

**The Participation of Women in the Preparation and Formulation  
of Local Council Budget: A Case Study of Enseleni Community  
in uMhlathuze Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of a Masters Degree in Social  
Science (Community Development)**

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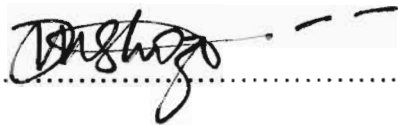
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**March 2007**

**(i) Declaration**

I, Dizline Mfanozelwe Shoji, declare that "The participation of women in the preparation and formulation of local council budget : A case study of Enseleni Community in uMhlathuze Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal", is my own work, and that all the sources I have used and quoted from have been acknowledged.



Mr D.M. Shoji

March 2007

## **(ii) Acknowledgments**

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**(iii) Dedicated to**

My late father, Sidlodlo sakoMakhanya, G Jackson Ayigugi Lentshebe, my mother, Ntozakhe Shozi (Mkhoma), my wife, Londy Shozi and my children, my uncles, Sikhakha and Sihlahla Mandonini, my grandmother, Sholo Khwela, for their unconditional love, faith and support.

#### **(iv) Acronyms**

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AZAPO	Azanian Peoples Organisation
ACDP	African Christian Democratic Party
ANC	African National Congress
ANCWL	African National Congress Women's League
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CDW(s)	Community Development Worker(s)
CGE	Commission on Gender Equality
CPP	Centre for Public Participation
CLRDC	Community Law and Rural Development Centre
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Union
DA	Democratic Alliance
DDP	Democracy Development Programme
DPLG	Department of Provincial and Local Government
ETU	Education and Training Unit
GEAR	The Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IRI	The International Republican Institute
ICC	International Convention Centre
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal Province

MFMA	Municipal Finance Management Act
NBI	The National Business Initiative for Growth, Development and Democracy
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PAC	Pan African Congress
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SA	South Africa
SANGOCO	South African Non-Governmental Organisation Coalition
UNIZUL	University of Zululand
UDF	United Democratic Front
USAID	The United States of America for International Development

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## **(v) Abstract**

This thesis focuses on the participation of women in the preparation and formulation of local council budgets: A case study of the Enseleni Community in uMhlathuze Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal. It examines whether or not uMhlathuze municipality enables women to participate in the preparation and formulation of the municipal budget.

The questions that this research will be trying to answer are the following:

1. Are women participating in the preparation and formulation of the local council budget, and if so, to what extent? If not, what barriers hinder the participation of women? How can these barriers be removed?
2. What can be done to improve the participation of women in preparation of the local council budget?
3. What structures exist that can enhance the participation of women in the preparation of the local council budget?

Through an analysis of data obtained from questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and observations this research reveals the following findings: The perceptions of women's role, by both men and women, coupled with women's traditional domestic responsibility impedes their ability to participate. In addition, there is a complex array of factors, which range from financial constraints to institutional cultures, poverty, little knowledge about local

government, and gender issues, in addition to the traditionally acknowledged self-denial and lack of confidence, that also hinders participation.

The municipality does not target women as an important constituency but rather applies a generic approach to involving the public to comment on the preparation and formulation of the local council budget. There are, however, internal and external avenues for participation. There is an internal process, where women who work in the municipality are involved in the preparation of local council budgets, although most of the women who work in the municipality denied that it really happens. There is also external participation, where women from different organizations and communities, as individuals and ordinary citizens, can participate.

The impact and benefit of women's participation in the preparation and formulation of local council budgets ensures that they would, in addition, know about tender opportunities and budget issues and this would create job opportunities and boost women's income.

The research revealed that the municipality does not have a gender policy. The municipality needs to be gender sensitive in all respects, including budget issues. A gender policy would ensure that a gender forum and gender desk are established.

The research demonstrated that the issue of political parties is critical since they are the ones who nominate more males than females to positions in councils. This results in the numerical dominance of males over females. Over and above this, very few women are elected as ward councillors - a key role, since ward councillors are tasked with driving the programmes of the municipality at ward level.

The research depicts a nominal presence of women's organizations at grassroots level in rural areas and townships. Rather, women are organized more specifically to perform activities that are to do with daily living.

Finally, this research depicts the need for more robust action to ensure that women participate in the preparation and formulation of the local council budget. It is envisaged that the conclusions drawn and suggested way forward in this study will be translated into an implementation plan which could possibly influence future public participation initiatives in uMhlathuze Municipality.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction and background information**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The topic of the research is: The participation of women in the preparation and formulation of local council budgets: A case study of Enseleni Community in UMhlatuze Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal. It is critical to look at what how this research report will look like. The research report has the following chapters; Chapter One is the introductory chapter and gives background information about uMhlatuze Municipality. Chapter Two presents the literature review and theoretical framework for the research. Chapter Three describes research methodology used during the research process. Chapter Four reports on research findings which are presented according to themes. Chapter Five analyses the results presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Six is the concluding chapter that will suggest the way forward. Each chapter will have its own introduction, detailed discussion and a conclusion. There is an appendix section at the end of the research report. This will show samples of focus group discussion questions, consent forms, face-to-face interview questions as well as communication between the researcher, uMhlatuze Municipality and other relevant stakeholders.

The discussion that follows focuses on Chapter One (this chapter). It will explain key terms that are used in the research, namely, preparation of the budget, local government, participation and women. This chapter will also give background information about uMhlatuze Municipality, the selected area for the study. The

background information will reflect on the following issues: total population in uMhlathuze Municipality, the population distribution by gender, dominant home languages, types of dwellings found, the maps of KwaZulu-Natal and uMhlathuze Municipality, traditional farming and cultivation of crops, water and sewage. The maps of uThungulu and uMhlathuze municipalities will also be depicted in this chapter. Secondly, the distribution of power relations in uMhlathuze Municipality will be discussed. This will be done through looking at how many women are in positions of power.

Thirdly, the research question will be presented in this chapter. Fourthly, this chapter will narrate the aim, objective, research questions and hypotheses. It will also explain the research methodology, which is the research design.

## **1.2 Background information of UMhlathuze Municipality**

“While South African women have a long and proud history of articulating their rights, dialogue regarding gender equality accelerated during the negotiations for a democratic South Africa.” Rhoda L and Watson J (2002: 26). Racial and social barriers had prevented women from being recognised as full citizens, and they were excluded from decision-making structures and processes. With the emergence of South Africa’s rights-based policies and legislation, and with explicit reference to equity issues including gender, an environment was created for women to participate in political and administrative decision-making.



Watson J and Rhoda L (2002: 27) add that, "Despite the fact that there have been some progressive developments within political life in South Africa, there is still a long way to go in securing the maximum participation of women. Many strategic and practical gender needs are yet to be addressed. The participation of women in key decision-making processes, which have the capacity to impact upon the quality of their lives in very significant ways, is not only an important strategic gender need which must be met, but also impacts upon how practical gender needs are addressed."

It is against the above background that this research chose to focus on the participation of women in the preparation and formulation of local council budgets. A case study of Enseleni community in the participation of women in the municipal budget process was used. This community is situated in UMhlatuze Municipality, an overview of which follows. The research was conducted in Enseleni, a small rural township which is 11 km away from Richards Bay. "It is under uMhlatuze Municipality which includes the former Richards Bay, Mpangeni-Ngwelezane transitional local councils. With the new demarcations the new uMhlatuze local council includes other rural areas from Empangeni and surrounding areas which are KwaBhejane under Inkosi Khoza, KwaDlangezwa under Inkosi Mkwanazi and KwaDube under Inkosi uDube. The municipal area covers 789 square kms. It began life as a fishing village in the 1960's and ALUSAF Bayside was the first industry to open up shop back in the days of protected Trade". City of uMhlatuze Annual report (2003)

The UMhlatuze Annual Report (2003:2) states that “The City of uMhlatuze derives its name from the uMhlatuze River that meanders through the municipal area and unifies the towns, suburbs and traditional tribal areas symbolically. The newly formed city of uMhlatuze which incorporates Richards Bay and Empangeni, has for a number of years shown the highest growth rate in the country. The City of uMhlatuze is geared for huge expansion with exciting planned developments such as the port expansion, a duty free Industrial Development Zone, the settlement of large new industries, a golf course estate and waterfront marine.”

In order to show the exact location of uMhlatuze Municipality, Figure 1 and 2 are depicted underneath. Figure 1 depicts the Map of Kwazulu- Natal showing all 11 District councils including eThekweni Metro Council. UMhlatuze Municipality is located within UThungulu District Municipality.



Figure 1 (Extract from Impact: Economic Strengths of Zululand 2005/6)

Figure 2 depicts all local municipalities council that are found under uThungulu Municipality which are Ntambanana (KZ 283), Mbonambi (KZ281), Mtonjaneni (KZ 285), uMlalazi (KZ 284) and uMhlathuze (KZ 282).

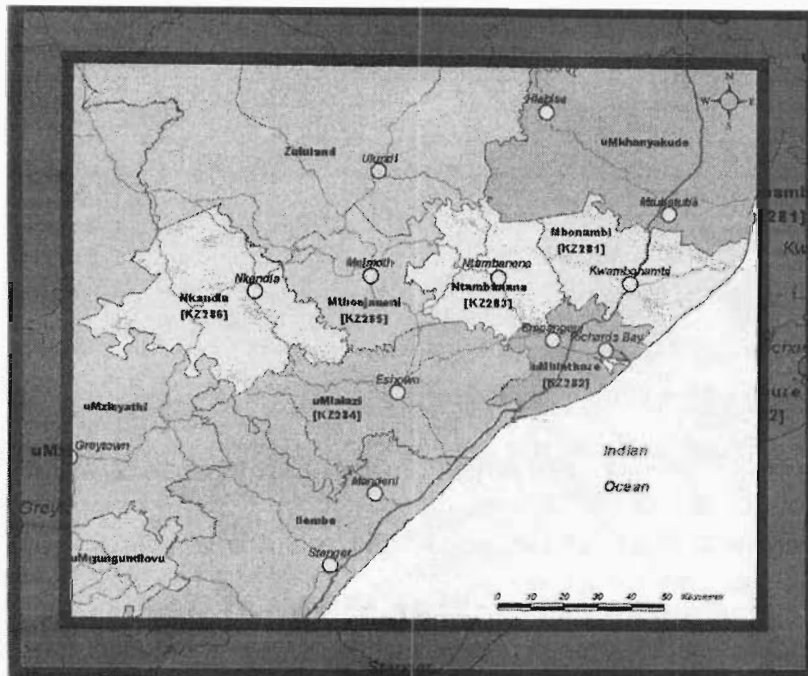


Figure 2

Extracted from UThungulu District Municipality Annual Report 2003/2004

According to [www.richemp.org.za](http://www.richemp.org.za) Key Statistics on the UMhlathuze municipal area, the following information is provided, as accessed on the 18 August 2006:

- ↓ “The total population of the city of uMhlathuze is 296 339 with estimated 70 031 households. Census 2001 estimates the rural population at 12 7331. Based on voting statistics this figure should be closer to 170 000 persons. More than 40% of the residents in the municipal area reside in

non-urban (rural and tribal authority) areas outside Empangeni and Richards Bay, and is indicative of a densely populated rural area.

- ✚ The dominant home languages are the following: 85% of people speak Zulu, 8.4% of people speak English, 5.4% of people speak Afrikaans and 1.3% of people speak other languages.
  
- ✚ The population is also relatively young, with 33% being under the age of 15 years. The young population is indicative of future population growth and a high demand on social services. Sixty-four percent of the population is between 15 years of age and approximately 65% of the total population has to provide for the remaining 35%.
  
- ✚ What is critical is that the population distribution by gender is fairly equal, although there are slightly more females than males. This could be attributed to migrant workers, who leave their wives and families behind in townships while they work at mines or farms outside the municipal area.
  
- ✚ Close to 18% of the population over 20 years old has no form of formal education, which would make it difficult for these people to find employment in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy. Only 11% of over 20-year olds has a tertiary education and 25% has completed

secondary school, indicating that education levels in the area are quite low.

- ✚ The types of dwellings are as follows; There are 77% formal, 8% informal and 15% Zulu traditional dwellings.
  
- ✚ There is still very little economic opportunity and formal employment in the former township areas like Empangeni, ENseleni, Ngwelezane and Vulindlela. Unemployment in the area is high in comparison with world standards.
  
- ✚ The population is served by 5 business districts with 20 shopping centres. There are 4 847 businesses in the municipal area. The area has 8 post offices, 27 bank branches, 35 government organizations and offices, 5 cinemas, 11 hotels and 64 registered bed and breakfast establishments/guesthouses.
  
- ✚ Traditional farming and cultivation of crops are characterized by communal land ownership in predominantly tribal areas. Approximately 80% of the arable tribal land is used for cattle and goat grazing. The major reason for keeping livestock is for cultural reasons and not for a profit motive. Farming activities are left in the hands of women, older men, and in some cases children.

- ✚ It is critical to look at energy sources because women use them to perform their domestic functions. A percentage of 70.3 of all households use electricity as an energy source for cooking and 86% use it as a lighting source. A percentage 18.9 of households use gas or paraffin for cooking. Solar power is used by 0.3% of all households for cooking and lighting. One hundred and fifteen households have access to free basic electricity services. A percentage of 92,6 of the municipality's 28 231 electricity customers has prepaid meters.
- ✚ A percentage of 42,5 of all households has a normal telephone or cellular telephone in the dwelling. Only 4,4% of all households do not have access to a telephone near the dwelling.
- ✚ In terms of income, the Enseleni rural area is the lowest, as over 405 of all households have no income. Close to 20% of households in the Ngwelezane, Esikhawini and Nseleni rural areas earn between R9 601 and R19 200 per annum.
- ✚ A percentage of 27 of households in Mzingazi and 29% of those in Mandlazini earn no income. A large portion of the households in these areas earn between R4 802 and R38 400 per annum. On average, the income distribution between households in Mzingazi Village and

Mandlazini falls similarly between the R4 801 and R76 800 income brackets. The comparison of annual household income between typical urban areas reveals that whereas 47% of households in Meerensee and 23% of households in Empangeni earn more than R15 3601 per annum, only 2% of households in Nseleni Urban earn this annual income. A percentage of 23 of households in Nseleni Urban do not earn any income. Overall, annual household income is the highest in Meerensee, although some 8% of households in this area earn no annual income. A large number of individuals in Nseleni and Esikhawini earn less than R400 per month.

- ✚ Water and sewage reflects that 88,5% of households have access to running water, and 68% of households have piped water to the dwelling or inside the yard.
  
- ✚ In terms of waste removal, there are 30 517 waste collection points for households and 1 000 for businesses. The municipality collected 8 384 loads of waste in 2003.
  
- ✚ Of the total population 58% has access to waste removal services; approximately 2500 tons of waste is collected on a weekly basis. A percentage of 47,6 of waste collected is domestic waste and 12,3% is garden waste.



- ✚ As far as transport is concerned, it is estimated that some 250 000 persons commute daily within the municipal area; close to 40 000 of these commuters are from outside the municipal boundary. The number of minibus taxis is estimated at 3 900 and the number of buses at 130. During 2003, 23 802 light passenger vehicles, 1 527 motorcycles and 1805 minibuses were registered within the municipal area. There are 733 bus routes and 142 800 bus commuters. There are 128 km of tarred national roads and 850 km of tarred secondary roads in the municipal area. A total of 529km of tarred roads and streets is maintained by the municipality.
  
- ✚ There are 809 sport clubs in the municipal area, with amongst others specific facilities for equestrian sport, aerolites, angling, yachting, padding, and radio flyers. Within the municipal area there are 4 hospitals and 23 health clinics, 4 cemeteries, 6 public libraries, 15 community halls, 102 schools, and 3 tertiary educational institutions including university. There are 5 police stations and 4 law courts.”

It is also critical to depict the challenges facing women in uMhlathuze Municipality. It is obvious that women are under-represented in decision-making and management positions. Few women hold positions such as Chairpersons of the portfolio committee. The uMhlathuze Municipality website paints the

following picture of the UMhlatuze Municipality after 01 March 2006: Out of 12 portfolio committees only two (17%) are chaired by women. The woman who is Deputy Mayor chairs Corporate Services and another woman chairs Electrical Engineering Services.

A similar tendency is visible in the administration where women are under-represented in management. There are ten departments in uMhlatuze but only one woman (10%) is a head of department.

In uMhlatuze there are 21 female councillors (35%) out of a total of 60. There are only 8 female ward councillors (27%) out of a total of 30.

Six (20%) of these women ward councillors come from the African National Congress. Two (7%) of these ward councillors come from the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). The Democratic Alliance does not have any female ward councillor but has two male ward councillors. According to the South African Local Government Association: Local Government Gender Report (2004: 21) "The representation of women was 35% before the 01 March 2006 local government elections. This is largely due to the "closed" proportional (PR) system that is used together with the first past the post system at local government elections. The adoption of 50% by the ANC has also contributed significantly to the representation of women."

In uMhlathuze Municipality that is how female representation is reflected. In the proportional representation, the IFP has five women and nine male councillors. The ANC has 7 women and 3 men. The African Christian Democratic Party has only one man, the National Democratic Convention has two men, the Freedom Front Plus has one man. The Democratic Alliance has only one man and one woman. According to the South African Local Government Association: Local Government Gender Report (2004: 21), "The under representation of women in both the political and administrative arenas assumes that women lack capacity and ability to lead or to understand issues pertinent to the scope of their work. This is an incorrect assumption. The under representation of women undermines our Constitution and true democracy. It enhances the ruling by the few. "

Furthermore the SALGA Report argues that women are often blamed for their under representation. Capacity building of women is often offered as the solution, together with assertiveness training. In some cases mentoring is suggested, with training to sensitise male colleagues so as to include women equally in all activities. However, this has not removed the stereotypes. It is important to address the underlying working practices. Further, it is important to reflect on inappropriate cultural norms that have led to the marginalization of women.

