has not only enabled people to know about everything that would occur in their communities as municipalities are required to publish their IDPs, but it has also empowered them with all the necessary skills and information for decision making processes. The participation of communities in the formulation of their IDPs benefited the participants as well, as they had to deal with issues that they very rarely, if any, had contact with previously. This process has made communities aware of the various difficulties and challenges that municipal officials have in dealing with issues of development. To this end the Msunduzi Municipality’s IDP states “community empowerment is the priority in encouraging the involvement of communities in matters of local governance and a major contributor to providing financially sustainable services, providing democratic accountable local government, and providing a secure, crime free local environment,” (Msunduzi 2002: 30).

However there appears to be some differences of opinion in terms of the extent of community involvement in the Msunduzi Municipality’s IDP process. Some councillors have expressed a view that since the Msunduzi Municipality Ward Forum, a structure that

will comprise two representatives from all wards in the municipality and these representatives will be drawn from the already existing ward committees, has not been established, it has therefore been difficult for the municipality to engage in a truly participative process.

What also emerged during our discussions with our respondents is that the establishment of the Msunduzi Municipality Ward Forum would have enhanced the participation of citizens in municipal processes. It would be at this structure that Ward Committees from throughout the municipality would have an opportunity to engage on issues in a single platform and share their experiences. This forum would also provide an opportunity to these ward committees to have access to municipal officials, as they would form part of such a structure. It was also envisaged that councillors would participate, which therefore makes the municipality's interaction with the community a reality.

Councilor Bongani Ndlovu of Ward 18 believes that "The IDP is a very important tool that will promote information flows between municipalities and communities." The problem, which he identifies, is that the process of the establishment of ward committee structures has not been completed, and this particularly refers to "The establishment of the Msunduzi Municipality Ward Forum which has been envisaged to promote 'true' communication channels between the municipality and all communities in a 'structured' manner."

This is a view that is also supported by Councilor Msimang of Ward 24 who has also seen the establishment of this ward forum as a "Very important and critical step that the municipality would need to take. This forum will provide a voice for the people within the municipality's structured processes of decision making."

5.3. Other Perspectives On Msunduzi Municipality

Some of the most critical issues that Mr Nhlanhla Khambule, Director of Vantage Training and Management (a consulting firm based in Pietermaritzburg that offers various services to municipalities across the country including training of councillors, officials and communities) raised during our discussions with regards to the operations of municipalities were: infrastructure and services, social and economic development, institutional transformation, good governance and democracy, and sound financial management.

For Mr Khambule, these are the five critical areas that municipalities have got to focus their programs and actions towards. These are the areas that IDPs, according to Mr Khambule, have got to address, amongst others.

The challenge is for councillors to understand and be fully aware of their role and tasks, and such awareness would lead to them developing a broad understanding of the municipality's Key Performance Areas (KPA's). Mr Khambule argues "it is only through this understanding of these five KPAs that councillors can be able to make their input in decision making processes within the municipality." Mr Khambule argues further that the problem with some of these councillors is that they do not want to "admit and acknowledge their lack of understanding" in so far as local government issues are concerned, and this results in them "misrepresenting the issues to the public."

He believes that councillors should be able to link the five Key Performance Areas to the broad thrust of government to fight poverty and disease. He argues, "I think these councillors must be able to link these five issues, and be able to say 'how does development contribute to the fight against poverty?' and for me this is a critical issue." Mr Khambule was also very quick to point out that councillors have a superb understanding of issues at a local level, but he feels the challenge is to "translate these into developmental decisions or even the actual presentation of these to the municipality."

Councilor Mazwi Msimang of Ward 24 which comprise areas like Richmond Crest, Bisley, Oribi, Ridge Park and Westgate, concurs with the ideas of Mr Khambule in so far as capacity among councillors is concerned.

Councilor Msimang believes that the problem of a lack of understanding among his colleagues is one of the many reasons why there are sometimes delays in bringing services and development to the people who voted them in. Councilor Msimang argues, “I think this is a political issue. In almost all political organizations, there are no set criteria on who and how people can qualify for election into the municipality. This then leads to us having problems when we have to deliberate on issues. This lack of understanding of issues not only does it stifle discussion at the time, but it also hampers development within the municipality.”

There seems to be a general agreement on the importance of training for councillors in order to discharge their responsibilities. Like Councilor Msimang, Councilor Bongani Ndlovu of Ward 18, which comprises areas like Imbali 2, 14, 15 and France, believes that “we need training as councillors. This is for the first time that I have been elected to serve in any government structure. My understanding of issues is very limited, and therefore need such training.”

