



**Exploring the implementation and impact of developmental local  
government projects on socio-economic well-being of Sweetwaters  
Community UMsunduzi Local Municipality**

**BY**

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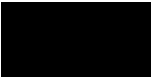
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17 JANUARY 2024

## DECLARATION

I, ...Ngubane Londeka Siphesihle....., declare that:-

1. The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
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3. This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Signature of candidate 

Date: 17 January 2024

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my single mother, who has supported me and believed in me in pursuing my studies, and to Sweetwaters uMsunduzi municipality for allowing me to engage with the community to understand how development from local government improves community well-being.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (JEREMIAH 29:11)*

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## ABSTRACT

In South Africa, since 1994, when the democratic government came into power, the development issue has been raised as one of the government's priorities. The government promised to transform the citizens' livelihoods through development and provide quality, effective and efficient services. Rural development was identified as one of the government's priorities to ensure community well-being. As a result, local governments were mandated to ensure rural development and provide quality service delivery to improve communities' living conditions and inclusion. However, rural communities still face challenges of exclusion and non-implementation of development programmes in South Africa. Therefore, this study explored the impact of local government developmental programmes or initiatives on the socio-economic and well-being of the Sweetwaters community in the uMsunduzi local municipality.

The research methodology adopted in this study was a qualitative approach. Therefore, fifteen (N=15) participants, including community leaders and senior community members, participated using in-depth semi-structured interviews. In addition, NVIVO computer software was used for data analyses. The study's findings revealed a high level of exclusion when developmental projects are implemented. Further, the issue of corruption from the community leaders also came up. The result also suggested that the local government does not contact communities to understand which project should be prioritized. Further, local governments implement what they feel is right and exclude the community in decision-making, resulting in no improvement or resentment from the community.

**Keywords:** Community, development, community participation, exclusion, socio-economic

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

CDWs	Community Development Workers
CV	Curriculum Vitae
EDOs	Estimated Delivery Date of Supply
EPWUP	Expanded Public Works Programme
IDP	Integrated Development Planning
LED	Local Economic Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPO	Non-Profit Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
.	

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.1.Introduction**

South Africa gained freedom in 1994, yet rural communities still struggle to receive development programmes to address basic needs, including sanitation and water supply, suitable technology, and infrastructure. In addition, they have faced various ongoing service delivery challenges due to a lack of local government accountability, backlogs, and neglect they endured during colonialization (Galvin, 1999, Chitiga-Mabugu and Monkam, 2013). Therefore, this chapter investigated the implementation of developmental local government projects and its impact on the community's well-being. Besides, local government initiatives are essential to foster growth and enhance community well-being. Further, these initiatives are implemented to accomplish sustainable development goals and improve community well-being. According to Molaba (2016), rural development in developing countries remains a struggle. Khunoethe et al. (2021) concur that the majority of the residents in the area do not progress much in terms of education, and that, on its own, limits their development of knowledge and understanding. As a result, it is evident as it can be observed that within the area, schools are dilapidated, no access to health services and facilities within reach, no proper sanitation, the roads are not up to standard, and the people in the community are not much educated especially the youth.

The South African Constitution articulates that local governments must promote social and economic development in their communities and participate in national and provincial development programs (South African Constitution, 1996). Therefore, the primary purpose of creating local governments was to bring the government's pulse and operations closer to the community (Department for Communities and Government, 2006). In addition, South Africa has good policies and one of the best constitutions around the world, but poor people living in rural areas are getting poorer every day. Besides, South Africa is one of the well-recognized nations that has successfully hosted major events, such as the World Cup in 2010, which contributed to improving the economy (Matsuoka De Arago, 2015). Events such as the 2010 FIFA World Cup give the incentive to create infra-structure, promote international exposure and increase tourism and business alliances. It is also a way to speed investments in certain areas and infra-structure that otherwise would be forgotten or would not pass through the political process (Barclay, 2009). However, people living in rural areas are losing hope daily

to their local government because of the slow pace at which rural development has been approached.

Development policies in many developed and developing countries seek to improve the living standards of low-income people in rural areas (Botes and Van Rensburg, 2000). In addition, the objective of Local Economic Development (LED) policy is to enhance the economic potential of an area to enhance its economic prospects (Koma, 2013). However, most development projects do not succeed without involving community members where these projects are implemented (Dipela and Mohapi, 2021). The idea of involving community members in development projects is not just a best practice but a fundamental aspect of responsible and effective development work. It helps ensure projects are relevant, impactful, and sustainable in the long run (Molaba, 2016). However, Phologane (2014) highlights that active and dedicated participation of the key stakeholders in the design and implementation of projects, especially those at the grass-roots level, contributes significantly to the sustainability of developmental activities. This is achieved through increased ownership and more effective use of inputs (Phologane, 2014) further argued. Everatt and Gwagwa (2005) maintain that in most cases, it is in rural areas where development projects need to be implemented because that is where development is ideally required. Likewise, for development initiatives to succeed, the community needs to be involved in every aspect the development projects within their area. Thus, community participation in rural development should include sharing all aspects of the development process (Clearly, 2008).

## **1.2. Background**

The primary objective of developmental local government initiatives is to enhance community living standards by addressing their fundamental necessities and fostering economic growth (Abrahams, 2018). KwaZulu Natal is the second-largest province in South Africa, with the highest rural population (Statistics SA, 2022). The people in rural areas live in poor conditions exacerbated by the poor levels of service provisions and non-development programmes. In addition, it is characterized by a high incidence of poverty, unemployment, especially among the youth, lack of quality education, poor infrastructural services, and a high rate of crime (Ngumbela et al., 2020). As a result, the rural area's challenges were identified post-1994, and

policy formulation had taken place. However, the situation for the rural communities has not changed much (Ngumbela et al., 2020).

Non-implementation of developmental programmes and poor service delivery in rural areas of most African continents have been a serious problem since the colonial days. For example, the protest wave in poor rural areas results from socio-economic issues that increase poverty, including the local government's failure to deliver service (Alexander, 2010). In addition, other grievances have included dissatisfaction with local councils and administrations as they are accused of being unresponsive to community needs and corruption (Sithole, 2021).

### **1.3.Problem statement**

According to (Sithole, 2021), when South Africa gained freedom in 1994, it signalled the end of a racially based local government system and the beginning of an era where all South Africans had a role to play in development. However, rural communities have been neglected, and even during the current democracy, rural areas are not getting much attention for efficient development (Macanda, 2014). Although the implementation of development programmes is guided by legal frameworks such as the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) framework, there are issues over disjointed strategies, insufficient stakeholder engagement, and low community ownership (Asmal et al., 2011). Kamara (2021) contends that developmental initiatives frequently favour wealthier groups of society while disregarding marginalized groups and rural areas. There is general agreement that even if community-based development projects adopt the bottom-up approach, they still need support from external development agencies (Narayan, 2020). However, most rural communities do not have the expertise or know-how to assess the credibility of organizations and, therefore, they are vulnerable to exploitation and project failure due to mismanagement of funds, nepotism, and substantial corruption (Cope et al., 2016).

According to Macanda (2014), community members have been undermined by not being involved in assessing community needs, and, in some areas, needs assessment has not preceded the introduction of local developmental initiatives. This contributed to the slow pace of progress. He further argued that many initiatives had been initiated by unscrupulous outsiders who infiltrated rural communities to take advantage of the villagers' dire circumstances by promising them employment. These individuals acted out of self-interest to enrich themselves rather than a desire to respond to the needs and concerns of rural communities. Thus, most

local developmental initiatives were short-lived and left community members devastated. Such experiences instilled fear and mistrust, hence the community's scepticism towards anyone wanting to initiate new initiatives in their area; an example of this is the local municipalities of South Africa, which are characterized by and faced with mammoth challenges of high poverty and unemployment levels, poor or lack of services, stagnant local economies, shortage of skills required to propel local economic development, lack of administrative capacity and ineffective implementation of policies. Cope et al. (2016) concur that local government in South Africa confronts several difficulties, particularly the lack of capacity to implement and complete development initiatives in the communities they serve. However, they have a constitutional obligation to play a critical role in promoting social and economic development in terms of section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 and the White Paper on Local Government of 1998, which clearly entrenches the developmental duties of municipalities.

This study investigates the implementation of developmental local government projects and their impact on the community's well-being in Sweetwater's rural area of Pietermaritzburg. According to Makofane and Gray (2007), 76% of the population resides in formal houses. The number of households living in formal dwellings across the country has increased from 76% in 2002 to 80% in 2014 (Statistics SA, 2016). While 4.9% of the communities live in informal houses, 12.3% of the population resides in traditional dwellings without adequate housing. In addition, a further 130,577 houses were built with government subsidies between 1994 and 2004. Only 2% of urban houses are without electricity, while 38.7% of rural houses are not electrified; 75.5% of households use electricity for lighting and 28.3% for heating; 29.7% of households still use wood for cooking. There is an insufficient supply of clean water and sanitation facilities, with only 11.6% of households having taps in their dwellings and 82.3% without flush or chemical toilet facilities. Only 13.1% of households have a local authority refuse-removal service. There are also insufficient educational facilities; just over a fifth of the population has no education, while 80% is literate (Stats, S.A, 2020).

#### **1.4.Rationale for the research project**

The rationale for choosing this study was informed by the fact that both rural and urban areas are undergoing a process of improving socio-economic and community well-being. As a result, this study investigated the implementation of developmental local government initiatives to fill

in gaps affecting the success of development initiatives and propose recommendations to enhance the success of those local government initiatives. Further, the researcher of this study grew up and lived in a rural area, where she has seen the challenges experienced by the community due to the lack of development programmes, resulting in increased poverty and unemployment, among others. The Department of Agriculture (2023) developed the following pillars driving rural development and revitalization of the rural economy in South Africa.

**Figure 1: Six Pillars driving rural development and revitalization of the rural economy in South Africa**



Source: Integrated Rural Development Sector Strategy (2023:11-12)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Integrated Rural Development Sector Strategy (2023:11-12)

The above pillars were developed in the National Development Plan to drive rural development, emphasizing the necessity of infrastructure to expedite economic expansion, foster inclusive growth, and enhance employment opportunities, thus improving the community's well-being and the economy (Integrated Rural Development Sector Strategy, 2023). However, compared with the current conditions in rural areas, it is clear that our local government still has much to do to close the gap and improve rural development.