This is still happening despite The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, where section 181 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to take part in the Government of his or her country.

The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration and sustainable development in all areas of life. The power relations that prevent women from leading fulfilling lives operate at many levels of society, from the most personal to the highly public. Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning. As section 186 of the Beijing report states, "the low proportion of women among economic and political decision makers at the local, national, regional and international levels reflects structural and attitudinal barriers that need to be addressed through positive measures."

In South Africa these positive measures include the gender machinery and the 50/50 campaign in local government. "Although greater focus should be placed on achieving 50/50 in local government, more importantly we need to look beyond women's numerical representation to women's substantive participation in structures in local government" (Getnet report (2006:7 ). According to Gender Links in Gem Summit, council meeting observations in South Africa generally showed low levels of participation of women dominating in all council meetings observed. One of the reasons offered for this low level of participation is that a party caucus takes place prior to the meeting and it is there that male party functionaries take decisions.

The SALGA report further argues that the problem in South Africa is that among the political parties there is no consensus existing on how the participation and representation of women should be approached. Only the ANC has agreed on the 50/50 campaign. Some political parties rejected quota systems upholding the principle of “merit”. Yet other parties believe that the representation of women is adequate in their structures. According to the SALGA Report, “Political parties must engage with the issue of gender representation on party candidate nomination lists (ward and PR) for the upcoming local government elections. The disadvantage of the existing system is that women are dependent entirely on the mercy of their political party. The political party determines the quota percentage and whether or not to adopt a quota SALGA Report (2006: 30)”

According to Pandy F (2002: 67) another issue is that “often communities have local governments without understanding its role, its limitation and how budgets, which reflect priorities, work. It is therefore imperative that communities understand how budgets are drafted and what their legal rights are in terms of their input or exclusion. In addressing the needs of local communities and the allocation of resources, municipalities are legally required to ensure the participation of people. The participation of women in this process is crucial. Women can only participate in an effective manner if they have skills and knowledge about economics, policies and finance and how these apply to their communities.”

Addressing the external dimension (community dimension) van Donk (1998 : 59) argues that, “yet, in terms of planning, service delivery and government (the external dimension), gender awareness appears to be largely lacking. There is a lack of understanding of the need to identify different social (interest) groups in the community, who may require different approaches to enhance their participation, likewise there is no acknowledgement of the different gender needs of men and women and what role local government can play in addressing these needs. Although gender planning is internationally recognized as a specialist discipline, it clearly has hardly developed in South Africa or found its way into traditional planning frameworks.”

### **1.3 Research question**

“Soon after taking office in the newly established municipalities in 2000, officials and councillors came face to face with the realities of community demands, needs and expectations on the one hand, and the limited resources to fulfil these needs on the other. It soon became clear, particularly to councillors, that council work is not just about politicking, but about planning, budgeting, prioritizing community needs, organizing ward committees, and above all, the delivery of basic services to address the needs of communities.” Kagiso Trust Consultancy (2002:03)

“In the majority of municipalities all over the country, officials and councillors continue to battle with the improvement of access to local government services

for all, to transform councils into financially viable institutions, and to design sustainable community participation mechanisms in municipalities' affairs and programmes. A concerning trend is developing in the country, where many communities are marching on municipalities demonstrating against the non-delivery of services. " Kagiso Trust Consultancy (2002:04)

My research reveals that the uMhlatuze Municipality involved various communities in developing its Integrated Development Plan (IDP). This is a five-year programme outlining development planning and service delivery in the municipality, through several community participation initiatives. However when it comes to engaging communities, particularly women, in the preparation of the municipal budget process there are "bottle necks" or blockages. The budget is a most crucial element in the realization of the programmes that appear in the IDP: if services or programmes are not budgeted for, they are not going to be implemented. The Municipal Finance Management Act No.56 of 2003 recognizes the council budget as the main tool of financial policy for the council.

**The research question that this research is trying to answer is whether or not UMhlatuze Municipality enables women to participate in the preparation and formulation of the municipality budget.**

South Africa was historically divided along racial lines, with Black communities excluded from government processes. Watson J and Rhoda L (2002: 27) argue

that “South Africa’s recent transition to democratic governance has contributed towards providing an enabling environment within which gender inequity can begin to be addressed. Since 1994, the participation of women in the public sphere has been greatly enhanced. The representation of women in the South Africa Parliament compares well with the rest of the world. However, the recent transformation is yet to bring about significant practical changes in the lives of many women who continue to be treated as second class citizens within the realm of the home, their places of work, their communities and society at large.”

“It is important for women to participate because if they do not participate their issues will be sidelined. It is also important because the services which local government are charged with delivering on equitable basis across the municipalities cover a range of concerns central to women’s roles in reproduction, and also as breadwinner in many, if not most, homes. The municipality must, inter alia, be responsible for the delivery of water, electricity, sewerage, for the planning of land use, zoning and transportation, health services and the promotion of economic development. For women who bear the burden of meeting their households’ reproductive needs, the provision of services such as water and electricity substantially affect their daily lives.” Agenda No. 26 (1995: 38)

The argument in Agenda (No.26 1995) is taken further in that “the participation of women in preparation of local council budget makes a difference because



women's needs might not be budgeted for. Without a local state which insists on the promotion of women's participation in the local budget preparation, their contribution to the character of development in the localities will remain marginal. There are numerous aspects of local development initiatives which require a gender sensitive perspective and input from women or from gender sensitive planners concerning their requirements, for example budgeting for housing would mean access to housing, and the location of new housing developments both require consideration of the position of women, especially of women headed households and of the specific opportunities and constraints facing women as they attempt to make a living."

It is therefore critical to know what women want and have it form a part of the council budget. Even if it cannot be budgeted for in the said financial year women must be given information on why their needs are not budgeted for and when this issue will be addressed. Women need to be involved fully in all stages of the budget process.

#### **1.4 Definitions**

It is essential to define and address what I mean by the following terms so that they will be clear to the reader. Since the topic of the research is: The participation of women in the preparation and formulation of local council budgets: A case study of Enseleni Community in UMhlatuze Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, all the main issues like participation, women, preparation of

budget and local municipality need to be explained and defined so as to ensure that the reader understands fully the topic of the research.

Preparation of the budget: It is critical to define what a budget is. The Education and Training Unit (2002:24) defines a budget as “a financial plan which summarises, in financial figures, the activities planned for the forthcoming year by setting out costs (expenses) of these activities, and where the income will come from to pay for the expenses”. According to Fubbs J (1999:11), “The budget must be unpacked as a political tool, economic tool, legal tool, planning tool, and a tool for allocation, reallocation and redistribution, and accountability mechanism.” He further argues that “budgeting is at the heart of good governance, with its emphasis on accountability, delivery and transformation.” Therefore it is critical for women to participate. In a nutshell, the Republican Institute (1997:2) defines the budget as “a plan that summarises in financial terms the activities planned in the forthcoming financial year by setting out the expenditure which will be incurred to fulfil these activities as well as the income and capital required to finance this expenditure”.

The Education and Training Unit (2002: 25) further argues that “there are two types of budgets which are operating and capital. Capital budget deals with big costs that you pay once to develop something, and spells out how you will pay for this. For example, putting in water pipes to a new township. Operating budget deals with the day to day costs and income to deliver municipal services, for

example, the meter readers' wages and maintenance work to keep the water flowing".

The financial year of South African municipalities runs from the 1 July of each year to 30 June the following year. Municipalities must prepare for each financial year. Council must approve these budgets before the new financial year begins, after proper planning and consultation with ward committees and other stakeholders.

Govender S and Vennekens A (2005: 2) argue that "As from financial year 2005/2006 all provisions of the municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) relating to the budget process will apply to all municipalities. Section 21 of the MFMA prescribes the steps that have to be taken in the budget preparing the annual budget and for reviewing the municipality's Integrated Development Plan. The Mayor is required to table a time schedule at least ten months before the start of the budget year (that is, by 31 August of the previous year). As part of the preparatory process the Mayor is also responsible to take into account the national budget, the relevant provincial budget, the national government's fiscal and macro economic policy, the annual Division of Revenue Act and any agreements reached in the Budget forum. He has to enter into a process of consultation with the district and provide information relating to the budget to relevant instances, such as the national treasury."

Govender S and Vennekens A (2005: 3) argue that “this preparatory budget fits into a broader annual planning and budget cycle. The overall objectives of the budget planning cycle of a municipality will seek to co-ordinate the implementation of the Intergrated Development Plans (IDPs), develop three year financial plans, monitor progress and take timely corrective actions, and undertake in-year reviewing. This process turns one year budgeting into a strategic aligning of medium term planning with medium term budgeting.”

Govender S and Vennekens A (2005: 4) argue that in terms of the MFMA there are basically six steps that make up the municipal budget process in order to comply with the requirements of the MFMA.

<b>Step</b>	<b>Process</b>
1. Planning	Schedule key dates, establish, consultation forums, review previous processes
2. Strategizing	Review IDP, set service delivery and objectives for next three years, consult on tariffs, credit control, free basic services, etc and consider local, provincial and national issues, previous year's performance and current economic and demographic trends
3. Preparing	Prepare budget, revenue and expenditure projections, draft budget policies, consult and consider local and provincial and national priorities
4. Tabling	Table draft budget, IDP and budget related policies

	<p>before council, consult and consider formal local, provincial and national inputs or responses</p> <p>A suggested time frame for the process of tabling would look like this:</p> <p>March: Table municipal and entity budgets, resolutions, IDP revisions and budget related policies</p> <p>April: Call for public submissions, council to have meetings with key stakeholders</p> <p>April and May: Council hearings and council meeting to consider submissions</p> <p>Council meeting - Mayor to submit amended budget</p>
5. Approving	Council approves budget and related policies
6. Finalizing	Publish and approve Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) and annual performance agreements and indicators

It would be significant to note whether women were involved in all the three stages.

What is critical about the budget and preparation of the budget is that the International Republican Institute stressed that councillors do not need to have an economics degree to play an effective role in the budget process. Officials do a lot of the work. However, understanding how the budget is created will help councillors influence the process. The above statement is true for women as well.

Local Government: It is critical to note that the Constitution of South Africa sets the rules for how government works. There are three spheres of government in South Africa, which are National government, Provincial government and local government. The focus here is going to be on local government.

The Education and Training Unit (2002: 6) argues that the whole of South Africa is divided into local municipalities. Each municipality has a council where decisions are taken, as well as municipal officials and staff who implement the work of the municipality. "The council is made up of elected members who approve policies and by-laws for their area. The council has to pass a budget for its municipality each year. They must also decide on development plans and service delivery for their municipal area. The work of the council is coordinated by a mayor who is elected by council. The mayor is assisted by an executive or mayoral committee, made up of councillors. The Mayor together with the executive also oversees the work of the municipal manager and department heads. The work of the municipality is done by the municipal administration that is headed by the municipal manager and other officials. S/he is responsible for employing staff and coordinating them to implement all programmes approved by council.

Participation: Deevy H (1998: 2) defines participation as being "about giving people a real 'say' in decisions that affect their lives. This means that they must have access to decision-making structures in order to exercise this 'say'." He

further argues that “to achieve this, participation must be based on the understanding that not all groups and members of the communities have the same opportunities to make their voices heard. People without access to resources (often women, the youth, people with disabilities and older people) have to work harder to be heard than other groups in communities”. Local government needs to work harder to include women in participatory processes if they are truly to claim real participation in the preparation of local council budgets. Participation, according to Deevy H (1998:2), means

- Improving and maintaining channels of communication; and
- Forming strong partnerships between the municipality and relevant stakeholders.

In relation to this research it means women need to play a pivotal role and participate in the preparation and formulation of the local council budget because they would be able to influence the way local council resources are allocated. In addition, Coetzee and Naidoo S (2002: 187) argue that “at the first strategic planning session of representatives of the South African Local Government Association Gender Working group in October 1997 in Johannesburg, three priority areas emerged. The first priority of them all was the ability to intervene in council budgets which is of crucial importance in order to influence the way council resources were allocated. Underpinning these priorities was the commitment to establishing gender structures in the local authorities and the

drawing up of guidelines for their establishment.” It would be of interest to note in the research whether uMhlathuze Municipality did establish these structures.

After participation has been defined it is critical to indicate what “appropriate participation” means. According to Mirjam van Donk (1998: 43) appropriate participation means “enhancing the participation of members of the community is through information dissemination. People have a right to know who in the municipality is responsible for what, where to go with questions or complaints, and how decisions made by the municipality will impact on their lives and neighbourhoods. Also without the relevant information, people cannot be expected to make meaningful contributions to community issues and debates. “

Secondly, “appropriate consultation” could be regarded as the second step, as it goes further than merely getting information from the community. The aim of consultation is to canvass the opinion and inputs of community groups and in the context of conflicting needs and limited resources, create consensus about the objectives and activities of local government interventions. Consultation is a critical element in the processes of identifying and prioritizing needs. Since women are citizens, it is critical for them to “play a number of roles in the local area: as workers, taxpayers, consumers of services and residents. All these capacities give rise to interests and opinions about how their district or city is run. Workers are concerned about commuter transport, congestion and parking. Taxpayers are concerned about the level of local government expenditure and



the uses made of it, and consumers of the quality of the services they receive. Residents are concerned about their living environment and the cultural identity of their neighbourhoods. If they are property owners, they will also be concerned about anything that affects the value of their properties". Parnell S et al (2002: 26).

The community needs to have decision-making power. Appropriate participation requires that people are given considerable influence in determining which direction to pursue and how available resources are to be used. Appropriate participation should be regarded as the right of citizens, not just a means to achieve certain goals.

To show how important public participation is, Baldwin Ndaba in *The Mercury* (18 August 2006: 3) reports that the South African parliament and its nine provinces have failed to consult widely enough to allow them to pass the bill on the Termination of Pregnancy Amendment. This ruling made by the Constitutional Court on 17 August 2006 by Justice Sandile Ngcobo, followed an application by Doctors For Life who challenged the validity of four health bills. Doctors For Life declared the ruling a "landmark judgment". The bills were the Sterilization Amendment Bill, the Traditional Health Practitioners' Bill, the Choice on the Termination of Pregnancy Amendment Bill and Dental Technicians' Amendment Bill. Doctors for Life, in their court application launched in February last year, argued that parliament and the nine provinces did not consult extensively with

various stakeholders before placing the Bills before the National Assembly for ratification. Ngcobo ruled and said that the council had failed to comply with the rules governing public participation in legislative processes, and accordingly declared both bills invalid. He gave the council 18 months to correct its mistake. However, Ngcobo ruled against Doctors for Life on the Dental Technicians Amendment Act, saying the council had been within its rights to pass it because there was no public interest in it. What is important about this judgment is that all spheres of government, including local government, should respect and implement public participation and take public interest into consideration.

Sibonelo Msomi in the *Weekend Witness* (19 August 2006: 5) reported: "Another Judgment was handed down on 18 August 2006 where the Constitutional Court declared the acts under which Matatiele was ceded from KwaZulu-Natal to the Eastern Cape under the part of the Constitution's Twelfth Amendment Act that alters the boundary of KZN. Justice Sandile Ngcobo said it was not adopted in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Constitution. The legislation was passed by Parliament last year and saw, among other areas, Matatiele redemarcated from KZN into the Eastern Cape in March this year. This was despite heavy opposition from the Matatiele/Maluti Mass Action Campaign Organising Committee (MMMACOC). The group complained that many people in the area did not want to move to the Eastern Cape. They alleged that the consultation process was overlooked in Matatiele.

According to Smyth in *The Mercury* (18 August 2006: 3) “the judgment will be of great importance to parliament in respect of all legislation, because the highest court in the land has made it clear that parliament must not cut corners but provide sufficient time and opportunity for citizens throughout the country to have their say in respect of all Bills passing through parliament”. This will of course relate to local government when developing IDPs, passing by-laws and drafting budgets.

Yet another word that needs further definition for the purposes of this study is “women”. According to the *Advanced Oxford Dictionary*, women means adult female human beings. It refers specifically to the physical features of that sex. To extend this definition, for the purposes of this research, it is critical that younger women (girls) be included. There are issues that girls and women need to be involved and participate in, namely, the preparation and formulation of the local council budget. In the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* (2003: 04) “women” is defined as “Persons of female gender, including girls.”

To deepen the understanding and concept of women and women’s equality in South Africa, it is important to understand the national gender machinery process. According to Watson J and Rhoda L (2002: 81) “National Gender Machinery refers to the structures which are put in place by the state to take responsibility for the periodic reviewing of changing conditions (or lack thereof) of

women's lives and for eradicating the factors that perpetuate women's position of subordination. Its purpose is to create a political, economic, legislative and judicial environment that enables women to enjoy, exercise and defend all their economic, social and political rights on an equal basis with men. The various structures of the national machinery are meant to be a conduit for women's voices in breaking down institutionalized deafness. The national gender machinery comprises three formal structures, namely the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE), the Office on the Status of Women (OSW), and the Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement of the Quality of Life and Status of Women (JMCIQLSW)."

Municipalities are expected to duplicate these structures at district and local level so as to promote gender equality and status of women.

Participation of women in the preparation of local municipality budgets: Women have been excluded in the past from the political sphere, let alone managing or being involved in the finances of the country. Since the statutes allow women to participate in all government process, it is therefore critical to assess women's involvement in the preparation of local council budgets. In terms of the International Budget Project, participation of women in the preparation of the local council budget means promoting public participation to be sensitive to the needs of women and in particular, poor women. It alleviates the problems

associated with traditional budgeting systems in which the marginalized, for example, women, are not involved.

Lowe Morna C (1994: 2004) argues that the evidence suggest that because of the differences in women's life experiences, women bring different perspectives to the business of decision making, or see mainstream issues from a different angle to men. This can become a powerful force for mainstreaming gender in all areas of government. International experience and evidence from the study revealed strong perceptions that women bring different kinds of skills and leadership styles, that because being in power is regarded as a "privilege" they tend to feel themselves under greater pressure to perform and that the presence of women contributes to greater transparency in decision making."