The question of capacity and its lack thereof is not only the problem and challenge that ward councillors have to contend with, there is also the issue of administrative support to enable them to discharge their responsibilities accordingly. Mr Khambule believes that this is a very important requirement that can lead to success or failure of the municipality in delivering services to the people, while at the same time being able to stay in touch with the issues on the ground in terms of the feelings of their citizens.

In the Msunduzi Municipality, according to Councilor Ndlovu, councillors are only offered support in terms of making arrangements for community meetings. The municipality only offers its support in terms of the distribution of posters and flyers

announcing such meetings and this also includes the use of the municipality's loudhailer. Councilor Ndlovu adds, "This support is only applicable to meetings aimed at discussing development issues in the community."

Councilor Msimang also agrees with Councilor Ndlovu's views on the support that they receive from the municipality, even though they have differences of opinion on the extent of such support. He states "We get support from the municipality for anything and everything that has to do with the development of our communities."

Mr Khambule makes an example of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan, formerly known as Port Elizabeth, where the municipality has developed a system to provide administrative support to all its ward councillors. "This municipality has been able, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), to provide administrative support to all its ward councillors, and this is the only municipality in the country which has this system."

The view that seems to be expressed by the example above is that there is a need for ward councillors to be readily available to assist communities at all times. He states that the idea in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan is, in the future, to have officers who would be placed where the people are. The idea here is that the municipality would establish offices in every ward, which will be resourced, including human resources, to serve communities on the ground. This would make ward councillors more accessible to their constituencies, and this would therefore enhance communication processes between the municipality and the communities/citizens.

In the Msunduzi Municipality councillors are provided with cellular phones that they can utilize in executing their duties. The municipality has also offered them an option of taking their own personal contract cellular phones whose calls can be claimed from the municipality, while other councillors have opted to take the council owned contract cellular phones that they can utilize. These phones, however, have a limit so that they can manage the use of such and the phone bills thereafter.

One observation made by Mr Khambule, which to a certain degree seems to be supported by Councilor Msimang's views, is that in the affluent communities, where people do not have a problem in terms of the lack of infrastructure, the residents associations are very vocal and in most instances initiate moves to call community meetings. Mr Khambule sees the ratepayers associations in many communities, especially in the historically white areas, as the most vocal sector when it comes to local development issues. Councilor Msimang on the other hand, sees his ward, which comprises some affluent suburbs in the Msunduzi Municipality, as not having a problem with infrastructure, but instead his constituency actively participates in any meeting that he calls to "brief the community on development prospects and getting their views on such a project," and he believes that this is really working very well as the levels of participation have been growing.

The divide that exists in the Msunduzi Municipality is not only about infrastructure, but it is a problem of a lack of infrastructure based on race and the degree or type of authority that the municipality inherited in the past. For him the Msunduzi Municipality is divided or can be divided into four broad areas. These are:

- White;
- Indians and Coloured;
- Imbali and Edendale; and
- Vulindlela.

This kind of division would make a difference and a huge impact in terms of how people living there would participate in municipal developmental issues. "The former white areas has professionals, and there is also a culture in believing in value for money," Mr Khambule explains. These areas also have fully functional ratepayers associations whose task "is to protect the interests of ratepayers." He argues that for every policy that municipalities come up with, the first groups to engage such policies are these ratepayers associations.

The Indian areas are "not so vocal, but they do contribute every now and then," and Mr Khambule further states that the problem with this community is that they lack

enthusiasm towards politics, and their focus is more towards running businesses. He further makes an example of a Coloured community, Woodlands, where meetings to establish a ward committee never had people exceeding thirty, and this happened on four consecutive occasions.

In the Greater Edendale area, one of our respondents feels that the participation of communities in developmental initiatives is fairly impressive, although he feels that “the understanding of local government issues, and how municipalities function is still a problem.” The other problem that he identifies is that there are also some individuals within these communities who are disillusioned and therefore are out there to frustrate any process of development either by “deliberately not participating or by opposing everything that the councilor or the ward committee comes up with.”

In the Vulindlela area the participation levels are ‘excellent’ according to one of our respondents who cites a few reasons for this. He argues that this is a historically traditional community, and is still today having traditional leaders. This, for him, suggests that when the local chief calls a meeting, people would attend in their numbers. He therefore argues, “It has become a culture for these communities to attend any meeting because in the past they used to have chiefs calling meetings which they had to attend, and today even when a councilor calls a meeting people would come in their numbers.”