### **1.5. Specific Aim of the study**

This study aims to explore the implementation of developmental local government projects and their impact on the community's well-being: A case study of Sweetwaters UMsunduzi Municipality.

### **1.6.Objectives of the study**

- To identify and assess the developmental local government projects implemented in Sweetwaters community.
- To explore the role of developmental local government projects in enhancing the socio-economic well-being in Sweetwaters community
- To explore the enablers and barriers affecting the implementation of developmental local government projects in Sweetwaters community.
- To investigate the impact of the developmental local government initiatives on community well-being in Sweetwaters community.

### **1.7.Research Questions**

- What are the developmental local government initiatives projects in Sweetwaters?
- What is the role of developmental local government projects to enhance the socio-economic wellbeing in Sweetwaters?
- What are the enablers and barriers affecting the implementation of initiatives in Sweetwaters?
- How does the developmental local government projects impact the community's well-being in Sweetwater?

### **1.8. Significance of the Study**

The study might help the Sweetwaters community and relevant role players to participate in development projects. It might also enable them to realize the significance of community participation and understand the barriers to community participation, its advantages, necessary structures, and improvements needed to ensure sustainable development. In addition, this hopes to encourage community participation in the development projects within their community. Besides, the study will benefit the local government and the community of Sweetwaters by improving poor living conditions in rural areas (Shunglu et al., 2022). This study focused on Sweetwaters, a rural community in KwaZulu-Natal, to investigate the effects of developmental local government programmes on socio-economic well-being. Despite the numerous problems rural communities face, this research aims to provide a clear understanding of the impact of these projects. The results will assist in developing policy suggestions based on evidence to improve development programme implementation, maximize societal advantages, and ensure sustainable advancement and inclusion to improve community well-being.

### **1.9. Limitations of the study**

The study's major limitation was that it was conducted in one rural community. Further, lack of funds was also a limiting factor as the study required a lot of travelling to achieve the desired objectives. Moreover, the researcher had to extend the estimated time to complete data collection and use more than the estimated budget to achieve the desired objectives of his study.

### **1.10. Delimitation of the study**

The study focused on implementing developmental local government projects and how they improve the socio-economic and well-being of rural communities and community participation in development projects at Sweetwaters municipality, which is under uMsunduzi Municipality. The study participants were male and female residents of the researched area, aged between 18 and 55.

#### **1.10.1 Definition of operational terms**

- 1. Community:** Tshikwatamba (2004) defines a community as a cluster of people living together and sharing common cultures and values. Probert et al. (2022) concur that community may refer to a cultural, ethnic, or language group or a group of persons with

the same or similar interests. The qualities and characteristics of the given definition by different authors benefit what the community of Sweetwaters Municipality is made of.

2. **Development:** Todaro and Smith (2012) define development as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of poverty. Further, Gegeo (1998) defines development as a process of growth springing from within, which involves a growing individual and collective self-reliance and focuses not only on material and economic needs but also on emotional, ethical, and political empowerment.
3. **Participation:** Participation is an active process by which beneficiaries influence the direction and execution of a development project to enhance their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance, or other values they cherish (Mansuri and Rao, 2012a). In addition, Westergaard (1986) defines participation as collective efforts to increase and exercise control over resources and institutions on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from control. This definition points toward a mechanism for ensuring community participation.
4. **Community Participation:** According to Gwala et al. (2015), community participation is a process that gives communities a chance to choose their course. In addition, they add that equipping the grassroots level with the skills they need to negotiate development delivery systems and make educated judgments about their development needs and objectives is also important. Mchunu and Theron (2014) define community participation as creating opportunities that give people of a community a chance to actively participate in and influence development endeavour procedures and reap equitable benefits from those endeavours' financial success.
5. **Development Project:** According to Wideman (2000), a project is a novel undertaking to create a new product or service, the delivery of which signals completion and begins

when resources are dedicated to its specific goal. Therefore, the community should define their needs, not their development agencies (Mendes, 2009). Given how the development project is being described, the researched area and the residents do not fit within the above-mentioned description of the development project.

6. **Well-being:** According to Wiseman and Brasher (2008), well-being is a state of integration and balance of all the components of the human being: body, mind, and soul. Only when these components are balanced and harmonized can they be transformed into a full human being able to realize one's potential. Likewise, community well-being is essential to the wellbeing of the individual. As the 1986 Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion makes clear, to reach a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, an individual or group must be able to identify and realize aspirations, satisfy needs, and change or cope with the environment.

### 1.10.2. Chapter Outline

**Chapter 1:** The introductory chapter in this section will introduce the reader to the issue being explored. This chapter states the aim and objectives, the rationale of the research, and an overview of the study.

**Chapter 2:** Chapter two will provide the reader with a comprehensive literature review of the problem under investigation.

**Chapter 3:** This chapter will outline the selected theoretical or conceptual framework, which will be aligned with the aim of the study.

**Chapter 4** covers the research process undertaken, design, and methodology. This chapter includes the samples, location of the study, data collection methods, and data analysis.

**Chapter 5:** This chapter concludes the research by providing findings and the summary of the research discussion.

**Chapter 6:** this chapter concludes on the findings of the research while also stating recommendations. This chapter outlines major findings on the challenges, level of community participation, and the strategies used for community participation in community development.

## **1.11 Conclusion**

This chapter outlined and explained the overview of the study. The introduction and background of the study were discussed, followed by the problem statement, where the reasons for conducting this study were highlighted. The aim and desired objectives were also highlighted, along with the research questions guiding the study. In addition, this study's relevance was also highlighted, followed by the definition of terms and how the study was structured. The study investigated community participation in community development projects in the rural area of Sweetwaters uMsunduzi Municipality.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

The concept of local government development has become increasingly influential in recent years, especially in the South African context. This is due to the need for local and community-led development during the rebuilding process after colonialism (Nagar, 2022). Therefore, this chapter presents a literature review related to the researched topic. This review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of what is known or what has been done about the area and where knowledge gaps exist (Venter, 2019). Therefore, such a literature review helps to provide a framework for establishing the study's importance and a benchmark for comparing the results with other findings (Mumba and van der Waldt, 2023). Auriacombe (2016), (Chigbu et al., 2023) argued that the purpose of a literature review is to determine the extent to which the topic under study is in the existing body of knowledge. Therefore, this literature review provided a theoretical background to this study investigation and has helped establish the links between what I am proposing to examine and what has already been studied. This chapter discusses the global and local overview of developmental local government and different types of developmental local government projects that relate to development, followed by an elaboration of elements that impede communities from participating in development projects. In addition, the chapter will provide a discussion regarding the barriers affecting the implementation of these projects in rural areas.

Furthermore, the chapter will conclude by presenting the statutory provision of community participation in implementing developmental local government projects and the impact such projects have on the well-being of communities in rural areas. In addition, how have rural transformation policies of the local government sphere to improve service delivery and serving all South Africans, instead of minorities who had benefited from the system of apartheid by being afforded first preference, been conceptualized, and what are the outcomes for those at the bottom of the rural socio-economic and political pyramid? And what the role of traditional leadership is in the implementation of developmental projects. Although ideas of participatory development still play a significant role in rural development interventions twenty years later, the actual details and practical application of the government's participatory approach require clarification (Khambule, 2018). Additionally, even though substantial financial resources are

directed into rural areas, the quality of life for rural residents has not improved much (Aman et al., 2022).

## **2.2. Concepts of the implementation of developmental local government projects in South Africa**

### **2.2.1 Developmental local government**

The White Paper on Local Government Africa (1998) defines developmental local government as local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic, and material needs and eventually improve their quality of life. Further, Koma (2014) defines developmental local government as one that puts economic development as the top priority and can design effective instruments to promote such an objective. Therefore, the instruments identified include, inter alia, forging new formal institutions, weaving formal and informal networks of collaboration between citizens and officials, and utilizing new opportunities for trade and profitable production. Moreover, Developmental local government is not constrained by ideology but is rather able to switch gears effortlessly from market-to government-directed growth or vice versa, depending on the contingent circumstances. Often, it combines both market and state direction in a synergistic manner when the opportunity beckons (Mohale, 2020).

Van der Waldt (2015) states that the purpose of developmental local government is to solve common national development problems, create new development opportunities, and achieve common national development goals. In addition, he suggests that this should be done through local stakeholder involvement and community participation that fosters the principles of local democracy. Moreover, Developmental local government is about creating a better future for the communities by promoting local socio-economic development programmes and projects. As a result, it requires strong and capable institutions, systems, strategies, policies, processes, and procedures to promote grassroots development (Kroukamp, 2006).

De Visser (2009) argued that local government had survived a fundamental restructuring and made great strides toward extending service delivery and development to marginalised communities. In thirteen years, local government has emerged from being an institution that was subservient, racist, and illegitimate to an institution with democratically elected leadership, constitutional status, and a developmental agenda (Koma, 2010). On the other hand, as

expectations of local government service delivery have risen, it has become evident that the broader transformation of local government is by no means complete (Cerna, 2013).

### **2.2.2 Developmental Local Government projects in South Africa**

The new South African government prioritized rural development policies that addressed economic inequalities in May 2009 (The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, 2012). The newly elected South African administration aimed to ensure that everyone in South Africa, even rural residents, benefited from the country's rapidly expanding and rising economy (Leibbrandt et al., 2010). Many rural development policies have been devised to accomplish that goal; an example of this is through the Rural Development Programme (CRDP) by the Department of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), which the largest set of jobs had been created through the National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC), the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and the Community Work Programme (CWP) and the establishment of food gardens for household food supply and income generation had improved access to food in rural communities (Rural Development and Land Reform, 2015). However, putting effective rural development projects into practice has proven difficult; it takes time to forge consensus and prioritize policies for piloting and expanding programs (Ogunleye-Adetona and Oladeinde, 2013). In order to improve their capacity for organizing and implementing local government programs that empower and promote rural development, other researchers have carried out various studies to comprehend successful rural development and poverty reduction cases (Fodo, 2018).