Sheila Meintjies and Simons M (2002:179) agree that "the mere presence of women does not necessarily translate into the representation of women's interests, but nevertheless argues that it increases the probability that gender equality concerns will be addressed. Some of the women elected will have the ability (or even inclination) to address gender, but the cumulative effect of their presence will affect local government."

The participation of women in the preparation and formulation of local council budgets is critical in decision-making structures. According to Watson J and Rhoda (2002: 80) "there is no guarantee that women are more likely to be

sensitive to women's strategic and practical gender needs than men. Going back to Bennett's concept of patriarchal deafness, it is strategic to have women in decision-making positions be a part of breaking this down. They further argue that adequate representation of women in decision-making capacities is important because it is a human rights issue. Women should be entitled, because it is in line with giving substance to their human rights, to occupy public office and to have women to represent their interests in elected office in adequate numbers. It is important for women to participate because the budget is the primary economic policy document of local government." For this reason transparency and participation in the budget are particularly important. It can be argued that women have the basic right to information about the budget and have its views considered in budget decisions."

### **1.5 Aim and objective**

The key objective of this research is to find out:

- Whether uMhlathuze Municipality enables women to participate in the preparation and formulation of the municipal budget or not.

### **1.6 Research questions**

The questions framing the implementation of this research are as follows:

1. Are women participating in the preparation and formulation of local council budgets, and if so, to what extent? If not, what barriers hinder the participation of women? How can these barriers be removed?

2. What could be done to improve the participation of women in preparation of the local council budget?

3. What structures exist that can enhance the participation of women in the preparation of the local council budget?

### **1.7 Hypotheses**

This research is based on the following hypotheses:

- The municipality has budget councils and forums in different communities to ensure that communities participate in the budget processes.
- The most disadvantaged sectors are often unable to participate in the democratic process. Limited access to media, low education levels and geographic isolation from the centres of government, not to mention constraints of time and money, preclude meaningful participation by much of society.
- Women are free to attend council standing committee meetings.
- There is a dedicated budget for community participation in the budget process.

### **1.8 Methodology**

The research design is a case study. The purpose of using a case study ensured that the research focused on one area, which helped the researcher to understand uMhlathuze Municipality in depth. The researcher used focus groups to collect data from the community. Participant observation was used because it

enabled the researcher to obtain people's perceptions of reality expressed in their actions and expressed as feelings, thoughts and beliefs. Interviews were also used. Interviews were only used for municipality employees and councillors.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has given a summary of the intentions of the research. It has unpacked key terms that make up the topic of the research. Background information reflects the socio-economic conditions of uMhlatuze Municipality. The research explained key issues surrounding the principles of the research like the aim, objectives, research questions and hypotheses.

The narration of the chapters that follow give a clear picture of what is going to happen in the research document. The research methodology depicts how the researcher carried out the research.



## **Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Democratic government in an open society involves a dialogue between government and its citizens. This means that the municipality should listen to the views of ordinary citizens to ensure that government addresses the needs and aspirations of the people who elected it into power. This is in keeping with a notion that democracy is “government for the people by the people”.

It is the responsibility of citizens to voice their support for or disapproval of government policies and programmes. If communities are not happy with any of the services provided by a municipality or the overall development of their communities, they can raise these issues with their councillor who will look into these matters on their behalf, and report back to them on how they are being addressed.

With the above background, this chapter attempts to review the literature on policy that regulates public participation in South Africa, research conducted and conferences held on women in local government, approaches to gender equality and thereafter craft the framework for women’s participation in the preparation of the local council budget. The following are pieces of legislation and policies that this section will review. They relate to how local government addresses the issue of public participation:

The Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998;

Municipal Finance Management Act No.56 of 2003;

Municipal Systems Act No.32 of 2000 and;

The White Paper on the National Reconstruction and Development Programme, 1994

The White Paper on Local Government requires that local councils facilitate public involvement in the by-law making processes and other process of the municipality and their committees. They also required that municipalities conduct their business in an open manner, and hold their sittings and those of their committees in public.

## **2.2 Research conducted and conferences held**

It is also critical to review the types of research and conference or seminar reports that the researcher has analysed. Research on civil society participation in governance has been conducted in the past. These research interventions focused mainly on participation in national and provincial government and include the following:

- The Women and Lawmaking: A Study of Civil Society Participation by Watson J and Rhoda L (2002). This concerns itself with the issue of women's participation in lawmaking processes. The limitation of this study is that it only targeted organizations whose scope of work entailed engagement with the legislative system.

- Gender in Southern African Politics: Ringing up the Changes edited by Lowe Morna Colleen (2004). This research explores in greater depth the issues surrounding access by women to political processes in several Southern African countries. It highlights and examines factors that help or hinder the effective participation of women in politics.
- A People's Government - The Peoples Voice: A Review of Public Participation in the Law and Policy-Making process in South Africa by Susan de Villiers (2001). This research assesses how successfully the young South African democracy has engaged communities in processes of public participation and how it may improve its performance.
- Local Government and Gender: A Reality Check by Mirjam van Donk (1998): A survey of selected municipalities in the Western Cape by the Gender Advocacy Programme. The purpose of this research was to assess the institutional awareness and responses to gender issues, rather than measuring the personal attitudes and views of those working in local government structures. The intention was to examine whether municipalities have an understanding of how they can promote gender equity, both in their institutions and in the local communities they serve.
- Gender Analysis and Interpretation of Barriers to Women's Participation in Ghana's Decentralized Local Government System: research conducted by Gifty Ohene Konadu for the African Gender Institute, University of Cape Town South Africa (July 2001). The aim of the research is to contribute to the dialogue on the new approaches soliciting popular participation among

citizens in local government. It focused on the gender dimension of decentralization and adopted a multi-dimensional gender analysis to debunk the notions that carry with them intrinsic assumptions that the devolution of power to the grassroots level will bring power closer to all the people, including women, and thereby improve governance.

- Commission on Gender Equality (CGE): Gender Budgeting in Local Government (2004). The Commission on Gender Equality identified an ill-conceived allocation of resources which had not taken into consideration, or lacked gender analysis of, community-based development projects which suggested a lack of awareness of gender from those who drive the budget process. The research and findings highlighted the gender experiences of women as municipalities grappled with understanding the different effects things such as budgets for electricity, water and salaries had on women and men. A small allocation for water, for example, has major implications for women as they are responsible for its collection and various uses.

In addition to this research, several organizations have convened conferences and seminars to address the issue of public participation, as follows:

- The Centre for Public Participation hosted a conference on public participation which was entitled, Growth Through Participation. “The conference was held on 24-25 June 2003 at the International Convention Centre (ICC) in Durban, South Africa. This conference was co-sponsored

by The Ford Foundation, Mott Foundation, and The United States of America for International Development (USAID). The aim of the conference was to provide space for sharing of experiences which included research findings, best practice models, opportunities and challenges and advocacy models in public participation, in order to strengthen all of our work in the field of public participation and build effective public participation mechanisms to encourage and facilitate meaningful public participation” (Hicks J 2004). In this conference very little was said about women taking a lead and being involved in local council budget preparation.

- National seminars have been conducted in the past on community participation in local government. One of these was the Participatory Development Through Ward Councillors and Ward Committees Seminar, Gauteng, 6-7 August 2002, convened by Kagiso Trust Consultancy. The seminar’s two key objectives were to:
  - Develop practical support mechanisms to increase the impact of local government sector efforts aimed at engendering participatory governance and development at municipal level, and develop community participation strategies, anchored on implementable capacity development plans to:
    - Harness effective participation of communities in municipal programmes.

- Empower local councillors to be able to sustain local participation during and beyond Integrated Development Plan (IDP) formulation processes.
- Identify and guide the role that should be played by ward committees, in drawing community participation and sectoral involvement beyond the committee itself.
- Design people-driven sustainable poverty eradication initiatives.
- Launch effective task-oriented training for ward councillors and ward committees.

The IDASA Budget Information Service (BIS) has a pilot research project on Local Government Finance aimed, firstly, at investigating and testing the application of Budget Information Service's budget analysis techniques to local government budgets ([http:// www.idasa.org.za/bis/](http://www.idasa.org.za/bis/)). BIS is trying to establish a one-stop shop for organizations where they will be able to access information from the website and internet about government budgets. The ultimate goal of the analysis is to investigate the manner in which municipal spending and revenue raising accommodates the poor, and track this over time and across municipalities. The research will also try to understand how spending and revenue raising affects fiscal sustainability. Secondly, the project aims to explain and promote our emerging approach to interested parties in South Africa. This

research project was set up in mid-2002 and is scheduled to be completed by mid-2005.

I am not aware of any studies that have either focused on or investigated the participation of women in the preparation and formulation of local council budgets. As reviewed above, research studies into public participation have investigated the participation of communities in the legislatures and parliament.

### **2.3 Participation**

It is important to discuss participation so that it will be easy to identify the one that uMhlathuze Municipality is using. In chapter one definition of participation was provided. De Villiers ( 2001:22) argues that "the South African Constitution provides for a broadly representative constitutional democracy based on universal adult suffrage. However, its emphasis on public participation introduces elements that, in the formal sense at least, distinguish it from many of the longer established democracies."

Oakley P and Masden P (1988: 6) has identified the following as being the forms of participation found in government processes:

- ✚ Participation as collaboration: In this form of participation, people do not actively and meaningfully participate in rural development, but they are

just informed of rural development programmes. While their collaboration is sought, there is no direct control of the programmes by them.

- ↓ Participation through organisations: Organisations are set up to help facilitate participation.
  
- ↓ Participation in community development activities: The direct and active participation of local people is sought in order to carry out the physical improvement at the community level.
  
- ↓ Participation as a process of empowering: This seeks the involvement of a group of people who previously had no opportunity to get involved in the development activities.

Houston G and Liebenberg (2001: 283) argue that “the South African Constitution places an obligation on legislative bodies at the provincial and national levels to facilitate public participation in their processes. This takes two forms: first, ensuring that there are channels for participation and, second, ensuring that the public is educated about participation mechanisms, and implementing measures to facilitate participation in legislative processes. The public thus has opportunities to participate, directly or indirectly by means of petitions, attendance at public hearings, submission of written and / or oral statements to public hearings, lobbying, or making complaints at parliamentary or



council constituency offices. In addition, certain bodies legislative bodies have implemented various programmes to educate the public about the role of council or legislatures and the nature of participation processes, such as, the national youth parliament, community meetings and workshops conducted at parliamentary or council constituency offices, members or councilors' briefing sessions on any relevant legislative topic for visitors to the legislatures, the distribution of information documents, newsletters, brochures, flyers, handbooks, pictorial pamphlets and newspaper adverts, and holding training for community based trainers and members of the community on how to interact with legislatures and councils.

De Villiers further argues that political oppression provides a powerful impetus to alternative forms of organization. In South Africa during the 1980s, rejecting imposed institutions that were seen as illegitimate, communities organized themselves into civics, street committees and other local organizations. Organised labour came together to form powerful structures that, in the repressive and punishing climate that prevailed, played a key strategic role. Youth, students and even children built organizations and claimed the right to political participation and recognition. Such structures established a tradition, at least in principle, of both direct and generally participatory democracy.

De Villiers argues further that this history influenced the manner in which South Africans approached the period of preparation for elections and Government.

During the 1990s, a plethora of participative forums was set up to discuss, debate and prepare for every aspect of governance. The notion of a more participatory form of democracy was captured in the RDP thus: Democracy for ordinary citizens must not end with formal rights and periodic one person, one vote elections. Without undermining the authority and responsibilities of elected representative bodies (parliament, provincial legislatures, local government) the democratic order we envisage must foster a wide range of institutions of participatory democracy in partnership with civil society on the basis of informed and empowered citizens and facilitate direct democracy...social movements and CBOs are a major asset in the effort to democratize and develop our society.

De Villiers further argues that the rationale for a participatory form of democracy goes beyond that created by the South African Constitution. It is, as we shall discuss, part of a growing international trend aimed at creating vehicles for dialogue between governments and people. It is, indeed, grounded in the common-sense view that, where people are not involved in the decisions that affect their lives, social policies and political interventions are likely to fail.

Therefore Participatory democracy is not necessarily a new or different form of democracy, but strengthening or expansion of formal representative democracy to include greater levels of participation by civil society. While participation may and has indeed been used to assimilate and manipulate social movements and political actors, the form of participatory democracy envisaged here aims to

empower civil society to drive legislative and policy agendas from the grass roots.

Houston G and Liebenberg (2001:279) argues further that “participatory democracy requires a high level of public participation in a wide variety of governing processes.”

Participation is important because it:

- ↓ “Reinforces democratic ideals
- ↓ Legitimizes our democratic institutions
- ↓ Gives a sense of ownership of the government processes to the public
- ↓ Provides an opportunity for a two way education process (the public educates the decision- makers and vice-versa)
- ↓ Facilitates peoples power
- ↓ Entrenches the rights of individuals in a rights-based society
- ↓ Contributes to the creation and maintenance of a democratic culture amongst South African citizens” (Lyons, C and Sparg L, 1999:9)
- ↓ “enhance acceptance of public decisions, programmes, projects, and services
- ↓ Protect individual and minority group rights and interests (Bekker K ,1996: 44)

Participation in governance tends to be weakened by several factors:

- ✚ The lack of feedback: those who make submissions find the lack of feedback discouraging
- ✚ Community dynamics: Because communities are never completely homogenous, there are a multiplicity of viewpoints, interests and needs that have a real impact and influence and influence upon public participation programmes.
- ✚ Working in rural areas: People in rural areas face many problems which directly affect any attempts to carry out a program of public participation in governance. Illiteracy is more wide spread than in urban areas. Lack of transport presents a bigger problem. Language barriers are more acute. Distances are greater. Costs are higher, and people are less able to afford to spend time away from work.
- ✚ Role of constituency offices: The role and function of these offices is not clear and they are often not utilized to their full potential. Another issue is that many constituency offices tend to be too closely associated with the political party of the elected representative utilizing the office, which is alienating to those who do not support the same political party
- ✚ Role of non governmental organizations: Non governmental organizations can play a very important role in public participation, especially in making the legislative and policy issues more understandable, in making the language used more accessible and in providing links and access between legislative and government institutions and communities. However, NGOs working in the field of public participation need to be

acutely aware of the attendant risks of confusing their own organizational objectives and agenda with the aspirations of the communities they are working in, which might be different.” (Lyons, C and Sparg L, 1999:9-13)

✦ “Participation mechanisms: lack of knowledge about the role of legislative institutions and participation mechanisms

✦ Apathy and feelings of political efficacy: Apathy and feelings of political efficacy have their strongest impact on the levels of participation of some race groups and by respondents in certain provinces. In addition, apathy and feelings of political efficacy played some role in affecting levels of participation for some age groups and living standards categories. “

Houston G and Liebenberg (2001:284-285)

## **2.4 Policy framework**

Community involvement in governance has been a central tenet of national government since the adoption of the South African Interim Constitution in 1993 and Development Programme in 1994. In South Africa, public participation is enforced and shaped by the Constitution and supported by other significant pieces of legislation. The Constitution states: “Local government must encourage the involvement of communities, community organizations in matters of government.” (1996: 81). The key issue which the Constitution of South Africa seeks to address is the legacy of the eras of colonialism and apartheid that excluded Black South Africans from any form of governmental decision-making and institutional activities, resulting in the erosion of self worth, self reliance and

self esteem of the majority population. These problems and legacies of the past have fundamentally damaged the spatial, social and economic environments in which people live, work, raise families and seek to fulfil their aspirations.

Legislation passed since that time further endorses this approach. The White Paper on the National Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994) states: "The empowerment of institutions of civil society is the fundamental aim of government's approach to building consensus. Through this process the government was aiming to draw on the creative energy of communities. Structured processes at all levels of government were introduced to ensure participation in policy making and planning, as well as project implementation."

A Policy Document on Social Empowerment and Community Development through Community Participation (May 1998) further states: "Consequently, all spheres of government adopted the common goal of empowering through participatory development processes to both redress past injustices and build proud self reliant and self sustaining communities. At these levels participation promotes sustainability and replication, reduces project costs, and takes advantage of local practices and technologies that are suited for the environment or local human capacities."

The Development Facilitation Act no 67 of 1995 puts a strong emphasis on the establishment of community organizations and development structures, through

which participation can take place. The Local Government Transition Act (1996) also states that one of the roles of local government is to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in local government.

The Growth Employment and Redistribution (Gear) policy in 1996 claims that it is not an argument for the abandonment of community participation. Rather it is a call for the institutionalization of participation to streamline participatory processes and promote the rapid delivery of development products. To stress this point, the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (1996: 26) claims that a central principle is “the involvement of all people as active participants.” This strategy further notes, however, that the majority of people in KZN have had little exposure to development or local government. As a result, strategies are required which include people into such initiatives in ways in which local economic opportunities can be maximized.

The White Paper on Local Government (1995) states that new developmental local government must commit itself to working with citizens, groups and communities to create sustainable human settlements, which provide a decent quality of life and which meet the social, economic and material needs communities in a holistic way. It further identifies three tools and approaches for Developmental Local Government, which can assist municipalities to become more developmental:

- Integrated development planning and budgeting

- Performance management
- Working together with local citizens and partners

To enhance public participation the Municipal Structures Act (1998: 52) “encourages the establishment of ward committees with an aim of enhancing and deepening participatory democracy and developing the culture of participation among community members. This task is mandated to the local municipalities and metropolitan councils. It is overemphasized that within those ward committees women should be equitably represented together with the diversity of interest in that ward. According to this legislation the municipalities are supposed to make administrative arrangements to enable the ward committees to perform their duties and exercise their functions effectively”.

There are numerous challenges obstructing the effective functioning of these ward committees including the fact that the number of people in those committees should not exceed ten. That on its own raises a problem in the functioning of these committees because the wards are too vast and there are too many diverse interest groups to be represented within this limited scope.