The problem of rural communities also extends beyond the issue of conformity that is raised above. There has been an ongoing debate around the future of traditional leaders, as some feared that the new system of local governance was nothing but a plan by the national government to take their powers and destroy the entire institution of traditional leadership. This however has never been the intention of government as the Minister of Provincial and Local Government, Sydney Mufamadi, states in his foreword on the Draft White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance of October 2002 that “the institution has a place in our democracy, and has a potential to transform and contribute

enormously towards the restoration of the moral fibre of our society and in the reconstruction and development of the country, especially in rural areas.”

The white paper has primarily been an attempt by government to provide traditional leaders with assurances that their institution was still relevant in a democratic South Africa. This came as there was resistance from traditional leaders towards the new system of local government, as it was also shown earlier in this paper that traditional leaders were opposed to the establishment of ward committees for instance because they viewed these as having a potential of making them redundant. The white paper, has therefore attempted to allay the fears of traditional leaders, and makes it very clear that “traditional leadership and South Africa’s present democratic order are not mutually exclusive. Traditional leadership has to function in a manner that embraces democracy and contributes to the entrenchment of a democratic culture, thus enhancing its own status and standing among the people,” (South Africa 2002: 19).

The second reason that Mr Khambule attributes this to relate to the underdevelopment that characterizes this area. He feels that because of their hunger for development, people in this area take every meeting seriously as they see such as a possible step towards them realizing ‘a better life’. There is also a problem that he identifies within rural communities in the form of literacy levels. “Participation in these areas is also undermined by literacy levels, and the more rural a municipality is the less understanding there is among citizens of local government issues,” Mr Khambule explains further stating that the relationship between the chief and the community, which historically has been looked at in terms of “chief and his subjects” has also been a serious impediment towards the extent to which rural communities are able to ‘critically’ contribute in meetings.

This has therefore suggested that the ‘excellent’ participation levels that was attributed to the rural areas of the Msunduzi Municipality partially addresses the quality of contribution that people make in these meetings, but instead is more focused on the question of numbers. The fact that people in these areas attend meetings in their numbers

does not necessarily mean that they actually contribute, but that there is a willingness on the part of the community to make a contribution towards changing their own lives.

The Msunduzi Municipality engaged in a thorough consultative process, which was also facilitated and made easier through the establishment of ward committees. The existence of development committees in the rural areas of the municipality delayed the formation of these ward committees. The resistance from traditional leaders in the area is an indication of the need for more cooperation with the traditional institution of leadership to ensure that development becomes a reality.

One of the major issues that came out is the need for the training and development of councilors so that they can meaningfully contribute to the development of their communities. Linked to this is the need to create an understanding of the key performance areas for municipalities, whose lack thereof would lead to a serious misrepresentation of issues to the public.

The levels of participation in the Msunduzi Municipality are also linked to the historical categorization of areas. In the more affluent communities, participation levels were high while in the underdeveloped communities only a few, professionals, were seen to be the most vocal. This calls for serious capacity building and awareness creation among the ordinary people in these areas to become more actively involved in matters of concern to them.

A need for councilor support was also identified, as it was felt that for them to be effective, councilors should be empowered with all the necessary resources to execute their duties more effectively. This would also make it possible for ward councilors to be more accessible to their communities.

5.4. Case Study Three: Ugu and Kgalagadi District Municipalities

The IDP of Ugu District Municipality in the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal and the Kgalagadi District Municipality, which straddles both the North West and Limpopo Provinces, can be used as further case studies to look at the process of formulating the Integrated Development Plan of a municipality.

As required by legislation, particularly the Municipal Systems Act of 2000, municipalities are required to put in place mechanisms to make the participation of citizens in the formulation of their IDP a reality. The Municipal Structures Act of 2000 further states that the participation of communities or citizens in the IDP process at a local level shall be through various structures with a specific provision for the establishment of ward committees to represent people in all development initiatives.

The two district municipalities, whose IDP processes are under review here, both had put up mechanisms to ensure that the people were actively involved in the formulation of such strategic plans. All stakeholders were involved in the process of identifying their needs, however, the involvement of the private sector was a bit limited. In the Kgalagadi District Municipality, in particular, the involvement of the white, big and wealthy business was largely absent. This has also been the case in other municipalities other than those under review here, where big business' involvement has largely been around issues that might have a direct bearing on their activities.

There was also a limitation in terms of the participation of a large number of people and many other civil society groups. According to a study by the Environmental Evaluation Unit at the University of Cape Town entitled "Integrating Environmental Sustainability Issues into Local Government Planning and Decision-Making (<http://www.egs.uct.ac.za/eeu/RESEARCH/archive.html#2001>), the nature of these District Municipalities is such that they are so vastly spread, geographically, which has therefore made it difficult in some instances for people to be able to participate in IDP

processes as they would sometimes be required to travel to a more central point which has often been far for many people.