In addition, the poorest residents of rural communities were considered to need assistance from rural development programs to alleviate social and economic disparities (Peng et al., 2023). Likewise, as part of rural development, South Africa learned from the developed countries with the purpose of establishing effective policies. The government intended to address inequality and reduce poverty through rural development and ensuring the implementation of programmes to address economic and social challenges (Govender, 2018). Adedayo (2013) adds that though self-help and rural development have been defined and conceptualized variously by different scholars, its mode of operation is made up of three essential elements: participation by the people as well as local organization management ability; the provision of technical and other services in ways which encourage initiative and therefore strengthening the community as an entity. Therefore, improving living standards and popular participation are thus central to the

concept of rural and community development (Babatunde et al., 2013). Thus, successful developmental local government projects in rural development in South Africa will imply the acceleration of the pace of development in rural areas through the provision of basic needs and necessary amenities like water supply, electricity, job opportunities, development of settlement schemes, and feeder roads (Macanda, 2014). As a result, the next section will provide a global overview of developmental local development initiatives in different regions of the world.

### **2.2.3 The role of Traditional Leadership on the implementation of Developmental Local Government projects**

Traditional leaders' core function is to lobby government services and other agencies for the development of their areas, as outlined in the White Paper on Local Government (s41:132). There are traditional communities that have no basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity (Tsoko, 2014). In addition to these are social problems of crime and unemployment which is a result of under development (Tsoko, 2014) further stated. Although there is a governmental focus on increasing developmental projects and channelling funds through structures, such as co-operatives, these projects are not monitored and have very little sustainability (Nemukula, 2019). Traditional leaderships are not fulfilling their core functions as community leaders (Wiseman, 2022). Instead, they are misusing their powers for their own benefit by hijacking the existing projects in their communities. The researcher observed that as a general trend in local municipalities, a positive relationship between the community, the traditional leadership and the local municipality management is lacking. Traditional leaders are accused of not performing according to their roles and functions as outlined in the Traditional Leadership Framework Act 41, of 2003. Developmental Local Government, according to Ntsebeza (2020), thus seeks to democratise local government by introducing the notion of elected representatives even in rural areas, but also to transform local governance, with a new focus on improving the standard of living and quality of life of previously disadvantaged sectors of the community.

### **2.2.4 A global Overview of developmental local government**

Local governments aim to bring the government closer to the people at the grassroots level to engage collectively in planning and executing social and economic projects in the community. Literature discussing developmental local government and its characteristics has found

evidence of its implementation in different regions worldwide (Eisenstein, 2019; Fukuyama, 2014; Kemp, 2011). Therefore, developmental local government is a government of a city, county, parish, township, municipality, borough, board, or district closest to the people, and where people are inclusive in its processes of governance, service delivery, and sustainable socio-economic development, that is central in creating jobs for the masses (Binza, 2013). Besides, all the countries in the world have this level of government, but they differ in terms of what (nature) and how (or the extent) which improves the lives of the people it governs and provides local public goods and services (Fakuyama, 2014). Globally, countries like the United States of America realized that local government, as the sphere closest to the people, needs to transform itself in line with the development agenda of the state so that the government can assist with developmental initiatives and programmes implemented to render services for community members especially those living in rural areas (Kemp,2011). As a result, in an attempt to cope with internationally rooted service delivery and socio-economic problems, local governments consider it imperative to undertake a new role: sustainable local economic development (LED). As a result, the World Bank (2011) defines local economic development as a process by which public, business, and non-governmental sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and sustainable employment generation. Moreover, Developmental Local government through LED would be able to build up the economic capacity of a local area to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all by undertaking a collaborative, strategically planned process to understand and then act upon its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Mashamaite and Lethoko, 2018).

Koma (2014) added that LED is an important strategy to boost local economies to address the high poverty, unemployment, and inequalities facing most communities. In Mexico, LED has become a widespread practice, with almost half of the country's municipalities integrating LED in their planning in order to promote local development (Rogerson, 2013). In Uganda, LED policy was implemented after the adoption of the decentralization system in the mid-1980s to further deepen the decentralization process, eradicate poverty, and ensure inclusive, sustainable, and equitable economic growth and development at the local government level (Karyeija and Kahika, 2017).

Likewise, Fukuyama (2014) characterizes the legacy of colonialism in Africa as unique compared with other former colonies globally. For example, in Latin America, the colonizers (Spain and Portugal) managed to replace indigenous systems of governance with authoritarian, mercantilist political systems. In Africa, the colonial rulers succeeded in undermining existing

traditional sources of authority while failing to implant anything like a modern state that could survive the transition to independence (Fukuyama 2014). This left the African continent with weak political institutions that lacked capacity after decolonization. The historical factors that shaped local governance, especially local authorities created for blacks, are classic examples of the legacy that Fukuyama (2014) refers to. Therefore, becoming aware of historical factors may not be difficult; however, a strategy to redress matters most, which is why local governments in the twenty-first century have become centres for developmental agendas (Mihai and Iatu, 2020). As a result, they are now required to go beyond the basics of service delivery. Eisenstein (2019) found that in Zambia, local government is seen through the town mayor to the councillors and market chairmen, among others. As a result, they reach the communities and act as a link between the people and the government.

#### **2.2.5. Brief overview of developmental local government transition in South Africa**

This section discusses the overview of the progress of developmental local government in South Africa. Ramodula and Govender (2021b) Indicated that the local government elections held on 5 December 2000 were the first fully democratic local elections in South Africa. This led to the disintegration of old apartheid divisions and the drawn of new municipal boundaries. The vision and policies for how local government should work was initially set out in the government (White Paper, 1998), and all laws and procedures are written in terms of this policy, emphasizing the developmental role of local government. The developmental role was also acknowledged in the Constitution (1996), which states that the government must take reasonable steps, within available resources, to ensure that all South Africans have access to adequate housing, health care, education, food, water, and social security (White Paper, 1998). Therefore, this means developmental local government should target especially those members and groups within communities that are most often marginalised or excluded, such as women, disabled people, and very poor people (White Paper, 1998).

Through the leadership of the developmental local government, basic service delivery has been extended to the marginalised communities to a degree unprecedented in South Africa's history and at a pace noted and commended internationally. For example, (Simpson et al., 2019) demonstrated that access to water supply increased from 59% of total households in 1994 to 86% by April 2007. He also found that access to sanitation increased from 48% to 73% over the same period. Furthermore, in 1994, 30% of houses in South Africa had access to electricity,

but by 2006/2007, this figure had increased to 73%, and within the same period, a total of 2,243 million houses were delivered at an average of 249,290 units per annum (Simpson, 2019).

Muloongo et al. (2005) stated that one of the cruel curiosities of South Africa is that the rural poor do not see agriculture as an answer to their plight; only 4% of the incomes of the poorest come from this source. Through combined and uneven development in which the most modern features of society are articulated with the most backward in medium-developed countries, the cities absorb the best educated and most energetic layers of the rural population and leave the rural areas to the women, children, and elderly (Hemson et al., 2004). This does not mean that the rural areas have lost their capacity to carry millions of South Africa's citizens, but it does mean that special provisions must be made to ensure that a social dynamic comes into play to carry this sector forward into the modern world. In addition, modernization to date has been associated with forms of state and economic oppression; now, new socio-political initiatives must be undertaken to empower and develop (Otto and Ukpere, 2014).

A considerable proportion of the population lives in poverty in the rural areas. Some 70% of people with low incomes live in these areas. The non-urban population is estimated to be 45% of the total population, and 85% live in impoverished former homelands. Hemson et al. (2004) articulated that many other households have intimate ties to rural areas through the migrant labour system. In addition, consistent developmental projects were implemented to introduce modern services, particularly to the former homeland areas that have been neglected and isolated. Clean water services have been extended to more than half the rural population, clinics and schools are visible symbols of state provision, and electricity pylons criss-cross the landscape (Ukper, 2014).

However, Hemson et al. (2004) suggest that this extension of services is widely welcomed, but difficulties appear. Without an increase in rural livelihoods and income, the most significant services are threatened by the inability to pay and stay connected. Development reaches its sustainable limits. Therefore, the principal lag in the process of service provision and the other related to capacity and strategy. Rural local government, with few notable exceptions, is something new in South Africa, and the capacity to implement and manage schemes and programs is only now being created. Line departments are passing on responsibilities to the local government, which they are not always pleased to take on because no financial and human resources are available to manage them (Mashamaite and Lethoko, 2018).

## **2.3 The enablers and barriers affecting the implementation of initiatives in South Africa**

### **2.3.1. The enablers affecting the Implementation of initiatives in rural South Africa**

This section will, in detail, discuss and give examples of the enablers of the success and progress in implementing developmental local government initiatives in South Africa. In 1994, South Africa stood at the threshold of democracy with optimism and a lot of goodwill from all over the world. History has recorded how many African countries fared after independence (Dimkpa, 2015). Further, most of them evicted their European colonizers and then allowed politicians and military rulers to be autocratic, which started the slow slide into poverty and/or civil war and, finally, helplessness for the masses. As a result, under the leadership of the first democratically elected president, Nelson Mandela, South Africa took the route of national reconciliation and peace and slowed transformation towards an economic ideal that would provide all its citizens with a better life (Heldring and Robinson, 2012).

According to George (2000), one of the first steps the government took to provide an opportunity to rural African communities was setting up the Reconstruction and Development Programme, to which a large amount of money was allocated. However, it was soon realized that those programmes were not the solution to the problems of underdevelopment as value for money spent was not being achieved. Besides, the programme could not monitor each of the projects' allocated money as there was a lack of capacity to carry out projects successfully, which brought about a lack of accountability. Cameron (1996) concurs that the most detrimental was that planning for sustainability was not given importance, and project implementers did not have a stake in the projects. These were some of the reasons for the projects not achieving their aims.