The Municipal Structures Act no 117(2000: 17(2) argues that mechanisms, processes and procedures for community participation must take into account the special needs of people who cannot read, people with disabilities, women and other disadvantaged groups. In addition, as section 18 (2 a&b) points out, some



municipalities do not take into account their language preferences and usage in the municipality and the special needs of people who cannot read and write. There is therefore no guarantee of deepening democracy through the formation of these ward committees. In some instances, the creation of ward committees caused some tensions, because existing structures saw committees as trying to undermine their functioning.

The Municipal Systems Act (2000) has also been in the forefront in charting a way on how communities should participate in the affairs of municipality, such as in integrated development plans and budgeting processes. It calls for municipalities to ensure that communities are involved in the preparation of their budget. It must also be said that section 5 (d) states that members of the local community have the right to regular disclosure of the state of affairs of the municipality, including its finances.

The municipalities are therefore given a challenge through these pieces of legislation to ensure that the culture of participation is developed. One of the major challenges facing the municipalities is to set aside particular resources that will be used in encouraging and creating the conditions for the local community to participate.

The Municipal Finance Management Act No. 56 of 2003 is a companion to the 1999 Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), which applies to national and

provincial governments. “The MFMB extends the basic principles of the PFMA to the local government sphere. These basic principles are that the Act secures sound and sustainable management of the financial affairs of municipalities and other institutions in the local sphere of government. This ensures the creation of treasury norms and standards. It ensures that municipal officials avoid fruitless and wasteful expenditure. The Act also regulates co-operative governance between the spheres, budgeting and related processes such as borrowing, and mechanisms to help restore financial health to any municipalities that find themselves in budgetary crisis. It is important to note that the main tool of Municipal financial policy is the council’s budget. The National Treasury has initiated the piloting of multi-year budgeting in 37 municipalities which will soon become the norm in all municipalities. The MFMA provides that money can only be spent in terms of an adopted budget, requires that the budget be realistic and balanced, and sets out the information that must be made available to the council and the public. A municipal budget formulation process must be co-ordinated with Integrated Development Plan, and with related policies such as those on property rates and tariffs. Consultations with the community are required in terms of the Municipal Systems Act.”

Pillay T.V (2003: 10) argues that “these reports and financial statements are a source of information for many interested parties. These include residents, business and industry who want to know how their money has been spent; newspapers who play an important information sharing and watchdog role;

researchers who might be interested in comparing municipalities or developing statistical information on the sector; and potential lenders and investors who need to form a view on how well the municipality is performing financially.”

## **2.5 Women’s issues**

Gender relations are concerned with the way power is distributed between the sexes. According to Taylor V (1999:12) argues that gender relations are prone to being relations of connection, conflict, cooperation, mutual support, competition, difference and inequality. Gender norms and values prescribe certain roles and responsibilities for men and women. These are called gender roles. The responsibility for caring for the family, cleaning the house, food preparation, water collection, child care and sick family members is called the reproductive role. Usually, it is women who fulfil these roles. Men play a limited role, if any at all. These activities are usually unpaid and excluded from national employment and income statistics because they are viewed as activities with non measurable economic value

Taylor further argues that earning money or growing vegetables falls under the productive role of men and women. Both men and women are involved in this, but men are often in better positions and that sexual division of labour exists( men as managers or technicians, women as nurses or secretaries). Work in the informal sector also falls under the productive role. Women are the majority in

the informal sector. Although most South African women work to make a living, people still tend to see men as the breadwinners.

Taylor further argues that women's involvement in both productive and reproductive tasks means that they invariably work longer hours per day than men. Women's work is often excluded from national employment and income statistics because activities carried out by women are often unpaid or take place in the informal sector not covered by labour legislation.

Taylor states that community management role is carried out by women. When facilities or services are lacking in the community, people mobilize women and other resources to provide these services. Usually it is the women who do this, because in most cases it is closely linked to their reproductive role. For example, when there is no old age home, women look after the elderly in the community. Similarly, when there are no child care facilities. Also, when a community event is organized, it is usually the women who make sure that everything is prepared and that there is food. Often, women do not get a lot of recognition for the work they do on a voluntary basis.

Taylor further argues that community politics role refers to decision-making in the community, whether in local government or in other community structures. This is the area where men clearly dominate, because social values hold that women cannot be good leaders.

According to the Department of Justice: Gender Policy Considerations (1997: 2) argues that many South African women experience triple oppression-gender, race and class and all vulnerable to forms of oppression and discrimination. For Some women this has been manifested in a lack of education and consequential illiteracy, lack of employment and poverty. Women are subject to violence in their homes and communities, suffer sexual assault and harassment and face discrimination in their workplaces. Women lack participation in decision making roles in society and the law and legal profession reflect this culture of the invisibility of women. Women are also subject to a patriarchal culture, where land and housing rights and family decision-making responsibility ultimately belong to men. In the face of these essential needs and concerns, issues such as access to justice and employment seem distant ideals but they are vital to the establishment and maintenance of a fair society. “

Among the problems that women face include poverty, violence against women, HIV and AIDS, Women in power and decision making. According to Sadie Y (2001: 65) Despite the fragile economic gains made by Africa over the last five years, absolute poverty is increasing especially for women. Four out of 10 Africans live in absolute poverty including 51 percent of those in sub-Saharan Africa. Sadie Y (2001: 68) further argues that a high premium is placed on poverty eradication and the more disadvantaged position of women, particularly rural women and women headed households. Amaratunga C (2002: 28) argues

that "legal systems and cultural norms in many countries reinforce gender inequality by giving men control over productive resources such as land, through marriage laws that subordinate wives to their husband."

Governments still seem to disregard the fact that addressing poverty requires not only developing women and improving their living standards but above all requires structural changes and the transformation of power relations.

Sadie Y (2001:68) Access to proper and affordable health-care for women is among the Beijing Platform For Action (PFA) commitments that are guiding the operations of countries which have identified health as a national priority area. The PFA notes that women should have decision making powers in matters concerning their health. Several SADC countries (Botswana, Namibia, Seychelles, Zambia, South Africa) have adopted guiding policies, particularly on health care. A few governments have introduced some form of free treatment. In South Africa health care for pregnant women and children under six years is free. In addition, primary health care is free for all patients. HIV/AIDS has emerged as one of the most serious threats to the fragile gains made by women. For cultural and traditional and economic reasons women feel unable to refuse sexual advances of partners and are not able to insist on men using condoms. Poverty has been forcing many women to enter the commercial sex industry thereby exposing them to HIV/AIDS. Furthermore according to Amaratunga C (2002:28) argues that widespread poverty and the forces of globalization have also led to

an increasing number of women and children being trafficked into prostitution and sexual slavery where they have even less control over their reproductive lives.” The challenge, however, is addressing the root causes of women’s disadvantaged position in society, in other words the power relations between men and women, through realistic education, communication and information programmes.

Sadie Y (2001: 71) argues that General statistics indicate that violence against women is major problem in Southern Africa with figures showing that women, regardless of their race, class, and geographical locations, continue to suffer violence at the hands of spouses and partners. According to Amaratunga C (2002:47) argues that “Gender –based violence is serious problem and an issue both of social justice and human rights of health and human welfare. It takes many forms and can include physical, emotional or sexual abuse. The most pervasive form of gender based violence is that committed against a woman by her intimate partner. Violence between intimate partners is often connected to marital rape, coerced sex, coerced sex or other forms of abuse. “ While both males and females can suffer from gender based violence, studies show the women, girls and children of both sexes are most often the victims. The experience of violence, or fear that it might take place, disempowers women in their homes, workplaces and communities and limits their ability to participate in and benefit from initiatives that are geared to prevent violence against women.

Lowe Morna (2004) argues that social and Cultural factors are the single most important barriers to women's access to decision making. They often continue to hamper the effectiveness of women, even when they have a foot in the door. This is reflected in the dual burdens of home and work that women in politics continue to bear. No matter how gender sensitive decision making structures have become, many women still find that there is a mismatch between the freedom they have found or created in the work place, the patriarchal regimes at home.

### **2.5.1 Women in local government**

The sphere of local government has great potential to contribute to gender equality. Its close interaction with the community presents it with opportunities other spheres of government do not have. It has within its competencies the ability to make the lives of women easier by delivering goods and services. Moreover, local government can play an important role in the emancipation of women by creating opportunities for women to participate equally in the economic, political and community sphere.

Budlender D (1997: 37) argues: "Every item in the government's budget must be examined for the differential impact it might have on women and men. Differential impact is possible and indeed likely because women and men occupy different places in the economy and society, and perform different roles."



There are obviously also further differences between women, regarding their position in the economy and society, and the roles they play. This is acknowledged by Lovenduski and Karam (2003:3) and focuses its attention on those who are most in need of government services.

Lovenduski and Karam ( 2003: 3) define women's issues as issues that mainly affect women, whether for biological or social reasons. They define women's perspectives as women's views on all issues. They note that research indicates that although broadly the same issues are significant for both sexes, women's perspective on issues differ from that of men. "Women are best placed to articulate their needs and concerns."

Councils should reflect their community's gender balance. Access to and participation by women at all levels of decision-making is a fundamental right. Many organizations have identified this issue as critical to achieving greater gender equality and, to this end, are lobbying for 50/50 representation (50/50 campaign). A government of men by men cannot claim to be a government for the people by the people.

According to Albertyn C, Hassim S and Meintjies S (2002 :39) women bring a different style and values into politics. The Beijing conference stated that excluding women from power in the public arena is in sharp contrast to their ability to make crucial decisions relating to the survival of families. "By excluding

women from decision-making the country deprives itself of a reservoir and fund of talent and wisdom as well as style of decision-making.”

Fick G, Meintjies Sand Simons M (2002: 190) argue that when, in 1995, local government elections were held throughout the country except in parts of the Western Cape and in KwaZulu-Natal, research conducted by IDASA’s local government information centre found that 19.4% of all councillors elected were women. Although this meant that more women were present in local councils than at any other time, the figure was substantially below the 30 % critical mass considered necessary to shift gender balances in organizations. This figure increased during the December 2000 elections where according to the GETNET Gender and Local Government Programme Election Report ( 2005-2006: 3) “local government as a tier of government remains male dominated.”

The GETNET report (2005-3) argues further that “a South African local government audit, conducted in November 2004, illustrates this fact. Across South Africa, women constitute only 18% of mayors, 6% of municipal managers and 29% of councillors. Unless this composition of local governance shifts to be more gender equitable, women's concerns and interests are unlikely to be fully considered or addressed.”

The participation of women in local government is intrinsic to addressing the issues that affect women. It is important to note that women's needs are not homogeneous, therefore their needs could be different.

Skepu Z (2002: 2) argues: "Local government must encourage women to take part in the public participation process, advise women on how to get involved in correcting the imbalances which exist in the provision of basic services such as the absence of recreational facilities for youth engaging in activities such as drug and alcohol abuse. This affects the lives of women as they are burdened and concerned about the safety of their children and the dangers which exist when their children play in roads or open fields. Working women are compelled to leave their children with relatives or friends as there are no after-care facilities for school-going children. Many mothers are forced to take unwanted risks by leaving their children unattended for hours a day. Attendance at pre-school is essential in providing children with opportunities."

Skepu states that when health care services are not available in the community women are forced to spend long hours and a considerable amount of money travelling to other areas in order to obtain these services.

Skepu further states that the need for employment opportunities is another priority. Families need homes, households must be sustained and the economic independence of the family must be achieved.

Although this is interpreted as the need for schools in communities, there is a need for adult education programmes for women as well. The local government and the Department of Education must play a role in reducing the high illiteracy rate and create opportunities for women.

Pandy F and Paulus E (2000: 6) argue that although it is important for people to participate at all levels of government, local government is located within communities, affording the opportunity for direct engagement. According to Skepu, the provision of basic services is not only fundamental to women's health and well being but also has the potential to transform gender inequalities.

Women are the ones who have to supply water services not provided by the municipality. Insufficient access to clean water not only poses health risks but also imposes an extra burden on women. Women are the ones who have to find alternative forms of energy supply when there is no access to electricity or when the access is not affordable.

Since women are the main consumers of services they are more affected than men if services are not adequately provided. Women's needs have to be prioritized by local government.

## 2.6 Theoretical frameworks

The ideological approach that underpins this research is the human rights approach to development. Hausemann, J (1998: 31-35) argues that “A human rights approach to development is participatory, inclusive and pro-poor. It stresses liberty, equality and empowerment. This approach:

- Puts people first and promotes human centred development.
- Recognizes the inherent dignity of every human being without distinction.
- Recognises and promotes equality between women and men.
- Promotes equal opportunities and choices for all so that everyone can develop their own unique potential and have a chance to contribute to development and social progress.
- Promotes national and international systems based on economic equity, equity in the access to public resources, and social justice.
- Promotes mutual respect between peoples as a basis for peace, justice, conflict resolution, sustainable human development.

Hausemann, J (1998:31-35) argues that this promotes a positive approach , “one that will utilise human rights principles and legal norms as a coherent framework for concrete action to eliminate poverty and to achieve sustainable improvement in the quality of life of the poor and socially isolated.”

It is therefore critical to draw up a framework that would enable the participation of women in the preparation of local council budget based on the theories that have been discussed above and tenets from the policy framework discussed below. The framework for participation should draw from a participatory and representative ethos. The municipality should have a unit that drives women participation issues and this should be housed under the Office of the Speaker.

“Denters, B etal (2002: 44) argues that community participation is one of the key principles of democracy. Public participation is undoubtedly a crucial determinant of the nature of democracy. Participation of women is an essential for good governance as it improves information flow, accountability, process, and gives voice to those most directly affected by public policy.”

Full participation thus requires community involvement at all stages of democratic decision-making. Referring specifically to environmental problems, Cunningham (2002: 128) identifies six of these stages: identification and definition of a problem, canvassing alternative solutions, proposing a specific solution, deciding whether or not to adopt the proposal, formulating a plan of implementation, and implementing the plan.”

De Villiers S (2001: 23) argues that “South Africa has opted for the representative democracy which is a participatory form of democracy which is indeed grounded on the view that where people are not involved in the decisions

that affect their lives, social policies and political interventions are likely to fail. This changed perspective from the apartheid regime takes place in a climate of growing concern in Western democratic systems. Declining voter participation, a narrowing of political choices and a decline in popular trust in the electoral and political choices have prompted the need for renewal on the way we conceive of democracy. It is clear that citizen participation strengthens or expands formal representation.”

According to the African National Congress Gender Subcommittee report, there are three approaches to gender. The first is a gender blind approach which views all human beings as the same and deserving of the same treatment. It argues that society should be governed by universal laws and values. This approach does not question what those norms and values are, where they come from and for what purposes they may have been developed.

The second is a women specific approach in which women are viewed as a special category deserving special treatment in order to enjoy equality with men. Within women specific approach there are two schools of thought on women. The first is the welfare approach, which envisages women as being dependents, either on their male partners, family members or the state. The welfare approach does not involve dismantling the very systems that oppress women.

The second example of the welfare approach is the equality of opportunity approach which focuses on the creation of opportunities for women to enter the spheres of authority, power and control. This approach requires women to engage in masculine activities in a masculine world. Women by virtue of their sex are deemed to be naturally gender aware and to automatically represent the interests of all women. Gender transformation is assumed to occur when women enter the corridors of power.

The third approach is the gendered perspective approach that looks at the relationship between men and women, at how societies are structured along gender lines and the impact of these relations on society as a whole. The context within which gendered relations emerge and the constantly shifting economic, political and social terrain is always recognized. The gendered perspective is concerned with ensuring that a gender analysis is applied with regard to all policies, programmes, planning, strategy and evaluation. It looks at fundamentally transforming unequal power relations and thereby changing society.