The establishment of Ward Committees has been one mechanism that has made people's participation in the IDP process possible. However, the participation of the people through these ward committees has also been hampered by the lack of skills within these committees which has therefore suggested a need for capacity building to ensure that communities are given an opportunity to effectively participate in processes aimed at improving and shaping their lives.

Through the participation of the various structures of civil society and other stakeholder groupings, these municipalities were able to come up with a thorough analysis of community needs and priorities, which were to inform and shape their strategic plans for the next five years. The participation of these various structures is an indication of the extent to which these municipalities were able to engage community needs raised by the communities after rigorous debates on their content. These debates meant that the kind of issues that were finally agreed upon as truly representative of community needs and priorities then positively fed through to the final IDP documents.

There has been a very strong emphasis, in both municipalities, on the need for the eradication of poverty and job creation. The study by the Environmental Evaluation Unit has found that in the municipalities they studied there was a "strong focus on satisfying basic human needs and promoting social justice and equity." This has been one very important aspect that communities kept raising during the needs analysis phase of the IDP formulation.

The active involvement of citizens in the IDP process has also meant that the people are informed about all they need to expect in terms of the nature and quality of service they should expect from their local authorities or municipalities. This would also expectations that might be created as communities are asked to identify what their needs and priorities are.

One of the key issues that were identified in the Environmental Evaluation Unit study is that relating to the very limited revenue base for some municipalities. The kinds of projects that the IDP of the two municipalities, and many other municipalities across the country has identified would require huge amounts of money to implement. Unfortunately, the tax base of the two municipalities is very limited as many of the people there are unemployed and therefore unable to pay their rates. Some parts of these municipalities are still under what was called 'rural' areas, which were mainly under the 'traditional authority', or what used to be called 'tribal land' where rates were never applicable in the past. This therefore makes these municipalities poorer, and therefore unable to implement, with their own revenue generated from taxes, their IDP.

The IDP has also identified local economic development as a critical element of any initiative to bring about sustainable development within their localities. One of the key issues that local economic development initiatives seek to achieve is the generation of a vibrant local economy that creates employment opportunities for citizens. A vibrant local economy is therefore a catalyst for the proper and effective implementation of the IDP; it creates the necessary conditions, i.e. the municipality has resources at its disposal essential in the implementation of the IDP.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

The democratic breakthrough of 1994, as noted earlier on in this paper, ushered in a new way of doing things within structures of governance. This new era has seen a new approach towards government communication with citizens, especially at the local government sphere. The system of apartheid, which had made access to information, nothing but a privilege of the few had left a legacy that had to be addressed through the various legislations discussed earlier in this paper.

The constitution has placed greater emphasis on community participation in all matters of governance, especially at the local level. Community participation is a fundamental characteristic of local government as this sphere of government is a link between residents and the provincial structures, which in turn links citizens with national government.

This has assumed that municipalities would understand the issues that need to be communicated with their residents. The fact that municipalities or local government structures are a delivery wing of government suggests that they must have very high levels of understanding of the needs of their residents. The municipality would, therefore, require an opportunity to listen to the needs of the people as they deal with the daily realities of their lives.

It has been established that the municipalities under review have engaged their communities through the IDP process to determine the needs and prioritize them. This has been in keeping with the provisions of the Municipal Structures Act and the Municipal Systems Act, which prescribe community participation. In the case of the Msunduzi Municipality, ward committees were seen as the primary vehicle to drive this process forward, while in the eThekweni Municipality wards needs assessment workshops were held to identify and prioritize the needs of communities. The eThekweni

Municipality also engaged the business community (small, medium, and big enterprises) in this IDP formulation process. This is an indication of the commitment by government to ensure that all sectors of society participate in developmental processes where they live.

The fact that this is a new system of governance has also meant that people occupying various positions within these institutions needed to be trained (an issue that some councilors concurred with) so that they could have a proper understanding of the challenges municipalities face, and the expectations that the various legislations places upon them.

One of the key problems that we established, which has a direct bearing on the municipality's ability to effectively and efficiently render quality service to its residents is that some councilors have failed to admit their lack of understanding around key local government issues, and this has led to them misrepresenting issues to the public. It is issues like these that have made it very difficult for some municipalities to speed up service delivery. This is an issue that some councilors have agreed to that they are new to local government, and therefore require training that would enable them to understand their role and responsibilities in such a manner that they themselves participate in decision-making within the council itself.