Since 1994, South Africa's ability to combat extreme poverty has improved thanks to a progressive tax system that supports social aid distribution and the provision of free basic services, such as the elimination of Value Added Tax (VAT) on certain food items, the elderly pension, child grants, orphan grants, subsidized water and electricity, and the designation of more public schools as fee-free (Matona, 2019). A few of the local government development initiatives that South Africa has implemented include land reform and agriculture, free higher education, and promoting entrepreneurship. As a result, the South African government has started initiatives to teach people with no prior business experience how to start their businesses (Mamokhere, 2022). Moreover, the South African government also established a social wage that includes free basic services for low-income households, free primary healthcare, social

protection, and RDP housing. Additionally, as a sign of commitment to eliminating poverty in the nation, South Africa has been raising its social grant spending, which reached R164.9 billion in the 2016–17 fiscal year and reached R209.1 billion by 2019/20 (Friendman, 2021) .

Between government and conventional market forces, forces sometimes need to be overlooked, using strategies that are valuable in the economic arena and important with regard to the sustainable development of land, upliftment of people, and the creation of job opportunities (Waston, 2009). Despite rapid urbanisation, rural areas still host the poorest people. Working to alleviate this poverty requires critical interventions on an ongoing basis with the backing of both the public and private sectors (Friedman and Bhengu, 2008).

### **2.3.2. Developmental local government Projects for Rural Development**

According to Mughal (2017), community development projects have benefited many of the world's poorest rural areas, creating new opportunities for some of the most vulnerable people. Therefore, projects range from the provision of vital healthcare facilities to the development of human resources through the implementation of educational programmes tailored to meet the specific needs of a particular community. Likewise, the financial, technical, and advisory community agriculture projects have also been beneficial in many areas, improving farming methods and enhancing rural farmers' abilities to make the most efficient use of the available land (Danso-Abbeam et al., 2018).

Projects such as municipal housing, education programmes for rural areas, and improvements to healthcare provision need to be implemented by those with the appropriate resources, qualifications, knowledge, and finance (Maphumulo and Bhengu, 2019). However, there are hundreds of ideas for projects that could be implemented in the local community to improve the quality of life for some of the more vulnerable members of society at little to no cost, regardless of the location. In addition, they can bring real change in the communities, especially at the local community level, simply by offering time in an organized way to help the community be part of the initiatives (Mughal, 2017).

Community projects can be big or small. They can be implemented in developing countries or used to help vulnerable people in developed nations. No matter what type, size, or shape of community project they choose to get involved in, the facts show that community engagement improves lives in every region of the world (Haldane et al., 2019). However, several challenges

affect the successful implementation of development local government initiatives in South Africa and elsewhere, as discussed in the next section of this chapter.

### **2.3.3. Challenges affecting the implementation of developmental local government projects in South African municipalities.**

South Africa has taken a significant and positive stride towards the promise of developmental local government. However, most municipalities still face significant challenges in implementing developmental local government initiatives (Tshishonga, 2021). Therefore, challenges affecting some local government initiatives within the municipalities include the lack of effective participation by local community members in the decision-making process or within the planning and implementation of the developmental local government initiatives (Netshimbo, 2017). Besides, community members are the only ones aware of the problems they face and what services they need to be delivered for the development of their community; however, corruption and maladministration exist in all the spheres of government and seem to be the main impediments to growth and development of many developmental local government initiatives in rural municipalities (Lewis, 2017).

The study conducted by Myeni (2005) found that there is a bias in developmental local government. This is partly attributed to urban constituencies being more organized than rural communities. However, he further explained that the political marginalization of rural areas gave little space for the rural poor to influence government policies and developmental initiatives (Myeni, 2005). As a result, these conditions call for strategies that would provide rural people with basic skills to interpret local government policies, and this should consider the high rate of illiterate that prevails in these areas (Leibbrandt et al., 2010).

Another major challenge is the lack of capacity-building opportunities to enhance community participation, weak administrative capacity coupled with poorly trained staff, and cadre deployment of unskilled personnel within rural municipalities who fail to implement developmental local government initiatives successfully (Tshishonga, 2016). For example, the project entirely depends on unskilled labourers for implementation; therefore, this causes challenges in the project implementation. Hence, using unskilled individuals is normal and not to question the opinion of the superior (Koma, 2014).

The challenge of financial sustenance is mostly created by local government initiatives failing to institute proper mechanisms to ensure they collect their revenue accordingly (Glasser and

Wright, 2020). For instance, municipalities rendered services in 2013/2014 and defaulted by more than R93.4 billion (SA Local Government Research Centre, 2014). As a result, without appropriate funding, it becomes difficult for local government initiatives to render services. In addition, the capacity to deliver regular and constant services becomes compromised. Further, though lack of funding is a major issue, the situation is worsened by unethical practices common in most municipalities, including appointing service providers influenced by politicians, thereby influencing the accurate supply chain processes (Madumo, 2015a). In some municipalities, municipal managers (accounting officers) have been suspended by the municipal council for failing to appoint service providers that the politicians favoured (SA Local Government Research Centre, 2014).

Lack of Accountability: from the community side, no one is informed enough to question the standard of the developmental local government initiatives under implementation because the project leader does his or her will to implement the project (Maropo, 2018). On the contrary, there is a lack of monitoring on the government's side to hold the project leader or implementer accountable, thus leading to a lack of service delivery (Tshishonga, 2021) further concurred. According to Tshishonga and Mbambo (2008), the challenge of service delivery is daunting, considering that demand for service exceeds the resources available. Therefore, the local government's failure to fulfil its mandate and perform effectively has led to widespread disillusionment, which results in communities losing trust in the institution (Siddle, 2011). Thus, people's distrust of local government has led to democratic deficit and participation fatigue, which (Siddle, 2011) describes as growing tired of the rhetoric of participation and empowerment without any material gain.

The Black Economic Empowerment initiative is the prime example of a developmental local government initiative that was implemented Since the inception of democracy in 1994 and partly failed due to challenges it faced being placed in rural municipal areas (Ponte et al., 2007). The Black Economic Empowerment initiative was introduced to combat and or reverse past economic inequalities. The program's focus was to empower blacks, in general, Africans. Rural areas predominantly occupy South Africa; hence, the centre of attention has shifted to rural development regarding empowerment (Staal, 2019). However, this initiative has been succeeding, but there are challenges facing the programme in the sense that those challenges outweigh the benefits. Even though the initiative is gradually succeeding, the triple challenge still exists: poverty, unemployment, and inequalities (Tshishonga, 2016). In conclusion, failure

to implement projects properly leads to programme failure; hence, identifying project weaknesses and developing effective mechanisms is paramount.

The other contributing challenge is that ward communities are not fully operational, resulting in poor communication with communities (Sekgala, 2016). Ward committees have been the focus of considerable attention by the government and civil society, with substantial investment already made to ensure that these structures have the capacity and resources required to fulfil their envisaged roles as the voices of communities. There is a wide lack of knowledge among ward committee members about the implementation of developmental local government initiatives, leading to a high amount of implementation of developmental local government initiatives to fail (Mtshweni, 2009).

#### **2.3.4. Community inclusion in developmental local government projects**

##### ***1. Public participation***

Improving and encouraging the culture of public participation that will promote inclusive participation and actively incorporate public input on vital governance issues remains vital in this democratic era. Therefore, public participation is a key tenet of democratic governance (Mavee and Majam, 2013). In addition, municipalities should engage and consult civil society more frequently in policy formulation and implementation and incorporate them in governance structures (Ramodula and Govender, 2021a).

Likewise, the process to ensure community participation is a core principle of legislation. There is a wide consensus that local democracy entails participatory and inclusive decision-making processes in which the beneficiaries have a substantial say in determining local government developmental agendas (Masango, 2003). Therefore, to achieve this, community awareness of their rights and obligations must be enhanced so that citizens can play an instrumental role in municipal affairs and implement developmental local government initiatives (Masango, 2003). For local government to live up to its potential, it depends not only on the availability of skilled personnel and financial resources but also on the role played by communities in the structures (Madumo, 2017).

## ***2. Curbing corruption and promoting financial compliance***

There is an urgent need to rethink innovative ways of curbing corruption and other administrative malpractices within municipalities (Ambe and Badenhorst-Weiss, 2011). Local government transformation in South Africa has exerted considerable pressure on municipalities to manage their financial resources effectively, economically, and efficiently to meet their developmental mandate (Mashamaite and Lethoko, 2018). Therefore, municipalities need to improve sound financial management requirements as envisaged in the statutory framework by appointing qualified and capable officials, including chief financial officers and internal auditors, with the right and appropriate skills. Importantly, municipal officials must account for results, not only for budget spending. As more resources are transferred to local government, there is a need to strengthen the institutions that enforce accountability of public resources (Sikhakane and Reddy, 2011). Therefore, to fight the scourge of maladministration, unemployment, inequality, and corruption, municipalities need to strengthen and review their existing internal control systems that detect the above-mentioned deficiencies. These include verifying the quality and appropriateness of internal audit and audit committees. Therefore, this requires effective monitoring by the officials in managerial positions (Ambe and Badenhorst-Weiss, 2011).

## ***3. Capacity building***

Building municipal officials' capacities becomes essential for municipalities to fulfil and optimally achieve their obligations envisaged in the constitution and other national policies (Madumo, 2017). Likewise, capacity building is one of the most essential tools available to local government in bridging the gaps in what is expected of municipal officials and what they can deliver. In the context of the overall transformation of local government, skills development is critical as it lays the basis for a more people-oriented local government system that can meet the people's demands for democracy, reconstruction, and development (Ndou and Sebola, 2016). For local government to work, there is a need for investment in building the capacity of councillors and officials. Stakeholders involved in such capacity-building initiatives must organize their programmes for a more significant impact and link them more accurately to the national democratic transition (Khunoethe, 2021).

According to Madumo (2012), developmental local government is intended to have a major impact on the daily lives of South Africans. Further, it should seek a new focus on improving the people's standard of living and quality of life. Thus, developmental local government means strong leadership and a clear vision for local government. This requires municipal officials to discharge their responsibilities with prudence and in an efficient, transparent, and accountable manner, thus promoting good governance (Ndou and Sebola, 2016). Moreover, Ward committees have been introduced to local government as community structures and should play a critical role in linking and informing local government about the needs, aspirations, potentials, and problems of the communities (Jikeka, 2014). By working directly with the municipalities, ward committees serve as a channel to give a voice to previously disadvantaged communities. Therefore, they play an important role in actively participating and determining core municipal processes such as Integrated Development Planning (IDP), budgeting, and the municipal performance management process (Seitlholo, 2016).