**Topic: Framework for Women's Participation in the Preparation of Local Council Budgets**

Figure 3

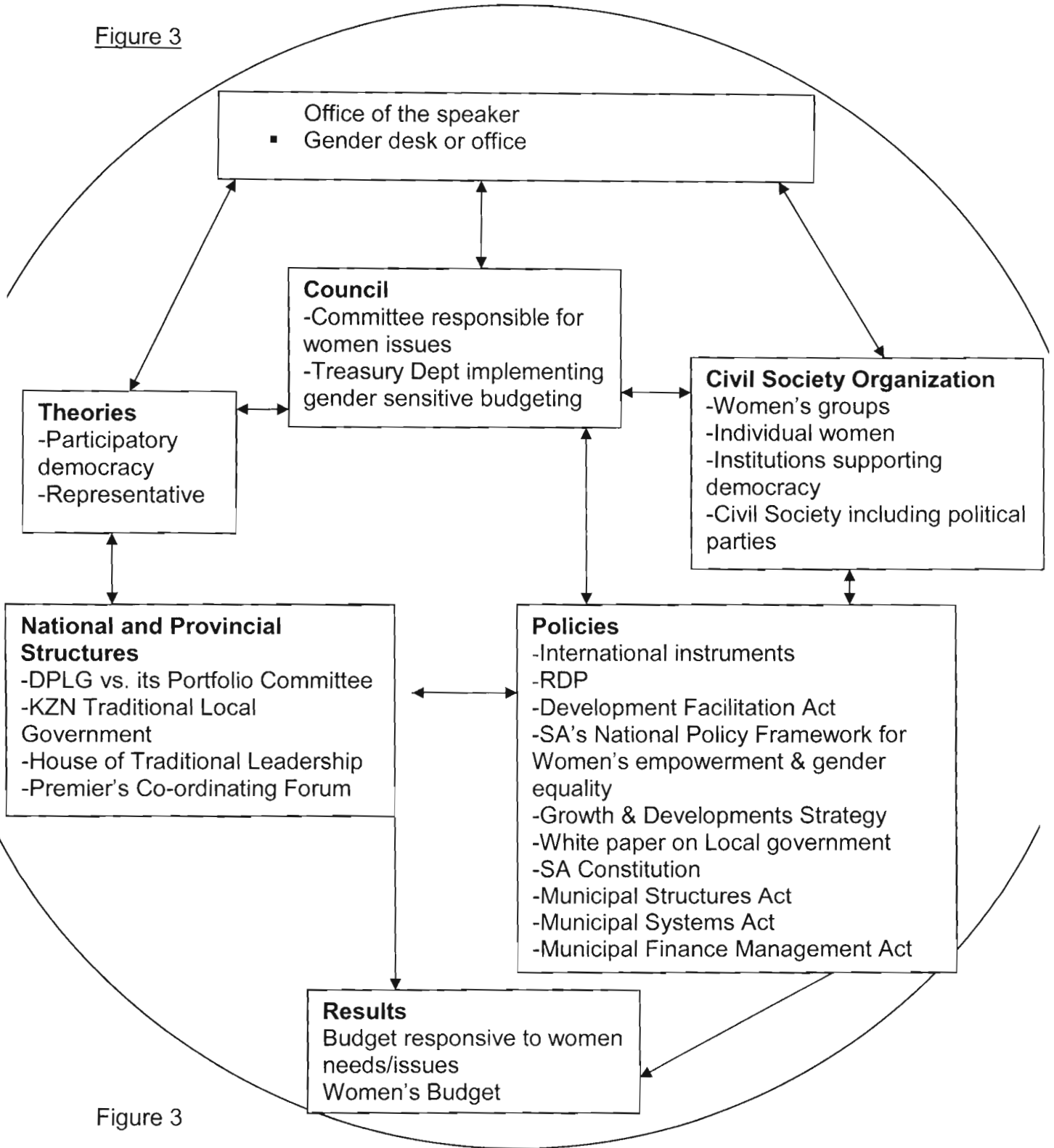


Figure three (3) explains the interplay that exists between government departments, local municipalities, district municipalities and civil society organisations. It is critical to note that no single organisation could succeed on its own by working independently. Therefore, organisations need one another to promote the well-being of citizens. For women to participate in the preparation of local council budgets, they need to understand national and provincial structures. They also need to have information on policies that govern or regulate these structures. In order for their participation to impact on issues, women need to work hand in hand with civil society organisations.

The Office of the Speaker in uMhlathuze Municipality should lead this programme in order to have an oversight function over other departments. The office of the speaker must establish a comprehensive network of structures, mechanisms and processes for bringing a gender perspective to bear in all municipal programmes and projects.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

In terms of research conducted and conferences held, it emerged clearly that the researcher could not source any previous research that would answer the research question at hand.

The section on policy framework gave a critical account of how conducive the environment in South Africa is in enabling all spheres of government to facilitate

public participation. The theoretical framework is a suggested framework that the uMhlathuze Municipality could utilize in implementing a plan to ensure that women participate in uMhlathuze Municipality. The framework also depicts the kinds of approaches that the municipality could use.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the process of collecting information from various entities. This section is a practical guide regarding the conducting of the research. The chapter starts by explaining the research design, including an explanation for the choice of uMhlathuze Municipality as the case study. This chapter explains how the sample was chosen and the importance of the sample. This chapter also focuses on the instrument development and data collection, which was undertaken in stages. The first stage is the reviewing of documents. Key informants were contacted to glean from them valuable information of citizen participation. The second stage centers on focus group discussions and face to face interviews. The third stage is the observation of council meetings. This chapter describes the data analysis and how data was recorded and analysed according to themes. This chapter also details the feedback mechanism that needs to be followed once the research is completed. Within this, ethical issues will also be discussed. The limitations of the research will also be presented.

### **3.2 Research design**

The research design took the form of a case study of Enseleni Community situated in UMhlathuze Municipality. It was selected because there are so many developmental initiatives taking place in this municipality. It is regarded as one of the fastest growing municipalities in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. According to

uMhlathuze Municipality website Key Statistics (page 5) the area is the third most important in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in terms of economic production, it contributes 7,6% of the total gross geographic product and 5.5% of total formal employment. The provincial economy makes up 15% of the national economy. In 2002, the growth rate was 3.0%.

The case study design enabled the researcher to focus on one area, which assisted the researcher to interrogate issues in depth. This led to the provision of a detailed description and analysis of processes as voiced by participants.

### **3.3 Sample**

The research took place in uMhlathuze Municipality. This was selected because uMhlathuze Municipality is presently regarded as one of the leading municipalities in South Africa as far as local government transformation is concerned. The National Department of Local Government identified seven local authorities to participate in a best practice project on transformation issues, with the intention that other local authorities may learn from this experience (UMhlathuze Municipality Annual Report 2002). In addition, the provincial Department of Local Government performed a similar exercise with eight local authorities in KwaZulu-Natal, with UMhlathuze Municipality participating in both exercises. In its 2002 Annual Report, the UMhlathuze Municipality argued that its transformation process was moving towards issues that had been given less attention, like community participation and ward committees. It was for these

reasons that this municipality was selected by the researcher for the research focus.

The focus of the research is on women's participation. Ordinary women from Enseleni Location were interviewed through focus group discussions. Most of these women sell fruits in Enseleni. I came in contact with them when I wrote a letter to the Municipal Manager in 2004 (see attached in the appendix) stating that I wanted to conduct research in his municipality, targeting Enseleni as a case study. He referred me to the head of Treasury as well as the Enseleni ward councillor, who gave me permission to proceed with the research. I chose these women because I knew that they were going to be informative, since three of them sit on the ward committee and they engage the municipality if they encounter problems in their daily business operations.

Selected municipality staff were interviewed. In uMhlathuze Municipality there are three departments which are related to the topic of my research. These are: The Department of Community Facilitation and Marketing; the Department of Integrated Development Planning and; the Department of City Treasury. Staff were selected from these departments. I asked for a list of all staff members to be provided in each of the above departments but such a list not available. I interviewed the junior staff members who were available during the interviews.

Staff included those who are in decision-making positions, and other ordinary staff members. I was able to interview four senior managers and councillors who were earmarked for the interview. Senior and junior councillors were interviewed. This included both councillors from the opposition and ruling parties. Three high ranking women in the municipality were interviewed. Three male councillors were interviewed. This enabled the researcher to obtain information and perspectives from a diverse range of stakeholders. There was a second focus group for Community Development Workers. Since they were attending a course in Empangeni this focus group took place there. They were chosen because they are involved in development work in uMhlathuze Municipality.

The criteria that was used to select respondents was as follows:

- Respondents from the departments should understand and be involved in participation and budget preparation
- The scope of women's work would be linked to municipality programmes
- People who are involved in development work in and around the municipality
- Councillors that were nominated sit in the portfolio committee that does oversight work for the above mentioned department

### **3.4 Instrument development and data collection**

- ↓ **Stage 1:** The researcher started by reviewing relevant documents in the municipality and from the community. The list that follows

depicts the type of documents the researcher reviewed: The Annual Reports for 2002, 2003 and 2004. Each gave a detailed report about programmes or activities that were carried out annually by relevant uMhlathuze departments.

- ↓ The UThungulu Annual Report for 2005.
- ↓ The 2003-2004 Mid-year Budget Review Portfolio Report. This document is about a multi-year budgets which included council's current year's budgetary projects and projects for 2004-2005, which was the next financial year.
- ↓ The minutes of the undermentioned committees of council where the drafting of the budget was discussed.
- ↓ The draft 2004/2005 Multi-year Capital Budget ready to be submitted to Portfolio Finance and Marketing. The document was developed by officials to be submitted to the portfolio committee for consideration and thereafter, to include the capital budget in the 2004-2005 multi year budget report to council for approval.
- ↓ Two council policies, namely, the Outreach Policy and the Public Participation Policy. They both argue that the municipality must reach out to people and involve people in its programmes.
- ↓ I attended and reviewed the State of the City address by the Mayor on the 28 July 2004. This is one of the programmes planned in the public participation policy. The purpose of the address was to inform the community as to the role played by both officials and



councillors. The address registered progress and reflected on problems encountered.

- ↓ The UMhlathuze Municipality Standing Orders. Section 14 of the standing orders is about consideration of the budget and the process that needs to be followed during council. It was noted that there is no provision for any kind of participation.
- ↓ Creating Development Oriented Ward Committees – A Challenge For Newly Elected Ward Committees Seminar. This is a report that states how elected ward committees should operate.
- ↓ A Policy Document on Functions of and Records Held by the City of uMhlathuze, compiled in compliance with part 3 chapter 2 (section 14) of the Promotion Act no 2 of 2000. The policy is written in three languages - Zulu, English and Afrikaans. In this policy communities are asked to provide written requests for information and told they must pay for certain information.
- ↓ Economic Strengths of Zululand (this is a quarterly booklet) which portrays uMhlathuze as an economic strength within Zululand and describes economic opportunities in Empangeni and Richards Bay.

- ✦ Izindaba Ezimtoti, this is a newsletter of the uThungulu District Municipality. It reports about municipalities that fall under it.
  
- ✦ uMhlathuze News (various editions.) This newsletter is published monthly and reports on programmes of the uMhlathuze Municipality.

This review of documents helped the researcher understand the kinds of problems that might be affecting the community.

Key informants were contacted to gain valuable information of citizen participation as far as the preparation of the budget is concerned (scanning the field). In my discussion with various stakeholders it emerged strongly that there are very few civil society organizations that do development work in the uMhlathuze area. The researcher chose to use the main political parties and one key non-governmental organization in the area (UThungulu Community Foundation). UThungulu Community Foundation provides development in rural areas in the field of local economic development. UThungulu Community Foundation was consulted in order to inform the research about whether women do participate in the preparation of the local council budget. Staff within the Richards Bay Rate Payers' Association, Enseleni Library and Enseleni Clinic were also used as key informants. The uThungulu Deputy Municipal manager was also used as a key informant. These organizations and people were chosen

because they work and reside in the area and they interact with communities on a daily basis. This was confirmed by reading the Zululand Observer, a community newspaper, which assisted me in selecting the list of key informants. The advantage of using this method is that the researcher saved a lot of time by accessing readily available information.

One limitation of this method was that the municipality and key informants might have protected and prevented access to other information that it thought confidential. Key informants might also have inadvertently misrepresented the uMhlathuze Municipality's role in involving women in the preparation of the local council budget.

**Stage 2:** The researcher used the focus group method to collect data from the community. There were two focus group discussions. One comprised people from Enseleni, three of the women being from a ward committee. The second focus group comprised community development workers. This focus group took place in Empangeni because they could not come to Enseleni since they were attending a workshop in Empangeni. An additional planned focus group discussion with the Richards Bay Rate Payers' Association did not materialize because members were not available. The Chairperson of the Richards Bay Rate Payers' Association was interviewed instead and valuable information was gathered.

The focus groups involved interviewing people in groups, and/or talking amongst themselves about issues that were presented to them during focus group discussions. Two sets of questions were developed (see appendix). The first set of questions was used during the focus group discussions. These questions were used as a guide. There were between six and twelve people per focus group. The researcher took notes and facilitated discussions simultaneously. Participants signed a consent form (see appendix) to demonstrate their willingness to participate in the research. The discussions were expected not to exceed two hours, although one of the focus groups in Enseleni took three –and-half hours, as participants had a lot to share that was relevant to the research. Although the research guidelines provided that where a group is not able to complete the discussion during the session, a follow-up session be convened, there was no need for such an intervention.

The other set of questions was for municipality staff and councillors. Municipality staff were interviewed separately, and an interview schedule was utilized. This comprised face-to-face interviews with the researcher completing the interview schedule as the interview proceeded. A telephone interview was undertaken only once, with the Chairperson of the Rate Payers Association, as he was not available for a face-to-face interview.

The researcher used a tape recorder. Participants were informed about the recording. The researcher recorded both the focus groups and face-to-face interviews.

The advantage of using the focus group method was that it encouraged debate and discussion by local people around key issues raised in the attached focus group discussion questions. It was also used to assess the feasibility of the intervention. There are several limitations to using this methodology, namely, it does not pick up the full range of beliefs and behaviours surrounding a research topic, especially if the topic is deemed sensitive according to local standards. Furthermore, interviews and focus group discussions provided information in a designated “place” rather than in a natural field setting. The potential for the researcher’s presence to affect responses cannot be discounted. In addition, the logistical problems in getting groups of people together at specific times is common. This was particularly experienced in focus groups with local government officials and councillors, since it was difficult bringing them together.

Face-to-face interviews (one-on-one interview) were used. A one –on-one interview was also utilised with the Richards Bay Rate Payers’ Association where the focus group discussion was cancelled and a telephone interview took place instead with the Chairperson of the Rate Payers’ Association. The focus group method is not entirely successful in eliciting information considered private or concerning behaviour that might be subject to disapproval, since people are

usually reluctant to share such information in a group setting. But the purpose of the research was explained and participants were relaxed, although in the Enseleni focus some participants tended to dominate. This was curbed through effective facilitation and chairing by the researcher.

**Stage 3:** I observed two council meetings. In one of the council meetings that I observed, the uMhlathuze Municipality Budget was passed. I attended a meeting on the 24 February 2004 because at that meeting, council took a decision and resolution on the national project: Community Participation in Local Governance, which took place in Gauteng. Only males were selected to go to the course. This was a full council meeting but amongst other issues that were discussed was this course.

I also observed a budget hearing in Enseleni in March 2005. At this hearing, mostly men spoke and their ideas were not entertained because the draft budget had already been drafted. The budget council meeting took place on the 25 May 2005. This was a sitting passing the budget of uMhlathuze.

I observed council meetings, standing committee meetings, community meetings and two ward committee meetings. It was important to observe council meetings since it is the highest decision-making body and passes the budget after it has gone through various stages.

### **3.5 Data analysis and presentation**

I wrote down what I heard and understood to make sense of the interviews and focus group discussions. Interviews were recorded on the interview schedule as well as on the tape recorder. The focus group discussions were recorded on the tape recorder. These were played back and written transcriptions were made.

The researcher grouped data from focus groups and interviews, focusing on observations which seemed similar or related to others. To further simplify the process of analysis, the researcher broke down categories into themes, which were then categorised and integrated around issues. The themes were created out of the discussions that the researcher had with various respondents, including focus groups. From the discussions, main issues started to surface and these were used as themes. Themes were created to make it easy to report on the information gleaned from the respondents.

### **3.6 Feedback**

As soon as the study has been finalised there will be a community or stakeholders meeting to which all stakeholders will be invited. The researcher will present the findings and the recommendations. Another presentation will be given to the municipality. The community and the municipality will need to commit themselves to how they will take recommendations forward. One copy of the dissertation will be given to the municipality and the other copy will be stored in the local library situated in Enseleni.

### **3.7 Ethical considerations**

In engaging in this research a number of ethical issues were taken into consideration. The research observed the following ethical issues as mentioned by Mwanje J ( 2001: 64);

- Informed Consent: A consent form was signed by informants to depict that they were not coerced into taking part in the research
- Confidentiality: It was explained to participants that their participation in the research would remain anonymous
- Coercion: During focus group discussions, rights of individuals were protected. Coercion and deception were avoided at all costs
- Feedback of results: There was an undertaking that findings would be shared with the community and uMhlathuze Municipality
- Seeking formal approval from authorities if necessary: See letter attached from uMhlathuze Municipality

### **3.8 Limitations of the research**

The research cannot be regarded as representative of all municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal, let alone in South Africa. As such it is limited in the extent to which it can be used for the purposes of generalisation or as a basis of accurate perceptions on the situation of women and local government. Despite the limitations, the researcher regards the findings as being indicative of the level of women's participation in budget processes.



### **3.9 Conclusion**

The research process was followed as planned. However, where the research strategies and processes could not be followed, this is indicated elsewhere in the research document. This chapter outlined all the strategies and methods that were followed when this research was conducted.

## Chapter 4: The findings

### 4.1 Introduction

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the municipality's staff and councillors. Both junior and senior staff members were interviewed. Senior councillors and junior councillors were interviewed. Councillors from opposition parties were also interviewed. Focus group interviews were conducted with community members who are members of the ward committee in Enseleni. In addition, another focus group was convened for Community Development workers employed by the municipality. A separate interview was held with the Rate Payers' Association, since the focus group with the organization could not materialize. This chapter will deal with research findings as outlined in terms of themes:

- ✚ The importance of involving women in the preparation of local council budgets
- ✚ Approach to participation in uMhlathuze
- ✚ Challenges facing uMhlathuze Municipality
- ✚ Budget meetings
- ✚ Communication strategy
- ✚ Ways of facilitating effective budget preparation
- ✚ Performance of the municipality in terms of involving women in the preparation of local council budgets
- ✚ Budget for citizen participation

- ✚ Factors inhibiting participation of women
- ✚ Role of political parties
- ✚ Scope for participation
- ✚ Structures
- ✚ The relationship between the IDP and Budget
- ✚ Capacity- building and training
- ✚ Impact and benefit of women's participation in the preparation of local council budgets and
- ✚ Other issues linked to budget preparation

#### **4.2 The importance of involving women in the preparation of local council budgets**

The community, through the views of focus group participants, said that for far too long, women have been told that they are secondary to men. One participant said, *"We need to have a mindset change for women to say: 'I need to play a better role' and also for men to allow women to play an active role to participate at all levels certainly."*

The Enseleni focus group stated that: *"Women are supposed to take part in the preparation of the local council budget because they give birth to people and take care of the welfare of the people.* It was expressed that women feel the brunt of poverty and are the ones who suffer a lot. It is warranted that they participate in the preparation of local council budgets.

Participants in Enseleni further believed that “this is a new area. Government is promoting equality for all and therefore women deserve to be recognized. In the old order or during apartheid women were sidelined. It is important that we should value their worth. We need to realize the vision and mission of government to empower women.”