Some councilors also felt that it was imperative for their municipalities to offer them appropriate administrative support to be able to discharge their responsibilities. This support is viewed as an opportunity for the municipalities to be in touch with realities on the ground, as councilors would be most accessible to their voters. These councilors saw this as critical, especially for ward councilors who must always be readily available to assist communities as and when the need arises.

The tensions in a more rural setting were also evident during our investigation, as the process of establishing ward committees was slower than in the other areas of the Msunduzi Municipality, as more lengthy consultative processes needed to take place

before anything could happen. These delays, not only did they delay the establishment of ward committees, but they also gave an indication of the unnecessary bureaucratic bottlenecks that rural people have to go through before they can enjoy the fruits of democracy in the form of improved living conditions. The resolution of the impasse between government and traditional leaders on the role and place of traditional leaders is a critical factor that is likely to impact on the speed at which development would take place in rural areas.

The mechanisms for community participation that the eThekweni and Msunduzi municipalities created were highly distinct, largely as a result of them being two different structures in terms of the categories of municipalities as defined in the Municipal Structures Act. The eThekweni municipality on the one hand does not have ward committees, while in the Msunduzi municipality these structures are the cornerstone of the municipality. The situation, however, in the country is that eight provinces have been declared ward participatory municipalities, where ward committees are to be and in most have been established. Municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal that want to establish ward committees according to Mr Khambule “have to request the approval of the MEC, which is only a formality.” It appears that political factors were the main reasons why KwaZulu-Natal has not declared its municipalities ward participatory.

The establishment of ward committees has been seen by many as critical towards the success of municipalities in delivering services. These committees would create an environment within which communities would contribute towards their own development. This, however, has failed to recognize the fact that participation is also dependent upon certain factors.

It has been established during our interviews that in some communities public participation forums were mainly dominated by a few, often high ranking members within such communities. The numbers of people who participated in the IDP formulation process in the municipalities under investigation were said to be quite ‘excellent’ according to the respective municipalities, however these numbers do not

truly represent those people who actually made their contributions, and whose voices were heard.

Public participation mechanisms have not addressed the disparities in terms of the levels of confidence that people have. The history of this country actually made the participation of women in community structures intricate due to patriarchy. This has therefore made it very difficult for some women, as there are those who were very active in their communities, to participate fully.

Communicating with citizens, as required by the Municipal Systems Act, is fundamental, however, it is not the only thing that can ensure that communities are part of processes aimed at their own development.

Community meetings provide working class residents an opportunity to voice their opinions on various issues affecting them, as in the more affluent communities, the use of emails, letters to the newspapers and radio phone-in programs have been highly utilized. The restriction of these mechanisms to the affluent communities is attributable to the lack of access to such facilities in the working class communities because of the cost implications.

Although this paper has not conclusively established the extent of communicative processes in the two municipalities under review, we have however established that communication processes, in terms of the various legislations governing local government, have mainly been seen within the context of community participation. The participation of residents or communities, as envisaged in the Municipal Systems Act, represents a great shift in government's thinking on development.

The democratic breakthrough of 1994 has therefore led to a new system of governance which should eliminate some problems associated with the past, as argued by Uzodike (1999), wherein development projects were decided without the consultation of

beneficiaries, and as a result there were too many institutions that became ‘white elephants’.

Community participation is therefore a catalyst for meaningful development, which addresses the needs of the people. It is through the IDP that municipalities are going to develop programs addressing issues of poverty, HIV and Aids, job creation and many other issues communities raised during the public participation phase of such a process.

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Annexure A

SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS

NAME	DESIGNATION	DATE
Ms Sarah Charlton	Project Manager: Durban Metro Housing	07 August 2001
Mr Kenneth Mngadi	Liaison Officer: Durban Metro Housing	30 August 2001
Mr Nhlanhla Khambule	Managing Director: Vantage Holdings	12 March 2002 11 December 2002
Mr Bongani Ndlovu	Ward 18 Councilor: Msunduzi Municipality	13 March 2002
Mr Mazwi Msimang	Ward 24 Councilor: Msunduzi Municipality	14 March 2002

Annexure B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What is your understanding of communication?
2. What communications mechanisms do you have in place?
3. How does communication enhance your projects?
4. Do you have a communications infrastructure?
5. What are the specific channels of communicating and discussing developmental projects with the intended beneficiaries?
6. What is the relationship between project implementers/beneficiaries and the forms of communication used?
7. What is the role of field-workers or development facilitators?
8. How far is your municipality in the implementation of local government legislation, as it relates to the involvement of communities?
9. What do you understand as the role of ward committees?
10. What support mechanisms have you developed to assist ward councilors discharge their responsibilities?
11. How did your municipality involve communities in the formulation of the IDP as per provisions of the Municipal Systems Act?