This study further argued that the two-tier system that exists in rural local government needs to be observed and evaluated very closely in terms of whether it contributes to the proper implementation of developmental local government initiatives or hinders the speedy delivery of services (Kaywood, 2021). This study also argued that most people working for rural municipalities have insufficient skills to implement local government services in rural areas, which needs to be carefully examined (Mabizela and Matsiliza, 2020).

#### **2.4. Implementation of Developmental Local Government Projects**

People are motivated by various factors to initiate or participate in development projects. Some residents and outsiders are keen to positively impact the lives of the disadvantaged, while others are out to exploit the situation for their personal gain (Makofane and Gray, 2007). Even though the changing global and local situation obliges impoverished communities to become proactive in enhancing the quality of community lives. Nel and Binns (2000) added that appropriate external financial and human resources are required for the survival and success of rural projects. There is general agreement that, even if community-based development projects were to arise from the bottom up, they would still need support from external development agencies (Narayan, 1995). However, most rural communities do not have the expertise or know-how to assess the credibility of organizations and, therefore, are vulnerable to exploitation. Hence,

some projects have failed due to mismanagement of funds, nepotism, and "substantial corruption" (Brown, 1999).

Among the myriad challenges in establishing and sustaining rural development projects are inefficiency and ineffectiveness, as shown in their failure to manage funds and achieve their technical, social, and financial objectives (Arrossi et al., 1994). In addition, factors impeding the success of rural development projects include political, physical, infrastructural, socio-economic, and cultural constraints (Makofane, 2007). Therefore, rural villagers are struggling to survive. It has been widely acknowledged that unemployment increases the vulnerability of poor households, with women enduring the most of supporting families in rural communities (Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1997). Tshishonga (2019) argues that several development projects have attempted to address the plight of women faced with the burden of providing for their children's basic needs, such as food and clothing. Also, the social cohesion of rural communities is being eroded by the high rate of crime, which has resulted in an elevated level of mistrust among villagers.

Koma (2012) and (Piya, 2008) argued that various issues and challenges must be addressed for successful implementation of developmental local government projects. Some of these challenges are particularly unique to rural communities, including resources and sustainability: Funding, technological, and human resources are typically limited in rural communities. Therefore, it can be particularly difficult to generate enough start-up funds to sustain the program as it begins. Having a network of stakeholders and partners in the community may be beneficial for providing resources and support for a program. Also, keeping the community motivated is essential. Piya (2008) argued that regardless of the community and populations targeted in the program efforts, an awareness of health concerns needs to exist, and individual and organizational commitments are necessary to make the changes required to address those concerns. Therefore, programme planners must understand that success will depend on education and outreach efforts to determine community members' expectations about the project's impact and motivate them to achieve better health outcomes (Madumo, 2015b).

## **2.5. Community participatory in the implementation of developmental local government projects**

According to Paul (1987), community participation in the context of development refers to an active process whereby beneficiaries influence the direction and execution of development

projects rather than merely receiving a share of project benefits. In addition, (Bamberger, 1986) suggests that it is an evolutionary process in which activities at the project or micro-level can create the conditions for increased popular participation in the planning and implementing development programs at the local level. Not all the basic needs of the rural poor can be met immediately; it is, therefore, necessary to prioritize their different needs, and the process of deciding which need ought to be satisfied first is fundamentally the concern of the rural people themselves and thus the need for community participation of the rural people is essential in rural development, (Donnges and Foley, 2003).

Moreover, community participation in project planning and implementation is universally acknowledged as an essential input for the socio-economic transformation of rural areas (Madzivhandila and Maloka, 2014). Such local participation enables the rural people to identify their problems and be part of the design which will be locally acceptable solutions to the problem and thus give them a desired sense of belonging, which will ensure the success of the projects and programmes (Ogunleye-Adetona and Oladeinde, 2013).

The development process is cyclic, and its success somewhat depends on participation. Likewise, participation must occur at every stage of the development initiative for the interventions to be effective (Binns and Nel, 2002). However, some aspects need to be considered during this process. Firstly, there is a need to understand that development does not entail and affect only tangible assets but also the psycho-social and economic entities of the people that need to be developed (Oni, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to organize a community as it will be easy to mobilize them regarding issues that affect them in their daily lives, which makes it essential for them to undergo development. Once the organization and mobilization of the community have been established, it is easy for them to indicate and identify the problems at hand. Furthermore, Oni (2015) articulated that through mobilizing and raising awareness, intervention to sustainable development is identified; community visioning and planning take place, a process through which the community identifies its future vision. Therefore, the visioning process establishes a desired end state for the community and a vision for the future towards which they strive (Botes and Van Rensburg, 2000).

### **2.5.1 Sustainability of the projects**

In most rural areas, developmental projects are not sustained as they are not accepted wholly by the community but by a few people within the targeted communities (Mathabatha and

Naidoo, 2004). According to Theron and Mchunu (2016), for any development to be sustainable, it must be accepted by the majority, if not the whole community, and to achieve and maintain the sustainability of the project, a sense of ownership by community members needs to be engendered. Furthermore, ownership can only be achieved through the active participation of the target community (Lachapelle, 2008). Andersson et al. (2001) state that successful development is entirely not determined by the quantity or quality of the product but also by the introduction process. In addition, it can generally be agreed that participation without power “is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless” (Sibanda, 2011). Thus, once the community is empowered, the community members can take ownership as the development project belongs to them.

Moreover, the sustainability of any project is crucial since the development process is not a once-off thing but continuous. Suppose the community is denied ownership of a development project meant for them. In that case, there can be dire results, such as vandalism, corruption, and sometimes premature termination of projects which are supposed to benefit the community (Vrchota et al., 2020).

## **2.6. Impacts of developmental local government initiatives in rural areas and its impact on the community's well-being**

There has been some improvement in the situation of rural residents since 1994. Several government policies and projects have echoed the importance of targeting state transfers to rural communities, but this commitment has lapsed when it comes to funding allocations at local levels, and this has continued to leave rural communities in poverty and unequal delivery of services than ever (Macanda, 2014). However, the implementation of developmental local government projects in rural areas over the years has also encompassed improvement in the provision of services; hence, it enhances opportunities for local economic development and income generating, social cohesion and physical security within the rural communities, improvement of infrastructure, active representation in local political process and adequate provision to the disadvantaged people (Donnges and Foley, 2003). The developmental projects also emphasize facilitating change in rural environments to permit vulnerable people to invest in themselves and their communities while also contributing towards maintaining the infrastructure key to their livelihoods. But still, underdevelopment remains a structure in rural areas (Donnges and Foley, 2003) further argued.

IlimaLabantu (2010) states that agriculture was valuable to the local livelihoods in South Africa, but many people migrated to the urban areas to find work. The population density in rural areas was high due to the lack of infrastructure and arable land. In addition, rural households in these areas have markedly lower cash incomes than urban households, with many falling below the minimum poverty line. Macanda (2014) adds that people were forced to seek employment opportunities in towns and cities. Service delivery has been frustrated by insufficient integration and coordination across government departments and between different tiers of government and the lack of institutional readiness to implement programmes. Likewise, the absence of clear strategic planning frameworks, institutional arrangements, and implementation capacity problems at the service delivery point contributes to the poor development of rural areas.

In most cases, in rural areas, the community cannot identify its needs because of a lack of understanding, organization, or agreement between its members as to what the needs are. Most development programmes these days are sponsored self-help. In this type of programme, the decision to start a development programme does not originate from within the community but at the offices of the aid agency, government department, or government worker (George, 2000). Therefore, the opposite is a scenario where the community is not so much a target; instead, it becomes a self-conscious entity that knows what it wants and who requests or demands the opportunity, resources, or both to act accordingly (Mwiru, 2015). The latter has a better chance of success. In my experience in community development, it has been proved over and over again that projects identified from within the community have a better chance of being sustainable. Watt (2014) argues that the best way to go about it is to identify a project, do a feasibility study, draw up the capital requirements, explain how the project can be feasible, and identify people within the community to take ownership of it. The completed document is then sent to possible funders. If a community can do the above, it needs an organization to bring it together. According to Maphazi et al. (2013), community action emphasizes organizing the people to request services and resources from local and national governments effectively.

### **2.6.1 Impact of developmental local government initiatives on community's well-being in rural areas**

As communities increasingly demand higher living standards and a reduction of inequalities, developmental local government projects need to target the well-being of rural dwellers and

broaden the classical frameworks for rural policymaking (Mashamaite and Lethoko, 2018). For instance, enabling factors like digitalization and considerations on building and attracting human capital are not part of traditional rural policy frameworks. These aspects need to be better integrated. A changing socio-economic landscape highlights the need for rural policies to shift towards a well-being-oriented, people-centred approach (Phillips and Wong, 2016).

In rural areas of South Africa, a phenomenon that becomes apparent is the general apathy and disinclination to do something out of the ordinary. Of course, there is interest in development activities, and there are people interested in taking up and initiating projects; the number of such people is low. Due to a lack of skills and understanding, they are often discouraged from taking the initiative (McKenzie, 1993). It might be caused by a lack of self-esteem or confidence in taking responsibility. There is always a tendency to look up to outside agencies to take responsibility and venture into unknown areas. In short, there is a lack of motivation to take up a challenge. Narsee (2007) further argued that this might be caused by the communal rituals and the communal responsibility instilled in one from a young age, which causes people to make group decisions rather than individual ones. This slows down all activities, and in the present age, where small businesses are run as efficiently as possible to compete to find a market, it is impossible to sustain. Ingenuity and creativity are the basic aspects that can make a project successful (George, 2000). I have seen the success of projects made possible by the hard work of individuals responsible for trying to make projects successful. The primary motive for these people to work so hard is not that they want the community to benefit; of course, this could be secondary; the main reason is always the benefit that he or she will derive from the success.

Rural areas make a vital contribution to the well-being and prosperity of OECD countries (Arku, 2010). The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated, even more importantly, how essential rural areas need developmental projects in agriculture, the production of food and raw materials, amenities, and ecosystem services for the functioning of our societies and economies (Mahmud and Riley, 2021). Rural economies, however, go beyond agro-food and natural resources nowadays and range from manufacturing hubs, service providers, logistical hubs, and tourism destinations, to name just a few. Understanding the new opportunities in these rural economies and how to exploit linkages with urban communities will be important in enhancing the well-being of rural citizens (Babajanian, 2008). Building resilience in rural regions has become indispensable due to their unique links to natural resources.