The community through the views of the focus group discussions mentioned that *“the majority of people are women and are the ones who feel the brunt of poverty. Women take care of nations. Women are the ones who can identify areas and items that could be budgeted for because they know and understand their communities. They remain behind when their husband are in the cities or looking for jobs.”*

One of the questions that was asked during face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions was “What is the importance of involving women in the preparation of local council budgets?” Therefore it is critical to share participants’ views on the matter. The focus group in Enseleni said: *“Women use local government services more than anybody. Most services from the municipality are used and affect women, how women operate on a daily basis. These services include use of water and electricity. Women should be given a chance to have a say in the budget so as to decide about their municipality destiny.”* One interviewee further mentioned that *“women should participate in the budget*

*process because they are the ones who care for people, who alleviate and know family problems. If family members are not working, women are directly or indirectly affected. ”*

Another woman from the Enseleni focus group said: *“Women could not have a say, now it is time where everybody is free, is supposed to have a say and our government is for everyone, we need to embrace it. Women are the backbone of our government.”*

#### **4.3 Approach to participation in uMhlatuze Municipality**

Virtually all interviewees including focus group participants, senior management, junior staff members and councillors agreed that the municipality does not specifically convene consultative meetings for women only. The municipality calls a meeting for all residents, and those who are interested and available attend. All participants agreed that the major areas where budget hearings are held are Enseleni, Esikhawini, Ngwelezane, Richards Bay and Empangeni.

Senior management and senior councillors from the ruling party tended to refer to two types of participation during the preparation of the local council budget, namely, internal and external participation where women participate.

Senior management mentioned that internally, there is a budget team that sits every year and compiles a ‘wish list’ of items that they want in the budget, that

relate to the IDP projects. The budget team comprises representatives of each municipal department. However, some staff members and focus group participants disagreed with the notion that women are involved in the internal preparation of local council budgets, since most heads of departments are men, and women are not given a chance to be involved in these issues.

One senior official claimed that in his department, two women are involved in the budget process. They assist with the community participation meetings - preparing the slide show and providing translation services. Clearly this cannot be regarded as substantive participation in the preparation of local council budgets.

Another senior official claimed that there are cases where women participate internally, including women councillors who are active participants in budget discussion at council. Contrary to this view, one women councillor argued that a lot of discussion happens at executive committee level and at the management board, and these boards are dominated by men. She observed that politics is a game. Once your principals, who are men, agree on something, it is difficult to oppose it at council level.

There are varying views when it comes to the participation of women in the preparation of the local council budget. Senior management and senior councillors from the ruling party agreed that internal participation is good, but that

externally there is room for improvement. They further concurred that the municipality has never gone out to include women in the preparation of the local council budget, but sometimes lack the strategies to pursue this.

Focus group participants and ordinary staff members agreed that there is limited external and internal participation of women in the preparation of the local council budget. They felt that this results from the fact that there is no particular approach where women specifically are targeted. There is a generic approach where all residents are invited to participate, and it is therefore difficult to segregate different categories of people who attend these meetings. It is even difficult to measure how various categories of people, like women, are going to benefit from budget hearings.

But all participants including councillors, staff members, and focus group participants agreed that the majority of people who tend to attend these meetings are women although they are not targeted specifically. All participants suspected that it could be that due to the times of these meetings, they are the ones available while perhaps partners and members of the family were at work.

#### **4.4 Challenges facing UMhlatuze Municipality**

During focus group discussions and interviews participants shared their views on the most important challenges facing their municipality in terms of involving women in the preparation of the local council budget.

One woman official, who is junior a staff member for the uMhlathuze Municipality, mentioned that : *“Internally women are not involved in the preparation of local council budgets, except a very few who are in senior management. Even if you are in management, most of the time it is the men staff because they are in senior management where real decisions are taken.”* One woman further said that she was never involved in the budget preparation despite having gone on a course on budget issues. She was never given any task that is relevant to the budget.

All participants agreed that the other challenge to women’s participation in the preparation of local council budgets is that internally there are not a lot of women in senior positions. One woman, who works in the treasury department, explained that the senior accountant and his assistant prepare the budget and that both are men. This woman further said that allocation of resources is done and checked by men in UMhlathuze Municipality. The consequence is that men allocate resources according to their own needs. They allocate resources according to what they perceive is best for the women.

One junior councillor (a woman) said: *“Women need to be involved in the planning of the budget.”* However, she stated that she does not know how this process works. She asserted that by involving women, women’s understanding of the budget process would develop. Some interviewees felt that senior



management has to recognize women as equal partners and not treat the municipality as a 'boys club'."

One senior official (a man) admitted that it has been the institutional culture not to target specific groups, like women. The focus has been on the generic public without giving attention to particular groupings in the community. This official felt that there are too many different groupings, for example, senior citizens and youth, and it is not practical for the municipality to target each of these individually within the given time frames.

Many interviewees seemed to agree that the municipality does not have structures that address women's issues. One woman councillor mentioned that there are delaying tactics in the implementation of gender desks and gender policies and that there is a deliberate delay in the involvement of women in budget processes.

Almost all participants in focus group discussions agreed that councillors, both male and female, do not understand women-related issues, including gender budgeting. A number of interviewees said that another problem is that women-related issues are aligned with a certain political party, so it becomes difficult to discuss these issues, and is dependent on which party leads that municipality.

The other challenge mentioned by all interviewees and participants was that ward councillors and ward committees are weak in terms of ensuring that women participate in the preparation of the local council budgets. The biggest challenge is that very few ward councillors are women. This makes it difficult for women's issues to be put on the municipality's budget agenda.

One councillor (man) mentioned that the municipality cannot introduce new interventions but mentioned that the municipality engages on an open invitation basis: when the budget is ready for review, it is open to everyone for comment. She stated that it is up to women in the community to participate in these processes. But contrary to this, the focus group discussions revealed that women do not get information about this open invitation. The processes used to involve communities are not at all accessible or transparent. They further mentioned that women in the rural areas are excluded from participating as processes, which tend to take place in the major centres, such as Richards Bay, Esikhawini, Enseleni and Ngwelezane, are not accessible.

At all sites, many interviewees and focus group participants asserted that women from rural areas and townships do not have enough knowledge of the budget process. The budget is prepared by highly educated people who live in urban areas and it is written in intimidating, technical terms. People in the rural areas have not been given a chance to learn and be exposed to the budget

processes. As a result, rural and urban women's needs are not included during the preparation stages.

One junior official (a woman) mentioned that transparency is a problem, since not all the relevant budget information is accessible. The participant said: *“One needs to be at the certain level to get some kind of information. For example, if I would like to know the budget on how much we have spent for the past year on the water supply in UMhlatuze area, I cannot go straight to the data base. I have to speak to a specific person who can give me access to that specific information that I need. It is the same in other departments, like electrical department. If I would ask how much was spent to install all pre-payment systems in Empangeni and Ngwelezane areas, I will not just get that information, I will have to go a certain route for me to get that specific information. Remember, I'm the woman.”*

Another issue that was raised by participants in the Enseleni group discussions is that the municipality has made many promises in the past which were never fulfilled, and sometimes it is difficult to assess whether the budget preparation stage is genuine. For example, one female participant said that in her organization, they were promised that the municipality was going to train young people to do counselling and assist community organizations, but this never transpired. She stated: *“We women get tired easily if we have asked for things that are not given.”*

One senior official mentioned that the municipality is yet to establish what would be referred to as a women's desk or gender desk which would address issues pertinent to specific social groups. Contrary to this, one woman councillor mentioned that it has taken senior officials five years to establish these structures. Councillors do not even have a forum for women councillors. This councillor concluded that officials are not concerned about women's issues and are deliberately dragging their feet.

#### **4.5 Budget meetings**

The focus group discussion with the Empangeni focus group mentioned that Council holds meetings at night, and these meetings are held in the main centers (Esikhawini, Ngwelezane, Enseleni, Richards Bay and Empangeni). The issue of transport is the most problematic since many rural residents and women in particular cannot afford to pay for transport to travel to these centres. The other issue is the safety of women travelling at night.

The municipality holds various budget meetings. Some of these meetings are internal and some are external. Members of the community including women are invited to attend these meetings. These meetings include executive committee meetings, budget council meetings, finance portfolio meetings, public meetings and council meetings to discuss the budget.

The researcher observed various meetings. Only the tabling of the budget in council and public meetings is extensively advertised in the local newspapers. The other meetings, which refine and deliberate on the budget, happen behind closed doors.

One senior official advised how the time for which meetings are scheduled are carefully planned to accommodate the needs of township and rural residents, to ensure community members are available.

Most participants in the focus group discussions claimed that meetings are arranged for evenings in the towns, when mostly White people are able to attend.

#### **4.6 Communication strategy**

The municipality has a comprehensive communication strategy and mechanisms that it uses to inform its citizens about its programme, including budgetary issues. The municipality makes use of several mechanisms, including megaphones, local media, including newspapers such as the *Zululand Observer*, *Umlozi*, *UMhlathuze News*, and *Indonsakusuka Community Radio Station* in Eshowe. The *Zululand Observer* is an English language newspaper which covers the Zululand area of the North Coast beyond Tugela River. *UMlozi* is the sister Zulu language newspaper. In addition, the municipality distributes its own newsletter, *UMhlathuze News* where it features articles to sensitise the community about the municipality's programme.

The municipality also produces a circular, which is sent to all councillors. These spell out how the entire budget process is going to unfold, including timeframes, schedules of meetings, and the dates and venues of such public meetings.

The municipality prints about 50,000 copies of this newsletter every month, and distributes these throughout the area of its jurisdiction. These are placed in local shops and public centres. The municipality has special mechanisms to allocate a specific number of newsletters to each ward. Each councillor gets on average 500 copies. The municipality has 60 councillors.

Very few meetings have been arranged in the rural areas. Attendance at meetings is very poor. The municipality has begun sending invitations to meetings via respective councillors well before time. In addition, municipality staff brief the local traditional leaders on the purpose of the meeting, with the result that they assist in publicizing these.

One senior councillor stated that the municipality presented one of its budgets where the attendance was between 300-500 people in the peri-urban areas at each meeting. In Richards Bay, home to the highest income group, the municipality managed to attract only 20 people to the budget hearing. In fact, the municipality's communication strategy ensures that people do not feel that they need to participate since they get all the information through the various

mediums of communication. Another interviewee agreed that this might affect the turnout because the municipality gives a very good breakdown of what it is doing from a financial point of view.

Senior management stated that, as a way of assessing the effectiveness of its communication strategy, the municipality has developed an assessment tool to check whether people read the newsletter. Every year, management services conduct a satisfaction survey on a number of services provided by the municipality. Findings are provided to the municipality's management, and are apparently forwarded to council for approval. The satisfaction survey also reports on the participation of communities in various municipality programmes. The researcher requested a copy of this report, which was promised but never given.

#### **4.7 Ways of facilitating effective budget preparation**

Interviewees were asked to share their views in terms of the ways in which the municipality can facilitate the effective participation of women in the preparation of the local council budget.

Almost all participants mentioned that the municipality should start recognizing that there are different categories of people who reside within its jurisdiction, and should target them as different groups. The municipality needs to call a meeting for women only to enable them to participate in the preparation of local council

budgets. This will ensure that women get space to talk about issues that affect them, including budget related issues.

One senior councillor (a woman) argued that one way to ensure the involvement of women in the preparation of the local council budget would be through ward committees, which should take a lead in this regard. The municipality should have a budget to pay ward committee members a sitting or sundry allowance. The out- of- pocket expenses should be paid as well.

The budget team needs to learn from the uMhlathuze Municipality IDP process. The uMhlathuze Municipality has put in place different task teams that discuss various matters, for example, the environment. People or organizations that serve on these task teams are recruited through advertisements in the newspapers. The people who drive the budget process should ensure that they identify women and women's organizations that should be involved in the preparation of the local budget.

Focus group participants mentioned that women as a category are very creative and can organize themselves very easily. They felt that women would get involved if they were given a chance and had access to information. This could be initiated through area meetings to explain the importance of getting involved in the preparation of the local council budget.



Although it does not form part of municipal strategy, one councillor (woman) said that once the uMhlathuze Municipality has started the budget process, she calls a meeting and explains the budget to her constituency. This is her strategy to ensure that people get involved in the activities of council, including the budget process. She stated: *“In my ward, people have asked me to lobby for money for access roads because these access roads help women when they have bought groceries. It is easier to ask people to deliver goods to their houses.”* Through this initiative, the councillor has been able to identify the needs of her people.

#### **4.8 Performance of the municipality in terms of involving women in the preparation of local council budgets**

Although there was no quantifiable question included in the interview process, there was an attempt to obtain participants' assessment of the performance of UMhlathuze Municipality in involving women in the preparation of the local council budgets. Focus group participants said that it is happening, but at a superficial level, in that women are involved at a later stage when the budget is about to be passed and they are not targeted as a distinct group. Participants said that developing a budget is a process, and women should be involved in the initial stages. They further mentioned that when budget hearings take place, there is very little that women can do because the council presents pre-determined items. The perception created is that the municipality is merely trying to adhere to legislative requirements.

Senior management and senior councillors from the ruling party stated that participation of women in the preparation of the local council budget is good but not completely satisfactory. They acknowledge that while there are no meetings for women exclusively, these are open to the community in general, and the majority of the people who attend these meetings are women. According to the interviewees, 75% who attend these meetings are women. One councillor noted: *“They are interested in what happens in the community in terms of service delivery. These are the people that are directly affected by service delivery. Generally these people have been living in these areas with no water, having to fetch water from the river. Therefore they play a very active role in community participation meetings.”*

But one senior councillor from the ruling party said: *“Women are only invited to participate in the towns, but in the rural areas women are discriminated against. For example, the State of the Municipality Address took place in Empangeni in July 2004 and most participants were from the major townships and major urban areas in uMhlathuze Municipality.”* I attended the event. The event was chaotic, and according to the researcher’s observation, a waste of tax payers’ money.

#### **4.9 Budget for citizen participation**

All participants confirmed that “the municipality has a budget for citizen participation.” They further mentioned that the “municipality has a whole department set up for community participation.” All focus group participants

stated that “the unit lacks a strategy to involve women in its operations, the preparation of the local council budget in particular.”

According to the senior official from uMhlathuze Municipality Treasury (a man) said that in the 2005 /2006 budget, the municipality had a total budget of R250,000 to R300,000 excluding salaries. The municipality had a budget to convene two State of the Municipality addresses, which included an annual provision for citizen participation. The publications distributed during such public participation meetings were also fully financed by Treasury.

One senior official said that in the 2005/2006 financial year, the municipality set aside R50,000 to further investigate the concept of a women’s desk. The municipality would be in a position to engage the community with a clear agenda on what it was that they intend to do, and hear from the community what they expected of the municipality.

#### **4.10 Factors inhibiting the participation of women**

During focus group discussions and interviews, many participants identified factors that inhibit the participation of women in the preparation of the local council budget.

Participants mentioned that some women feel that men should take part in political issues, like the budget process. Women will wait for men to speak first in

the budget hearings. One interviewee added that even in discussions at people's homes, men take a lead. Even where women attend meetings, they do not participate in discussions, and it becomes very difficult to get their views. Participants further mentioned that women are important because they stay in the municipality while men go out and look for employment elsewhere.

In addition, focus group participants in Empangeni said that women believe that money matters should be discussed by men. This normally happens when meetings have been called. Women isolate themselves from taking part in the preparation of local council budget. Men also do not want to involve women when discussing budgetary issues.

Participants stated that women focus their attention on domestic work for their families. They wash, cook, and plough and these traditional roles prevent them from participating in governance processes. Some women are afraid to stand and talk in front of men. One woman said in Zulu: *"Ngeke mina ngimele amadoda uMfazi ojani lowo."* (I cannot stand and talk in front of men - that is being disrespectful).

In many cases, men will not permit their women-folk to attend meetings. One interviewee, who was a councillor last year, recalled how she used to live with a man who would not allow her to attend local women's meetings. She had to assert herself even to be allowed to attend church meetings.

The Empangeni focus group participants argued that *“women are undermined by men. Even women sometimes isolate or discriminate against one another. Women in UMhlatuze are still controlled by men in most cases, whether it be by their husbands or boyfriends. Women’s voices are never heard.”* One of the interviewees recounted how while campaigning for votes prior to recent local government elections, she was told by a woman whom she had approached for her vote that she would vote as directed by her husband.

Focus group participants felt that the greatest impediment to women’s participation in the formulation and preparation in the local council budget is illiteracy, which prevents people from understanding complex and technical budgetary concepts.

Participants in discussion groups further said that those who are literate are not informed about their rights and how the municipality budget works, to enable them to take part in its preparation. Participants felt that women’s lack of education results in them being scared to express themselves when they do not fully understand complicated topics.

Focus group participants in Enseleni argued that poverty is an additional impediment. Women weigh the options and are often faced with choosing between attending municipality programmes and going to sell things that will

ensure that their children eat at the end of the day. Women are concerned with bread and butter issues.

Focus group discussions in Empangeni revealed that women do not understand the seriousness and importance of attending meetings and the impact that this has on the provision of services. They do not understand the importance of uniting as women and having one voice as women.

Participants felt that women in political, government or civil society structures have a tendency to elect men into positions of power, despising other women. For example, one of the councillors in UMhlatuze Municipality moved to Johannesburg and the organization had to elect another person to represent them in Council. Most members in this political organization are women but they all elected a man. When this councillor was asked why women did not elect another woman he said: *"I think in terms of their background, women feel that men should be in the position of authority over the houses, this area, as well as perhaps that a male person would be a better person to represent my organization in council. Most members of my organization are female. They elected me because I have got leadership qualities."*

One women interviewee also said that some men have a tendency to look down on and undermine women. They refuse to take instructions from women. Sometimes men unite in order to sideline a woman if she is in a position of

authority. This makes it difficult for women to work in a male-dominated environment.

#### **4.11 Role of political parties**

This issue of political parties became a very interesting one during focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews. Focus groups mentioned that the problem starts with political parties because they nominate more males than females to positions in councils. This results in the dominance of males over females. Over and above this, very few women are elected as ward councillors, a key role, since ward councillors are the ones who are supposed to drive the programme of the municipality at ward level, including budget preparatory issues and the integrated development plans.

Women are seldom given positions of Mayor, or Municipal Manager neither are they elected to chair finance portfolio committees and executive committees. These two committees in uMhlathuze Municipality are critical in terms of resource allocation.

One senior official said: *“There is no doubt in my mind that if we had a majority of women councillors, the women’s agenda in council would be a dominant one.”*

#### **4.12 Scope for participation**

Participants deliberated on the scope for women's participation in budget preparation. Some participants felt that women should be more involved at committee level, because this is where budget issues are discussed in greater detail. Women should exert their energies at a community and committee level because at council level there are strategic issues to be addressed.

Some participants felt that women should be involved at committee level, community level as well as council level. They argued that women need to follow the budget process right through to ensure that they see their input being adopted by Council. Another interviewee added that women are found at all these levels, and everybody should recognize women.

#### **4.13 Structures**

Enseleni focus group participants mentioned that there are many community-based and church organizations operating locally, but very few non-governmental organizations. There is no co-ordinated effort to bring together these organizations to lobby and confront the local municipality in terms of ensuring that women participate in the preparation of the local council budget.

Focus group participants in Empangeni noted that there are local educational institutions that the municipality could utilize in terms of ensuring that women participate in the preparation of the local council budget. These include various



high schools and Adult Basic Education (ABET) centres, Richtek, University of Zululand, UMfolozi College, Working World, Commercial College and Computer College. The focus group further noted that if these institutions could be utilized effectively, women could learn from them and participate effectively in the preparation of the local council budget.

There are also traditional structures, for example, Amakhosi structures that could be utilized.

#### **4.14 The relationship between the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and Budget**

Participants stressed that the link between the IDP and Budget should be emphasised. Focus group participants noted that the IDP should be treated as a foundation for setting budget priorities. The needs as identified in the IDP are broad issues that affect the community, like provision of water, sanitation, refuse, electricity, education, and schools. Participants noted that these are not solely directed at women's needs, so it is difficult just to address women's issues, because in the IDP issues are not segregated.

Focus groups felt that there is close link between the IDP and Budget. The IDP is treated as a 'wish list' of all programmes and services that residents require the municipality to provide. Focus group participants felt that residents need to have a say in the drafting of the IDP so that their participation in the Budget

preparation could be more informed. The municipality starts by involving municipal staff, and then engaging communities in the participatory process by convening meetings in rural areas. Many traditional courts are used as meeting venues.

The IDP forum meeting is attended by representatives from the ward including the ward councillor, one or two members of the ward committee and representatives from industries and the agricultural sector. In this meeting, issues raised in previous community meetings and progress made are reviewed and feedback given on what action needs to be taken.

A question was posed on how the municipality identifies representatives for the IDP forum. Participants answered that reports are published in local newspapers. The uMhlathuze Municipality places adverts in the newspapers, and has a municipal newspaper that is circulated throughout the municipal area, where the municipality invites all parties to participate. The municipality provides ward councillors with approximately one hundred flyers to distribute to the ward to ensure that everyone is aware of what is going on. The municipality gives and distributes 3 000 flyers to 30 wards. A similar approach could be followed by the budget team where communication and consultative processes could be used in the budget drafting process to seek community input.

#### **4.15 Capacity-building and training**

Focus group participation in Empangeni mentioned that preparation of the local council budget requires people who can engage with the process, and who know what is going on. The problem is that women are not capacitated to engage the municipality. The municipality is not providing enough information to inform women about the budget process and how they can participate.

Capacity-building programmes are needed to empower women to understand and engage with municipal processes, and should also include human rights training so that women understand that they have equal rights to men. Such capacity building programmes would ensure that women's self esteem is boosted, so that they know that they can play a very important role in budgetary issues.

#### **4.16 Impact and benefit of women's participation in the preparation of local council budgets**

Participants felt that if women participate in the preparation of the local council budget they will be able to get the services they need from the municipality. This will ensure that poverty is alleviated and that the municipality awards tenders to women.

If women participate in such processes they would know in addition about tender opportunities and budget issues and would be able to tender for these. This will create job opportunities and boost women's income.

One interviewee mentioned that if women participate it can have an impact on the budget, albeit on a limited scale. In the past, contributions from women during budget public hearing have been implemented, and sometimes the budget has even been amended.

Participants gave two examples in this regard. In the May 2005 budget public hearings, people were vociferous about a perceived lack of movement with regard to housing provision, even though housing is not a municipal competency. However in order to respond through the budget to what people had expressed for the first time, the municipality allocated a substantial amount of money to plan and implement housing projects. This included funds for land acquisition, and the repackaging of UMhlatuze Village, a low- cost housing project.

#### **4.17 Other issues linked to budget preparation**

One senior councillor stressed the value of the input of the community during the budget hearing process. He argued that the municipality chiefly considers what the majority is asking for. For example, at the Enseleni budget hearing in May 2005 one person complained that they do not want a swimming pool in Enseleni, since they have the ocean less than 12 kilometers away. Another man, during

the focus group interview, mentioned that the construction of the swimming pool is a problematic one since it is going to conflict with the way of life of Africans. He said: *“Young people now will swim at night forgetting about the essential things that they are supposed to do.”* In that budget hearing the councillor responded by saying, *“The issue of the swimming pool was discussed in 2000 during the development of the IDP where people identified the need for a swimming pool in their area.”* The councillor said that there were many discussions with community members on this and agreement was reached on the swimming pool issue. He reiterated that the municipality must start with what was requested first. The Councillor noted that prioritization during budget hearing is problematic because it depends on what individuals want. People who have houses will require swimming pools, but people who do not have houses will want houses. For a person who is homeless, a swimming pool is not a priority.

The focus group in Empangeni and one councillor mentioned that there are some officials who are not interested in involving women in the preparation of the local council budget. For example, just before the budget was concluded in May 2005 there was a community meeting in Empangeni for people to make an input on the budget. The officials failed to attend the meeting. This reflects municipal arrogance and a refusal to take public participation seriously.

#### **4.18 Conclusion**

In concluding this chapter, focus group discussions gave responses that were not favourable towards the methods and ways used by the municipality to involve women in the preparation of local council budget. Ordinary staff members in the municipality felt that the municipality is not doing enough to involve women in the preparation of local council budgets. This was also echoed by councillors from opposition parties. Management and senior councillors from the ruling party agreed that uMhlathuze Municipality was doing all in its power to involve women in the preparation of the local council budget.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion of findings**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The findings of this research are presented against the results of the study presented in chapter four, and literature in Chapter Two. This chapter explains and interprets the findings discussed in Chapter Four. This will be handled by discussing whether the research question was answered or not. The findings will also be analysed through checking whether the aims and objectives of the research were achieved.

The analysis will seek to confirm or refute hypotheses or claims. The communication strategy will be analysed to check on whether and how it affected women in terms of the participation of women in the preparation of the local council budget. The factors that come across as challenges to women and the municipality will be analysed.

Since the framework for women's participation was discussed in the literature review it is important for this issue to be analysed against the findings and literature review. This chapter will also look at the importance of civil society organizations. The policies and theories that inform the participation of women in the preparation of local council budgets will be discussed and analysed in relation to findings that were presented in chapter Four. Cultural issues will also be analysed in this chapter.

## **5.2 Research question**

It is important to start with whether the research findings tried to answer the research question or not. The research question under discussion is whether uMhlathuze Municipality enables women to participate in the preparation and formulation of the municipal budget or not. This research question was partially answered because the findings clearly demonstrated that the municipality does not target women as an important constituency, but rather applies a generic approach by involving the public as a whole to comment on the preparation of local government budgets.

The UMhlathuze community is seen by the uMhlathuze Municipality as a homogenous group which is surprising, as even women themselves are not homogenous, as noted by Budlender D et al (1999: 19). "Women are not homogenous and one can question whether their interests are the same." Goetz notes that while "women's interests, like men's vary according to their circumstances and identities by class, race, ethnicity, occupation, life cycle stage, and so on, the fact that most women tend to be constrained in their life choices to a range of reproductive functions in the private sphere, marginal positions in public arenas of the economy and politics, suggests that gender affects the way other social cleavages are experienced."



All participants who participated in the research agreed that there is no particular approach utilized in which women are actually targeted. It is clear that the municipality uses a gender blind approach which views all human beings as the same and deserving of the same. Contrary to this, the Municipal Structures Act No.32 of 2000 section 17 (2) states that, "Mechanisms, processes and procedures for community participation must take into account the special needs of people who cannot read, people with disabilities, women and other disadvantaged groups." It is further surprising that the municipality has failed for five years to establish a gender desk and gender policy. The fact of the matter is that some women do participate but only along with other categories of people. They are not given enough space to discuss issues that affect them as women and that will impact on their day-to-day activities.

Agenda no.6 1995 argues: "The participation of women in the preparation of local council budgets makes a difference because women's needs might not be budgeted for. Without a local state which insists on promotion of women's participation in the local council budget preparation their contribution to the character of development in the localities will remain unchanged." Budlender (1997: 37) further argues that, "every item in the government's budget must be examined for the differential impact it might have on women and men. Differential impact is possible and indeed likely because women and men occupy different places in the economy and society, and perform different roles. There are obviously also further differences between women, as to their position in the

economy and society, and the roles they play. This is acknowledged and focuses its attention on those who are most in need of government services.” Therefore, the approach that the municipality will need to look at or embark on is a women-specific approach which is the equality of opportunity approach where women need to enter the spheres of authority. Once the community and the municipality have seen that women have taken their rightful place, then the UMhlatuze Municipality could embrace or start adopting a gendered perspective.

### **5.3 Aims and objective**

The aim and objective was to find out whether uMhlatuze Municipality enables women to participate in the preparation and formulation of the municipal budget or not. The research findings partially fulfilled the aim and objective of the study. One would include this piece here about the internal and external avenues for participation. There is an internal process, where women who work in the municipality are involved in the preparation of the local council budget, although most of the women who work in the municipality denied this. The second type of participation was external participation where women outside the municipality, either from different organizations or as individuals, can participate.

### **5.4 Hypotheses or claims**

The first hypothesis explored in this research is that the municipality has budget councils and forums in different communities to ensure that women participate in the budget processes. In fact, the municipality does not have external budget

structures but does have internal structures that deal with budget issues. The research findings highlighted the fact that women do not fully participate, either internally or externally, and that no structures exist to assist women to participate in the budget preparation and formulation processes.

The second hypothesis, or claim, is that the most disadvantaged sectors are often unable to participate in the democratic process. Limited access to media, low education levels and geographic isolation from centres of government, not to mention constraints of time and money, preclude meaningful participation by women. This hypothesis was partially covered by the research because limited access to media came out strongly as a point where women are sidelined. The low education level of women was also highlighted by participants and was seen as a stumbling block to women's participation. Constraints of time and money were cited as one of the important challenges that face women.

The third hypothesis is that women are free to attend council standing committee meetings. Although the municipality mentions that there is no policy or individual from council who is standing in the way of women, senior councillors and senior staff members did not mention the challenges that are facing women in the preparation of local council budget. The research revealed that the times and venues at which these standing committees are held do not take into consideration women's needs and their domestic activities. Other factors that prevent women from attending these meetings include women not being allowed

by their partners to attend meetings, the burden of domestic responsibilities, poverty and the cost of transport.

The fourth hypothesis is that there is a dedicated budget for community participation in the budget process. The research revealed that there is a dedicated budget for community participation, and that the municipality hosts various budget hearings in the main city centres of the municipality.

### **5.5 Communication strategy**

It is clear from the research that the municipality relies mostly on the written medium when it communicates with its constituency. The distribution of newsletters in all areas, including deep rural areas, is questionable since there is no clear distribution strategy in place. There is no guarantee that residents will read newspapers, including the municipality newsletter, *UMhlathuze News*.

It was clear from interviews and focus group discussions that the communication strategy is intended for educated people who live in urban areas. The communication strategy for the municipality benefits highly educated individuals who can get all necessary information from the paper. They are therefore not obliged to go to these budget hearings, because the municipality gives a thorough breakdown of the budget through the print media. This excludes women who are illiterate or have limited educational skills.

## **5.6 Factors that come across as challenges to women and the municipality**

The most important challenge is that people who are in council come from all walks of life since there are wards throughout the municipality, yet they do not influence the decision-making in terms of ensuring that women participate meaningfully in the preparation of the local council budget. In effect, they fail to consider factors that inhibit women's participation in this process. It is clear that there is disagreement between the administration and councillors' discussions of the municipality about how the participation of women in the budget process should be addressed. One councillor mentioned that councillors are delaying the process and do not want to implement gender mechanisms. Another councillor recommended that the gender equality agenda should be run and led by councillors. This shows why there are no structures that will craft a way for women in order for women to participate in the preparation of the local council budget.

The other issue that came through very strongly was the issue of education. Participants in the research felt that women who are illiterate are not informed about their rights, including the right to participate in the preparation of the local council budget, and how to go about this. All stakeholders really believe that women from rural areas and townships do not have enough knowledge about the budget process to engage with it. Therefore, in the words of Methuen "UMhlathuze Municipality is not using an effective holistic community participation approach because community participation is more comprehensive

than simply actively helping people in a project, for instance through labour. It also involves community empowerment. Empowerment means the improvement of people's skills base so that they can become more effectively involved in the process of development. It also means that the community can make its own decisions and take action regarding its own needs and actual conditions. The community itself knows best what the prevailing conditions are and what problems are being experienced. This means that it knows best how to address these circumstances or problems facing them." There is no empowerment programme to assist women to understand budgetary issues, which would be less intimidating and more accessible.

It must also be mentioned that women are capable individuals who could master this process. They need to be trained and made familiar with processes. Empowerment and self-esteem interventions could also address women's tendency to elect men into positions of power. Targeting them as a sector would enable them to discuss issues without being afraid, and to learn from each other. The conclusion in terms of the form of participation used by the municipality, is one that Oakley P (1998: 6) has identified as participation through collaboration, where people do not actively and meaningfully participate in rural development, but are just informed of rural development programmes. While their collaboration is sought, there is no direct control of the programmes by them. This was evident during Enseleni and Empangeni budget hearings that the researcher attended,

where the municipality brought an already prepared budget for people to comment on.

Another critical issue is lack of commitment and inefficiency. Senior councillors of the ruling party and senior staff members tried to conceal this, but ordinary staff members and councillors from the opposition parties raised this issue. It was mentioned in one of the focus group discussions that the municipality called a meeting to address the budget and IDP, and officials failed to attend. No one from the municipality arrived to address the public. This situation shows that the municipal staff, especially senior staff members, lack commitment to community participation. It also confirms the opinion of the interviewees that senior management has used delaying tactics to prevent women from participating in the preparation of the local council budget, this despite clear legislation providing for community participation.

Still, on lack of commitment, participants mentioned that the municipality is sponsoring three community policing forums to the amount of R10 000. Senior management mentioned that women's organizations in and around UMhlatuze are not organized. In my interactions with focus groups, many organizations for women were discovered at grassroots level. The question which then arises is why these organizations are not sponsored, as is the Community Policing Forum. R10 000 could make a very big difference to these organizations. This is not to say that crime-combating processes are not important, but that there are also

other important issues like, participation in the preparation of local co. budget, that need to be taken seriously, because it impacts on the quality o. people's lives.

### **5.7 Framework for women's participation**

It is also important to relate findings to the framework for participation, discuss them and see what they provide. The framework articulates various structures and programmes that the municipality should have in place to function effectively, and should be able to involve women in the preparation of the local council budget. This framework recognizes council as an effective political structure that should have a committee responsible for women's issues. The findings revealed that there is no committee of this nature. It is surprising that 12 years into our democracy, such important structures, critical to the advancement of women, do not exist. It is very clear that the council is not implementing gender sensitive programmes. Contrary to this Budlender D (1997: 37) argues, "Every item in the government's budget must be examined for the differential impact it might have on women and men. Differential impact is possible and indeed likely because women and men occupy different places in the economy and society and perform different roles."



### **5.7.1 Civil society organizations**

Civil society is one of the crucial pillars of the framework for participation. The research depicts a weak presence of women's organizations at grassroots level in the rural areas and townships. Women are organized to specifically perform activities that are to do with daily living. The municipality is not targeting this sector but instead leaves out this critical and vibrant sector that could contribute effectively to the preparation of local council budgets. It is a myth that women are not visible. One could deduce that the municipality does not have a clear plan to involve women in the preparation of the local council budget. To support this analysis, the EThekweni Municipality Citizens Action Support Programme document (2004: 26) argues "that the role of civil society has been highlighted in the White Paper on Local Government. On the issue of service delivery Section F of the White Paper on Local Government outlines that: Municipalities will need to seek an appropriate mix of service delivery options, choices about delivery options should be guided by clear criteria such as coverage, cost, quality and socio-economic objectives of the municipality. Therefore, civil society has a very critical role in that it can engage the government from an independent point of view. Most importantly, is to note that civil society has been the voice of the voiceless in despotic regimes, where it champions the culture of human rights. In many instances it is civil society that has denounced corruption and unlawful practices within public services. In a context of local government, civil society organisations may play a role in a variety of ways. "

### **5.7.2 Policies**

As part of the framework it is critical that policy issues be discussed. It was clear from the findings that the uMhlathuze Municipality does not adhere to gender equality legislation and policies of the country. All participants agreed that the municipality does not specifically call meetings for women only. The municipality calls a meeting for all residents. The South African Constitution, Act No. 108 of (1996: 81) supports this municipal act of involving all citizens without differentiating various groups by stating that “local government must encourage the involvement of communities, community organizations in matters of government.” The Constitution set generic principles and guidelines, but it is critical to point out that there is enabling legislation and policy that regulates how the municipality should function, and provides guidelines about how the municipality should operate. UMhlathuze Municipality is not honouring section 17 (2), which stipulates that “mechanisms, processes and procedures for community participation must take into account the special needs of people who cannot read, people with disabilities, women and other disadvantaged groups.” The municipality is still investigating the possibility of drafting a gender policy.