Developmental local government projects aim to empower citizens to live happy, healthy, and meaningful lives (Kruk et al., 2018). Structural changes relating to demography require policy makers to pay special attention to the social well-being of different groups present in rural communities to ensure inclusivity. Besides ensuring individual well-being through service delivery on specific needs, inclusive policy making can also help reduce regional inequalities, strengthen resilience, and deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, promising to leave no one behind (CEPAL, 2020).

## **2.7. Conclusion**

This chapter gives a broad insight as to what developmental local government entails. It shows that it is vital that developmental local government projects are planned and initiated with the participation of the target community. The national government is responsible for promoting all-round development and working to improve the conditions of all its people. The previous government of South Africa had a legitimacy problem, so the people did not willingly become part of the initiatives. This phenomenon is changing now, and we see a flurry of development activities in South Africa initiated by the state and more and more projects initiated by communities (Koma, 2014). International Aid Agencies, Multinational corporations, South African businesses, individuals, and game farms are also greatly interested. The pitfalls of large-scale, externally funded projects provide the reader with a global view of problems in the development sphere (De Visser, 2009).

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3. Introduction**

Candea (2018) states that every discipline is grounded on theories that develop over a particular point of disciplinary history. The unfolding of the discipline can be better understood in terms of its (i) theoretical rigour and (ii) methodological orientation. Further, he suggests that the theory provides a broad framework or orientation for interpreting facts, and the methodology provides specific rules and logical guidelines for collecting and analyzing the data. However, Bryman (2016) suggests that although a research study can be effectively structured around one specific theory, there are substantial advantages to integrating different theoretical viewpoints. An advantage of this based on this study is that the researcher wants to gain a deeper and broader understanding of the phenomenon and uncover its underlying mechanisms, causes and effects. Morse (2011) highlighted that each theoretical framework has its limitations. Hence, this study employs multiple theories to gain a more comprehensive and diverse perspective on the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, by incorporating complementary viewpoints, this study avoids simplification while looking at various facets of the phenomena. As a result, this study discusses the theoretical framework, which draws on participatory development, social capital, and governance theories.

#### **3.1. Theoretical underpinnings**

A theory can be defined as a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables to explain and predict phenomena (Kivunja, 2018). The study aims to understand the implementation of developmental local government projects and its impact on the community's well-being. Therefore, the study will incorporate the concepts from governance, participatory development, and social capital theories to comprehensively understand how local government initiatives can effectively promote community well-being. Moreover, governance theory highlights the significance of effective institutional structures, mechanisms for accountability, and participatory decision-making processes for accomplishing development objectives (de Wit, 2020). On the other hand, participatory development theory suggests that engaging community members in the project cycle, from planning, implementation, and evaluation, produces more sustainable and effective results (Dinbabo, 2003). According to Kreuter and Lezin (2002), social capital theory refers to relationship structures that rely on the obligations,

expectations and trustworthiness of those involved. In such structures, people would have expectations for reciprocity of benefits or the sharing of goods, services, or other forms of assets or assistance. Initiatives that promote social capital theory can positively affect community well-being (Claridge, 2018).

### **3.2. Participatory Development Theory (PDT)**

Firstly, the study discussed participatory development theory. Participatory development theory is a process through which groups and communities determine their development priorities through inclusive dialogue and consensus and the design of solutions that address their priority needs (Dinbabo, 2019). The responsibility for the implementation of a solution lies with the participants (Dinbabo, 2019), further elaborated. Likewise, Sherry Arnstein's understanding of participation development theory equates it with the concept of power, suggesting that participation can enhance the empowerment of the local community with the opportunity to think and develop solutions for themselves (Arnstein, 2015). The process in the participatory development theory implies that it must be ongoing and must have its objective, which is the continued establishment of solutions and ongoing partnerships. Participatory development theory must be inclusive, meaning all groups and individuals affected by the "problem" (Libati, 2017). Inclusion helps ensure the sustainability of projects by allowing their design to be based on more information and tailored to participant needs. Thus, more people are interested in maintaining the projects (Naku and Afrane, 2016). According to Thomas (2014), responsibility for implementation rests with those the projects serve. Participatory projects generate new income and services where the output generated outweighs the cost of outputs.

Moreover, participation can also allow the incorporation of local knowledge, skills, and resources in the design of interventions, and it can ensure programme responsiveness to people's needs, enhance the goal of sustainability, and assist in breaking the mentality of dependency (Mulonda, Libati and Mubita, 2017). According to (Mansuri and Rao 2012), involving marginalized communities in some aspects of development programmes would lead to better results through the connection between development aid and its intended beneficiaries. Therefore, adopting PDT into this study can transcend simply assessing community participation and the impact of the development project. However, it can also provide a greater understanding of power dynamics, knowledge dissemination, and decision-making processes

that influence the implementation of developmental local government projects. Besides active participation, exchanging knowledge, and communities making decisions together, PDT can facilitate sustainable and significant development that meets the community's needs to improve their well-being (Nyama and Mukwada, 2023).

The researcher found this theory significant on the basis that within the researched location, the residents are most likely to refrain from participating in development projects as they are supposed to be at the centre of development. However, in most development programmes implemented in the area, community members are often left out, resulting in a lack of skills to sustain themselves. Thus, the welfare of a community depends on the successful execution of development initiatives carried out by the local government. Nevertheless, top-down approaches sometimes fall short of comprehending the complexity and distinct requirements of the wider society. Therefore, PDT provides a significant structure for comprehending and enhancing the execution of such programmes, resulting in more sustainable results (Naku and Afrane, 2013). Moreover, PDT emphasizes the active participation of local communities in the identification and prioritization of community needs in the planning and execution of development initiatives (Mubita, 2017).

### **3.3. Social Capital Theory**

The second theory adopted in this study is Social Capital Theory, which emphasizes the significance of interpersonal relationships and connections in attaining shared objectives (Lin, 2017). The social capital theory outlines a network of relationships created by a group of people that helps them achieve common goals and lead a comfortable life. The whole notion of social capital is centred on social relationships, and its major elements include social networks, civic engagement, norms of reciprocity, and generalised trust. Broadly speaking, it is defined as a collective asset in the form of shared norms, values, beliefs, trust, networks, social relations, and institutions that facilitate cooperation and collective action for mutual benefits (Kumi and Bandari, 2017). Social capital theory by Robert Putnam (2023) emphasizes the importance of social connections and civic engagement for the functioning and well-being of societies. Putnam argues that societies with strong horizontal bonds of collaboration, such as associations and clubs, experience benefits such as lower crime rates, increased health, happiness, and economic prosperity. Putnam's theory of social capital is based on the idea that long-term relationships and trust among individuals and organizations contribute to a society's overall cohesion and success.

Further, this theory contends that social relationships are resources that can lead to the development and accumulation of human capital (Ross, 2023). For example, a stable family environment can support educational attainment and the development of highly valued and rewarded skills and credentials (Rogosic, 2016). This is evident in Sweetwaters as more community members work as a team, whether to get children to school or give a helping hand wherever possible. The social capital theory states that social relationships and networks can provide invaluable resources to the participants involved and lead to development. The aim of building social capital is to lead to development, productivity, and overall growth (Kenton and Perez, 2022).

Baycan and Öner (2023) concur that social capital and relationships between the community and other stakeholders become valuable assets to community members where they can work together, trusting each other for the community's well-being. Therefore, by working and trusting each other, they can share information and resources, thus increasing overall productivity and efficiency. In the context of extreme poverty, in Sweetwaters, the poor community can rely on assets and amenities rather than income, of which human assets (for example, skills, entrepreneurial and education and social assets (such as networks and ties) (Woolcock and Narayan, 2006). Therefore, this study argues that Social Capital Theory can provide a valuable understanding of the significance of social connections, trust, and cooperation in local government initiatives and their influence on the community's well-being.

Therefore, this study used this theory to examine the network connections among the local government, community members, and other stakeholders' participation in implementing initiatives for development (Dubos, 2017). Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of trust and collaboration in attaining positive outcomes. Therefore, social capital theory will be beneficial to this study in understanding the degree of trust and collaboration among different stakeholders and its influence on the implementation of a local government project to enhance the community's well-being (Varda, 2011). According to Sandefur and Laumann (2009), James Coleman demonstrated that social capital could benefit marginalized communities where mutual trust and shared values construct relationships for producing social capital based on reciprocity and expectations.

### **3.4. Governance Theory**

This study also adopts governance theory to understand the execution of progressive local government initiatives and provide significant perspectives on the influence of these programmes on community well-being. Ansell and Gash (2008) define governance theory as an interaction among structures, processes, and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are enacted, how decisions are made, and how citizens and civil society are incorporated into these interactions. Therefore, it concerns power, relationships, and accountability in governing the community (Termeer et al., 2013). Asaduzzaman and Virtanen (2016) articulate that the central focus of governance is the structuring of the relationship between the state and civil society and how non-state actors should be involved in governing processes as the state cannot address complex problems on its own (Asaduzzaman and Virtanen, 2021). Further, it seeks to promote several forms of collective action during developmental local government projects to achieve goals, especially at the local level (Termeer et al., 2011). According to Zondo (2022), rural communities are losing value through incompetent governance, affecting sustainable development. As a result, this study adopted this theory to understand better the conditions of evolving governance in rural contexts. It requires the development of a conceptual framework that captures the integral and integrating forces and factors shaping regional and local development. Therefore, this theory can provide greater access to information, counteract government failures, and improve rural service delivery and governance (Kosec and Wantchekon, 2020). Prinsloo (2012) states that only a governance theory can shrink this gap and create wealth. Good governance starts with every state official doing honest and hard work to improve community well-being through providing administration that promotes community well-being (Rodinelli and Shabbir, 2003).