### **5.7.3 Theories**

Theories are part of the framework, and it is critical for the researcher to discuss them. South Africa has opted for a system of representative democracy, a participatory form of democracy which is indeed grounded on the view that where people are not involved in the decisions that affect their lives, social policies and

political interventions are likely to fail. It is clear from findings that women are represented in council as councillors but one could not gauge the impact of their input during budget discussions. Women who serve in the administration occupy in the main junior positions. Participatory democracy in relation to the preparation of the local council budget does happen, but at a very superficial level. The researcher observed a budget hearing in Enseleni, where the budget items were prepared in advance. Women were not involved in the initial stages when the budget was in the process of being drafted. On the whole, people get to know about the budget only later when it is supposed to be passed. For example, in April and May 2005, uMhlathuze Municipality advertised its proposed budget in different newspapers and budget hearings were held for community members to make input into the process. At this point, it became apparent that the municipality ensured that women and their respective community members 'rubber stamp' what the municipality has agreed upon. This was evident when one participant was not happy with the construction of a swimming pool in Enseleni, and said that people were living in shacks and squatter camps and therefore houses were more important.

He further argued that a multi-purpose centre could be constructed to assist the community of Enseleni. One could tell from the reaction of the municipal officials that they were not happy with this point. They were very defensive, citing that the idea of the swimming pool was mentioned by people during the IDP process in 2000. One wonders and questions the value of budget hearing gatherings if

genuine contributions from ordinary citizens are not taken seriously. This also questions the notion of the depth and efficiency of our participatory democracy.

Another view pertaining to the swimming pool issue is that there were conflicts between different groups of people. Some wanted a pool and others did not want it. This is part of government difficult job to balance conflicts such as these. What participation can allow, however, is for some deliberation over whether a pool is priority. So the meeting could discuss this in detail and then make a collective recommendation to government.

### **5.8 Cultural issues**

There are cultural factors that inhibit women from participating in municipal processes. Female participants stated that some women feel that only men should take part in political issues like the preparation of the local council budget. Women will wait for a man to speak first in the budget hearing discussion. This fact needs to be understood and addressed by the people responsible for the administration of municipal processes, who largely do not understand how women live in the rural areas and townships. According to Colleen Lowe Morna (2004: 46) "A socialization version of the argument is that women have been brought up to regard politics as alien. Their lives and activities have always directed them away from activities of power. She also argues that "women often face a double day, balancing career and family responsibilities, thus limiting their opportunities for career advancement."

As part of the issues that were raised by participants in discussions it is also critical that cultural issues be discussed. Goetz in Budlender D (1999: 19) notes that while women's interests, like men's, vary according to their circumstances and identities by class, race, ethnicity, occupation, life cycle stage, and the fact that most women tend to be constrained in their life choices to a range of reproductive functions in the private sphere, marginal positions in public arenas of the economy and politics suggest that gender affects the way other social cleavages are experienced and hence generates specific interests.

This is to say that perceptions of women's role, by both men and women, coupled with women's traditional domestic responsibility, impedes their ability to participate in government processes. Women feel that men should be the ones who lead in political issues. All participants in the research agreed that women focus their attention on domestic work in order to assist their families. In contrast to this, men tend to undermine women. It is clear that the municipality is not promoting local democracy where both men and women could really see the importance of equality so that they will be able to encourage women to be involved in egalitarian programmes.

## **5.9 The relationship between the participation of women and addressing women's issues.**

The relationship between the participation of women and addressing women's issues is a complex one. The involvement of women will not automatically have a linear relationship to the more resolution of women's issues. One could argue that women might become more involved but simply reproduce power relationships in greater society in forums of participation. An alternative model could be that gender issues should be given higher priority on the agenda of participatory forums so that men and women together address these problems. After all while women are the ones marginalised through patriarchy, misogyny, the gendered nature of the economy, it is going to take the participation of men as much as women to address this. "In these participatory forums, ways for increasing women's effective participation in decision making must be highlighted. It is also important to strengthen the arguments for equal participation by women in decision making structures." Lowe Morna (2004: 255)

"Advocacy around women's increased representation in decision making that to date has concentrated on quantitative arguments should be augmented by qualitative arguments. Showing the difference that women make will not only strengthen the case for their representation, it will also contribute to the broader debates on good governance." Lowe Morna (2004: 255)

“No matter what actions are taken at a political level, women's equal participation in decision- making will only become the norm when it is accepted as such in the public mind.” Lowe Morna (2004:255)

## **5.10 Conclusion**

In concluding this chapter, it became clear that uMhlathuze Municipality does not have external budget processes and the internal processes that exist are not adequate. Women do not fully participate both internally and externally and also there are no structures that exist that assist women to participate.

The analysis also depicted that the burden of domestic responsibilities, poverty and cost of transport are other factors that prevent women from attending these meetings.

The analysis also reflected two critical issues, that the budget for community participation is intended for highly educated people who live in urban areas and secondly, that the communication strategy excludes women who are illiterate or have limited educational skills.

The analysis also depicted that women are capable individuals who could understand budgetary issues if they are empowered. The analysis further showed a lack of commitment by senior municipality staff to involve the women in the preparation of the local council budget.

The framework for women's participation in the preparation of the local council budget articulates various structures and programmes that the municipality should have in place to function effectively, and to be able to involve women in the preparation of the local council budget.

The analysis also depicted cultural factors that inhibit women from participating in municipal processes, and women participants shared their views that some women feel that only men should take part in political issues like the participation of the local council budget.



## **Chapter 6: Concluding remarks: Where to from here?**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter will summarise important findings of the research as a form of conclusion. This chapter will further discuss ways and means that the municipality could utilize in order to ensure that women do participate in the preparation of the local council budget. A short summary will be provided at the end of this chapter.

### **6.2 Where to from here?**

The first step in is to make sure that UMhlatuze local government makes its councils, officials and community sensitive to gender issues and gender relations.

The new Community Development Programme can assist by ensuring that women do participate in municipal processes. The address to the National Council of Provinces by President Thabo Mbeki on the 11 November 2003 gave birth to the Community Development Workers (CDW) programme, where he said that among the key strategies to meet the growth and development challenges of the Second Economy, is included the creation of the echelon of Community Development Workers to help build social cohesion in the Second Economy, and to help develop strategies and forge links that can transform the Second Economy.

Community Development Workers can assist officials in implementing municipality programmes (including the preparation of the local council budget) at ward level. Furthermore, municipalities should work with CDW in involving and conducting workshops that include the IDP and budget preparation and monitoring. In addition to this, the Enseleni Focus Group reiterated that: *“Women need to be trained because they are involved and are found in various organizations like development committees, school governing bodies, arts and craft organisations, tourism, church leaders, committees like gardening, beadwork, sewing, pensions, and sports councils. These link directly with the municipality focus areas, yet women’s committees do not link directly with the municipality.”*

Interviewees agreed that councillors should be trained and be comfortable with basic accounting and budgeting principles so that they have confidence in taking the budget issues out to the community. Furthermore, the municipality needs to provide gender training for councillors and senior and junior staff, to deepen understanding of these issues. This training should take place on an annual basis.

Civil Society Organizations in UMhlatuze Municipality should forge better working relationships and align themselves with non-governmental organizations like the South African Non-Governmental Organisation Coalition (SANGOCO),

the Centre for Public Participation (CPP), the Democracy Development Programme (DDP), the Community Law and Rural Development Centre (CLRDC), the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) and the Black Sash, so as to be able to raise issues that affect women in the local municipality. These organizations have links with all spheres of government and they can capacitate civil society in uMhlatuze to deepen understanding of public participation. They could also collaborate and forge links in terms of ensuring that the municipality is accountable to its citizens.

A women's forum needs to be formed inside the municipality. It should also include women from various community organizations, not necessarily from the municipality itself.

It is clear from the research that women are organized at the grassroots level therefore it is imperative that the municipality budget team targets women's clubs and committees. It is clear that such a target intervention is both required by legislative provisions in this regard, and would create an empowering, accessible space within which women can engage with the budget process.

Communities should identify suitable women representatives who could be recommended to the municipality for training in the way the municipality operates, as well as the IDP and budget process. Such basic training would enable more women to participate in the budget process. Ward councillors could

play a role in identifying key women participants for the training programme, who in turn can then disseminate the information to other women in their communities. Another way of identifying these women would be for the municipality to call all women's organizations and groups to come forward and register with the municipality, so that they could be informed and notified during the budget preparation stages of the municipality.

In addition to training, focus group discussions in Empangeni revealed that the council should identify and visit women's organizations, or conduct door-to-door explanations, in order to explain the importance of involving women in the preparation of the local council budget. Training could be strengthened and supplemented by such a process.

The municipality should ensure that there is access to budget data and reports, and ensure that this is made available to women's groups in a format and language that is accessible to them. This data would help to ensure that everyone has access to information about the budget and how the municipality works. Libraries should have a copy of all reports and a computer that will enable individuals to access information about the municipality's budget.

In order to influence internal participation of women in the preparation of the local council budget, women need to be recruited into higher positions of the municipality. In research entitled "Local Government and Gender: A reality

Check”, conducted by Mirjam van Donk (1998: 30) it was discovered that “when municipalities were questioned about whether they specifically tried to attract women candidates for a vacancy, only 16.7% responded affirmatively. An additional 16.7% of municipalities stated that they try to attract women in line with an Affirmative Action policy, but do not explicitly invite women to apply in their advertisements. Fifty percent of the municipalities that have adopted an Affirmative Action policy do not attempt to attract women candidates when a position needs to be filled. It is unclear from the responses whether Affirmative Action is understood to mean merely increasing the numbers of previously disadvantaged groups (black persons, disabled persons and women) or whether it is regarded as an important tool in organizational transformation.”

Political parties should ensure that they adopt a 50/50 campaign, including nominating women for ward councillor positions so that participation of women in local government can be improved. There must be discussions by various organizations on the position of women, the need for women to unite for a non-sexist post apartheid state, and the need for women to have a voice in the shaping of the new South Africa. We must remember that women in political parties were angry at being sidelined in the early part of the negotiation process. These women were from the United Democratic Front (UDF), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the South African Communist Party (SACP), the African National Congress Women’s League (ANCWL), the Azanian Peoples’ Organisation Women’s Wing, the Pan African Congress Women’s

Organization and the Workers of South Africa. The struggle for women should carry on and mobilize around this issue in ensuring that the 50/50 campaign is implemented in all structures of their municipality.

The approach of the municipality in engaging with community has so far been to treat residents as a homogenous group. The municipality should cater for various groupings including women, as required by legislation.

The municipality should change the time at which council meetings are held. These are mostly held at night, and women are not able to attend such meetings. Times of the meetings need to be negotiated with women and the community as a whole.

The municipality should ensure that they award tenders to grassroots women's organizations. The municipality needs to link the budget process with its local economic development initiatives, so that women will see the importance of being involved in the preparation of the local council budget.

One of the key policies of council that needs to be developed is gender equality. The municipality needs to be gender sensitive in all respects, including budget issues. This policy should ensure that a gender forum and gender desk are initiated. This policy should also ensure or devise ways to develop an

implementation strategy which will encourage the participation of unorganized individuals or groups.

In advancing the issue of participation of women in the preparation of the local council budget, the uMhlathuze Municipality must work with the Office of the Status of Women, found in the Office of the President, and in the Office of the Premier in each province. UMhlathuze Municipality must also work with uThungulu District Municipality unit that deals with gender, NGOs, CBOs as well as traditional authorities, including the wives of Amakhosi, to advance the issue of participation of women in the preparation of the local council budget. Such networking and partnerships would prevent municipalities from working in isolation on this issue, and enrich initiatives and interventions to strengthen women's participation in local governance. According to Albertyn C (1996: 6) in Agenda No.30, "The Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing placed the following obligation on Governments:

- Based on a strong political commitment, create a national machinery where it does not exist for the advancement of women at the highest level of government: It should have clearly defined mandates and authority. Critical elements would be adequate resources and the ability and competence to influence policy and formulate and review legislation. Among other things, it should perform policy analysis, undertake advocacy, communication, coordination and monitoring of implementation."

The municipality must develop campaigns, projects and programmes that are in line with Women's Day celebrations like 8 March (International Women's Day,), 9 August (National Women's Day), 15 October (International Rural Women's Day), 25 November to 10 December (16 Days of Activism) which will demonstrate that the municipality is in line with the new democratic ethos and committed to addressing issues of gender equality.

### **6.3 Concluding remarks**

In conclusion, the study investigated whether UMhlatuze Municipality enables women to participate in the preparation and formulation of the municipal budget or not. According to the evidence and analysis in the study, it is evident that women do not fully participate, either internally or externally, although there are structures in society that can assist women to participate.

The following contributed to limiting the participation of women: limited access to media, low education levels and geographic isolation from centres of government, not to mention constraints of time and money. All of these preclude meaningful participation by women.

The weak presence of women's organizations, poverty and illiteracy are the greatest impediment to women. The research further depicted the lack of



commitment to community participation by municipal staff, especially senior staff members.

It is therefore important that all role players utilize the findings of the study in order to improve the efficiency of the municipality. In conclusion, there is great potential within the sphere of local government to contribute to gender equality and uMhlathuze Municipality must adopt a gender sensitive approach, coupled with political commitment. Political commitment means that resources are made available for women in order to make it easy for them to engage with the preparation of local council budgets. Appropriate structures need to be set up to ensure that gender equality issues become part and parcel of the municipality's programme of action. The capacity of those given this responsibility must be enhanced and developed.

In closing, the uMhlathuze Municipality, through its leadership (which includes both councils and officials) must adopt values and principles that show commitment to women's empowerment and involvement of women in the preparation of local council budgets. Further, it must encourage municipal officials and councillors, community members, NGOs, CBOs, traditional structures, faith-based organizations, individuals, families and structures that are resistant and unreceptive to women's empowerment to seriously consider involvement of women in budget preparation processes.

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## 8. Annexures

### 8.1 Annexure A

#### **Consent form**

**Topic: The participation of women in the preparation of the local council budget**

#### **1. Procedures:**

If you agree to be part of the study I would ask you to confirm by signing below consent to participate in the above mentioned study.

#### **2. Confidentiality**

We will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you in any reports that I may publish. The records of this study will be kept in a secure place and only my supervisor and myself will have access to it.

#### **3. Voluntary nature**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate you are free not to answer any question that you may find uncomfortable or is deemed by yourself to be of a personal nature.

#### **4. Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information including the introduction letter about this project. I have asked questions and received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

**5. Contact details of participant**

Name of  
participant.....

Contact details of  
participant.....

Address of participant  
.....

Signature of  
participant:.....

Date.....

Name of  
researcher.....

Signature of researcher .....

Date.....

## 8.2 Annexure B

**THIS QUESTIONNAIRE HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO INVESTIGATE THE**

**PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PREPARATION OF LOCAL COUNCIL**

**BUDGET**

The information gathered will be treated as strictly confidential and will be used only for this academic purpose

Questions to be answered by both Councillors and Municipality staff

### **Question 1**

Sex

- Male
- Female

### **Question 2**

Educational Background

- No formal education
- No formal education but can read and write English
- Basic (Primary, Middle, Junior Secondary)
- Senior secondary
- Tertiary education

### **Question 3**

In your view what are the most important challenges facing your municipality in terms of involving women in the preparation of local council budget?

**Question 4**

How many times did your municipality call a meeting of women in order for them to participate in the preparation of local council budget?

**Question 5**

In what ways can the municipality facilitate the effective participation of women in the preparation of local council budget?

**Question 6**

In your opinion, what is your assessment of the performance of your municipality in involving women in the preparation of local council budget?

**Question 7**

How would you rate the participation of women in the preparation of local council budget?

**Question 8**

Does the municipality have a budget for citizen participation?

**Question 9**

In your opinion what are the some of the factors that inhibit the participation of women in the preparation of local council budget?

**Question 10**

In what ways do you think the participation of women can be encouraged at a grassroots level?

**Question 11**

What do you think are the areas where participation of women in budget preparation could be achieved?

Council

Community level

All levels

**Question 12**

What can be done to improve the participation of women in preparation of local council budget (at grass root's level)?

## 8.3 Annexure C

### Focus Group Discussion Guideline

#### ***Instructions***

There should be three focus group discussions:

Rate Payers Association Representatives (Women)

Community Development Workers

Enseleni Development Committee or Ward committee

1. Each group should have at least 8-12 members
2. Invitations will be sent out at least five days before the meeting
3. Researcher to facilitate and record the proceedings
4. General introduction of the researcher and the objective of the study should be done before the discussion begins
5. The main issues of discussion should be stated clearly
6. Discussion should not exceed two hours
7. Where a group is not able to complete the discussion during the session, a repeat could be done
8. Questions and suggestions from the participants about the research process should be recorded

#### **Questions**

The facilitator/ researcher should lead discussion on the following topics / questions

1. Do you know the uMhlathuze budget formulation process? How did you know about it ?
2. Why is women's participation in the preparation of local council budget important?



3. Do uMhlathuze community and other interest groups have the capacity to dialogue and engage in the preparation of the uMhlathuze local council budget?
4. What are the reasons for women that encourage them to participate in the local council budget preparation? Or what are the areas where women are stimulated to participate?
5. Is there any link between participation in the local council budget and benefits that women could enjoy?
6. In your view, what is the level of participation of women in the preparation of local council budget?
7. What channels do the women have to express themselves in relation to the local council budget preparation?
8. What enhances participation in the local council budget preparation?
9. What are the obstacles that women encounter in processes of engagement in the preparation of the local council budget?
10. How can the women become involved in the preparation of the local council budget?
11. What could be done to improve the participation of women in the preparation of local council budget?