Moreover, these targets have been set to show an effort to achieve good governance in South Africa. This study argues that there are three suggested properties of governance theory that may help uMsunduzi municipality to be on fully good governance: Firstly, it is the degree of trust that exists between classes, clans, and political elites about the nature, purpose, and the rules of sociopolitical interactions and practices. Without legitimate trust, individuals and organized interest groups will see no reason to engage and participate in community initiatives (Nzimakwe, 2005). The second element is the degree of accountability, for instance, whether the governors can be held accountable by the governed via institutionalized procedures and processes. This cannot be sustained over time without the eventual implementation of structures of accountability and trust across society (Maile, 2002). And lastly, the nature of

authority, for instance, how political leaders make policies and implement them in a way that resolves the problems of ordinary citizens and promotes the legitimacy of the public realm, what many in South Africa refer to as the capacity to govern, (Shehrin, 2005).

### **3.5. Conclusion**

In an attempt to obtain more information about community participation and the implementation of developmental projects, various theories and strategies were considered to guide the study. The chapter highlighted and discussed the participatory development theory, social capital theory and governance theory in detail and how it was crucial to be included and guide this study. Social capital theory highlights the importance of networks and relationships in mobilizing resources and implementing projects. Governance mechanisms that are responsive and accountable can help ensure that these resources are allocated efficiently and equitably, leading to more effective outcomes. Participatory approaches guided by social capital theory can enhance the sustainability of development initiatives by fostering local ownership and buy-in. Effective governance theory helps ensure that projects are managed transparently and accountable to stakeholders, reducing the risk of elite capture or mismanagement (Sikhakane and Reddy, 2011). In essence, integrating social capital theory, governance theory, and participatory development theory provides a holistic framework for designing and implementing developmental projects that are responsive to local needs, inclusive of diverse perspectives and sustainable over the long term (Alshammari, 2023).

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

The primary objective of this chapter is to present investigative techniques used in this research project. Therefore, this research method presented is the fundamental basis of this study (Creswell and Poth, 2016). Neale (2009) suggests that the research method refers to data collection and analysis techniques used in the research project. In contrast, methodology refers to the study design that the researcher used in the study (Ranganathan, 2018). This chapter explores the intricate components of the qualitative research approach used to examine the implementation of developmental local government projects and its impact on the community's well-being: A case study of Sweetwater's municipality. Therefore, this chapter will include research design, instruments used to collect data, ethical considerations, data analysis, and interpretation. In addition, it helps the researcher and the reader understand the research process, thus giving it scientific merit (Sileyew, 2019). Research methodology includes understanding how to proceed from empirical research findings to make inferences about the truth or at least adequacy (Bellamy, 2011). In this regard, research methodology entails the methodological framework through which the study should be understood. Therefore, this chapter justifies the methodological choices the researcher has made.

#### **4.2. Research design and methodology.**

Flick (2022) defines research design as a plan or blueprint of how the researcher intends to conduct research. Theron et al. (2016) aver that a research design is a total plan used to assist in answering our research questions. Therefore, research design refers to a technique of selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer the research questions (Creswell and Poth, 2016). Brink (2006) defines study design as the set of logical steps the researcher follows to answer research questions. Ranganathan and Aggarwal (2018) further argue that the study design determines the methodology that needs to be used by the researcher to obtain sources of information such as research subjects or participants, elements, and units of analysis, and how data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. This study employed the qualitative research method. According to Anderson (2006), qualitative research collects, analyses, and interprets data by observing what individuals do and communicating with participants to understand the phenomena. Gerring (2017) concurs that qualitative methods focus primarily on the kind of evidence (what people tell you, what they do) that will

enable you to understand the meaning of what is happening. According to Queirós et al. (2017), the key advantages of employing qualitative research reside in its ability to enable researchers to comprehensively capture a more profound and detailed comprehension of the topics under investigation.

The researcher decided on the research questions, the required data, the people from whom to obtain data, and the best way to gather the data. In this study, the researcher employed a descriptive research design. According to Creswell (2013), the purpose of a descriptive study is to provide a picture of a phenomenon as it naturally occurs. It seeks to draw a picture of a situation, person, or event or show how things are related to each other. It is concerned with making complicated things understandable. It involves finding the reasons for things, events and situations and showing why and how they have come to be what they are (De Vos et al., 2014). All descriptive research has one thing in common: in that they may provide a description of the variables to answer the questions (Creswell, 2015). According to Theron et al. (2016), descriptive research observes, describes and documents aspects of a situation.

#### **4.2.1. Rationale for adopting qualitative research method**

This study is located mainly within the qualitative research tradition. Utilizing qualitative methodology facilitated a more profound comprehension of the topic under investigation. Additionally, it yielded more intricate and comprehensive data due to its inherent characteristics, which allow participants to openly articulate their thoughts, experiences, and understandings concerning the subject matter. Creswell and Creswell (2017:4) concur that qualitative research is “an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.” By using the qualitative research method, the researcher could expand the range of knowledge and understanding of the world beyond themselves as a researcher. It helps people to see why something is the way it is rather than just presenting a phenomenon (Creswell, 2015). The qualitative approach allowed the researcher to learn the most by participating or being immersed in research. In this study, the researcher investigated the implementation and impact of developmental local government projects on the socio-economic well-being of Sweetwaters community uMsuduzi local municipality. The researcher used qualitative research methodology for acquiring, arranging, processing, and interpreting the data, as (Theron et al., 2016) stated.

### 4.3 Area of the study

This study was conducted at Sweetwaters, which falls within the jurisdiction of the UMsunduzi Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal Province, Pietermaritzburg.

**Figure 2: Sweetwaters UMsunduzi Municipality study site**



Source: Google Maps (2022)<sup>2</sup>

### 4.4. Population and study sample

Banerjee and Chaudhury (2010) define a population as a collection of all individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and events we are interested in discovering. According to Casteel and Bridier (2021), population is the total number of possible units or elements included in the study. Further, the researcher must specify a set of variables or characteristics to define a population. Therefore, the targeted population in this study was the community from Sweetwaters, which is situated in KwaZulu-Natal's capital city, Pietermaritzburg, approximately 15.4km / 19 to 25 minutes away from Sweetwaters. The researcher selected males and females (including all age groups) within the research location's residence. This study was conducted in the rural area of Sweetwaters to understand the implementation of local government projects and how the communities have benefited and improved their well-being.

<sup>2</sup> Sweetwaters Umsunduzi Municipality study site

#### **4.5. Sampling**

According to Martinez-Mesa (2016), a sample is a group of elements drawn from the population that is considered to be the characteristics of the population and which is studied to acquire some knowledge about the entire population. Myeni (2005) stated that involving all population members in a research project is not practical and economically feasible. Instead, one can obtain data from the population using the participants' knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation. Panacek and Thompson (2007) define sampling as selecting cases for inclusion in the research study. Besides, sampling was necessary for this study, given the complexity and vastness of uMsunduzi Municipality. According to Oribhabor and Anyanwu (2019), a sample is a group of elements drawn from the people that are considered to be the characteristics of the population that can provide knowledge regarding the phenomenon.

The researcher used non-probability sampling since the probability of the selection of each element of the population is not known (Vehovar and Vera, 2016). In this study, purposive sampling was more appropriate because the target group shared common characteristics as they lived in an area where development seemed to be a problem. Etikan et al. (2016) state that in purposive sampling, the sample is chosen because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon the researcher is investigating. This type of sample was based entirely on the researcher's judgment in that the sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristics.

##### **4.5.1. The sampling method used.**

The study utilized a purposive sample strategy to recruit key informants based on their knowledge and understanding of the development projects implemented by the local government in the area and how they benefited the communities to improve their well-being. Babbie (2013) argues that purposive sampling is a popular qualitative strategy that entails identifying and choosing individuals or communities that have knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation. Besides, purposive sampling also requires study participants to be available and willing to describe their experiences clearly, reflectively, and expressively (Etikan et al., 2016). Further, this kind of sampling is also known as judgemental sampling, where the researcher may use his or her own judgment in selecting the sample depending on

the nature of the research project (Tongco, 2007). Likewise, participants who are informative on the topic being investigated.

Although purposive sampling was relevant for the study, most argue that this type of sampling has its disadvantages and limitations, such as the element of bias because it is the researcher who decides who to participate in the study and who does not participate in the study (Campbell et al., 2020). However, the researcher in this particular study ensured that all the participants were greatly knowledgeable and were able to provide valuable, relevant, and rich information that benefited the study regarding the benefits of local government initiatives and how they have improved the well-being of the community. However, Andrade (2021) states that purposive sampling is often more efficient in terms of time and resources, but the focused nature of purposive sampling may result in overlooking unexpected or less obvious aspects of the phenomenon.

#### **4.5.2. The study sample size**

The study sample size was N=15, including community leaders and other community members selected at Sweetwaters uMsunduzi Municipality. Since the study was conducted in a rural area, it was important to include the traditional leader (the Chief), ward councillors, chairperson of the ward committee, etc., as part of the sample size. The participants included women and men. The principles of saturation guided this study. According to Creswell and Poth (2016), saturation can occur if including more study participants does not yield new information or perspectives.

#### **4.5.3. Recruitment strategy**

The researcher recruited community leaders and community members who have lived in the area for a long time and understand the development projects implemented in the community. Therefore, the key informants included cultural, religious, and political leaders, youth leaders, and other community members living in the Sweetwaters area. Glasser (2014) states that to represent the population of interest, selecting appropriate participants and ensuring they fully understand the phenomenon under investigation is essential.

**Table 2: List of participants**

	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Participants profile</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Sex</b>
1.	Participant 1	The local Chief	56	Male
2.	Participant 2	Ward councillor	39	Female
3.	Participant 3	Youth leader	39	Male
4.	Participant 4	Community leader	41	Female
5.	Participant 5	Community youth leader	27	Male
6.	Participant 6	Community leader	52	Male
7.	Participant 7	Senior member of the community	56	Female
8.	Participant 8	Ward committee	45	Male
9.	Participant 9	Chairperson of the ward committee	47	Male
10.	Participant 10	Women's league leader	32	Female
11.	Participant 11	Church leader	35	Male
12.	Participant 12	Community structure	31	Female
13.	Participant 13	Youth sector	29	Male
14.	Participant 14	Church youth leader	29	Male
15.	Participant 15	Manager at the chief office	50	Male

Source: Researcher<sup>3</sup>

#### 4.6. Individual Interviews

Data was gathered through in-depth face-to-face interviews with community leaders and local government officials. Therefore, the researcher scheduled interviews with the participants at a time and location that was convenient for them after the participants returned the consent form. In addition, the researcher explained to the participants that they were allowed to withdraw anytime if they felt uncomfortable with the questions and that participation was voluntary. The study interviews were conducted using the participants' home language to ensure they understood the questions. According to Knott et al. (2022), semi-structured interviews were used because they offer the advantage of being conducted with a fairly open framework that allows for focused, conversational, and two-way communication. In addition, Horsfall et al. (2021) argued that semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity for the interviewer to use probes to clear up vague responses or elaborate on incomplete answers. Given the nature of the study, Kabir (2016) articulated that in-depth interviews can assist the researchers in

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<sup>3</sup> List of participants

gaining a greater understanding of the phenomena and developing trust between the researchers and the participants. In addition, a digital voice recorder was utilized to capture each interview. However, the researcher obtained the participants' consent to record the interviews before proceeding. Thus, in situations where recording was not permitted, notes were taken as a substitute. The semi-structured interview methodologies incorporated a flexible interview duration system, ranging from sixty to one hundred minutes.

#### **4.6.1. Advantages of Interviews**

According to Ryan and Cronin (2016), interviews have several advantages as a qualitative research method. First, they allow researchers to gain rich and detailed data from the participants' own words and expressions, which can reveal their feelings, motivations, and meanings. Secondly, Busetto (2020) articulates that they enable researchers to establish rapport and trust with the participants, enhancing the data's quality and depth. Knott (2022) asserted that they provide researchers with the opportunity to clarify and follow up on the participants' responses, which can improve the validity and reliability of the data. Lastly, they allow researchers to adapt and tailor the questions and topics according to the participants' needs and interests, increasing the data's relevance and usefulness (Dunwoodie et al., 2023).

#### **4.6.2. Disadvantages of Interviews**

Perri (2018) states that interviews also have some challenges as a qualitative research method. First, they require a lot of time, resources, and skills from the researchers, who must design, conduct, transcribe, analyze, and interpret the interviews. Second, they may be influenced by various factors that can affect the quality and accuracy of the data, such as the interviewer's bias, the participant's honesty, the rapport between them, the language and cultural barriers, and the ethical issues (Carter, 2021). Third, De Villiers (2022) added that they may produce a large amount of data that can be difficult and complex to manage, organize, and code. However, the researcher ensured that she followed ethical conduct prescribed by the University of KwaZulu Natal. Dunwoodie et al. (2023) concur that the study should be conducted in an ethical manner, such as obtaining informed consent and protecting confidentiality.

#### **4.7. Secondary Data Sources**

This study also gained in-depth information from viewing literature using different sources, including research journal articles, academic books, and papers presented at reputable conferences. A literature review on the implementation of local government initiatives or programmes was incorporated into the desktop analysis to enlighten the conceptual structure of the research. As a result, it provided valuable context for the study, enhancing comprehension of the impact of implementing local government programmes and how they contribute to improving community well-being. According to Helms et al. (2018), secondary data can be employed to position each study within the broader collection of study research and identify gaps in research approaches.

#### **4.8. Data analysis**

Bless (2013) defines data analysis as a search for patterns in recurrent behaviour, objects, or a body of knowledge. The aim of data analysis is to organize and structure the data so that a meaningful conclusion can be reached (De Vos et al., 2014). In addition, data analysis encompasses several key processes, including interview coding, interpretation of result meanings, and providing fresh insights to the investigator (Brinkmann, 2014). Besides, data analysis is a challenging and creative process characterized by an intimate relationship between the researcher, the participants, and the data generated. As a result, it is the crucial stage in every research project. According to Wong (2008), data analysis is the process of inspecting collected data, data cleaning, data processing, and making sense or gaining knowledge from the collected data. Therefore, this study used NVivo to code and analyze data. Hilal and Alabri (2013) articulated that NVivo, a computer software, possesses numerous benefits and can potentially enhance the quality of research. In addition, they highlighted that it allows qualitative data analysis to be more streamlined and produces proficient and quality outcomes.

Conversely, thematic analysis is an approach for data reduction and analysis in which qualitative data are segmented, categorized, summarised, and reconstructed to convey the key concepts within the data set (Glenna et al., 2019). As a result, thematic analysis was used in this research to find and interpret patterns in qualitative data (Clarke et al., 2015). This approach was adopted because of its flexibility. Therefore, the interviews were transcribed into relevant information to identify useful patterns. In addition, the researcher continued to listen to the recordings again to ensure that the data had been precisely transcribed. The researcher will then

read the transcripts to ensure no information is omitted. As a result, information that could not be associated with the study was discarded, and only relevant information was classified and grouped into themes.

#### **4.9. Ethics considerations**

Research ethics refers to the moral principles guiding research. Ethics are sets of moral principles or norms that guide moral choices of behaviour and relationships with others (Resnik, 2015). Bless (2013) maintains that ethical issues should always be considered when undertaking research because the nature of qualitative research requires observation and interaction with groups. Bless (2013) listed several issues researchers must be aware of during and after the research.

- **Informed consent:** Respect for a person requires subjects to be allowed to choose what shall or shall not happen to them (Sanjari et al., 2014). Patton (2004) asserts that before the interview or during the opening of the discussion, it should be communicated to participants that information is important, the reasons for the importance, and the willingness of the interviewer to explain the purpose of the interview should be clear. As a result, the researcher on this study informed the participants that participation is voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time they want to withdraw from the research.
- **Honesty and trust:** A researcher will first mention his name and reasons or purpose of the study to the participant and tell them the purpose of what the study is trying to achieve and why. In addition, the researcher should explain that no one will be compensated for his engagement in this study. The researcher aimed to develop reciprocity between herself and the participants to gain trust and enable the researcher to generate rapport (Bos and Bos, 2020).
- **Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity:** Privacy, in its meaning, is to keep from oneself what is normally not intended for one to observe or analyze. Confidentiality can be viewed as a continuation of privacy, which refers to agreements between persons that limit others' access to information (Saunders et al., 2015). Anonymity protects the identity of specific individuals from being known (Babbie, 2007). The researcher maintained confidentiality by not divulging information shared by the participants unless they agreed that the information could be shared with others.

All participants were given information sheets with research details, and those who decided to participate were given an informed consent form that they must sign before participating. Therefore, the document and consent form details guarantee the anonymity and confidentiality of any data provided for this study. In addition, participants were informed that their actual identities will not be used at any point during the research and that only pseudonyms would be employed.

The researcher assured the participants that their identity would be concealed. According to Khobragade et al. (2023), research participants do not owe anything to the researcher, and they are entitled to be treated with respect, dignity, and courtesy. Khobragade et al. (2023) further highlighted that the informed consent of prospective subjects to participate in research should be obtained beforehand. As a result, the researcher ensured that consent was granted before participants were interviewed.

This research adhered to the University of KwaZulu-Natal's High Degrees Committee's regulations regarding the ethical conduct of research. Section 1 of the UKZN Research Ethics Policy requires researchers to uphold the utmost honesty and integrity while rejecting any form of academic dishonesty. This research study was guided by principles such as honesty and integrity by employing safe and responsible methods and ensuring the participants' fairness and equity.

#### **4.10. Limitations of the Study**

Limitations are matters and occurrences that arise in a study that are out of the researcher's control. They limit the extensity to which an investigation can go. This study's limitation was that it was conducted using one rural area, Sweetwaters, and the results cannot be generalized. However, this study aims to provide solutions that will enhance the implementation of developmental initiatives by local government to improve community well-being. The study will be conducted ethically, ensuring credibility and presenting accurate results.

#### **4.11. Conclusion**

This Chapter has presented a methodology in which this study will be based upon. In light of the research problem the study sought to resolve, it became apparent that the usage of purposive sampling was crucial to use in order to get to the knowledgeable people in Sweetwaters to get

to the grassroots problems concerning the developmental local government projects not being properly implemented in Sweetwaters UMsunduzi Municipality. The study employed a qualitative approach as it was important to enable a deeper understanding of experiences, phenomena, and context. Using the qualitative method involves studying human behaviour from participants' perspectives in their natural settings, which can enable the development of an understanding of the meaning that people ascribe to their experiences. The chapter covered and outlined all issues concerning the study's methodology, how the study was conducted, the nature of the study, research design and focus, study population, sampling, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations. After highlighting the research methodology, the chapter included how data was analyzed and the study's limitations.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **5. PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

There has been a shift in development focus to rural areas mainly due to the realization that rural areas can no longer be neglected. Attendant to this has been the phenomenon of many development agencies increasingly turning to projects as a critical wheel upon which sustainable rural development can be realized (Muronga and Iminza, 2020). However, many projects meant for rural development do not succeed in fulfilling the goal for which the projects are designed and implemented (Muronga, 2020). Monitoring and evaluating the success of projects in rural areas is fundamental to gauging the impact on poverty and developmental achievements. With every project, there should be a strong emphasis on a learning approach so that not only is the project completed successfully, but the community is left supported and revitalised with better decision-making abilities and a sense of responsibility. Engaging communities in the implementation process through community development councils has been the key to the success of development initiatives (Web, 2022). The qualitative method was applied. As a result, the in-depth semi-structured interviews were the primary tool used to collect data. Data collected from the participants was analyzed using NVIVO computer software.

#### **5.2. The objectives of this study**

This study aims to explore the implementation of developmental local government projects and their impact on the community's well-being: A case study of Sweetwater's municipality.

- To identify and assess the developmental local government projects implemented in Sweetwaters community.
- To explore the role of developmental local government projects in enhancing the socio-economic well-being in the Sweetwaters community
- To explore the enablers and barriers affecting the implementation of developmental local government projects in Sweetwaters community.
- To investigate the impact of the developmental local government initiatives on community well-being in the Sweetwaters community

### 5.3. Presentation and discussion of the findings

There has been an emphasis in the development and research literature on the participation of beneficiaries in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of developmental projects. A changing socio-economic landscape highlights the need for developmental projects to shift towards a well-being-oriented, people-centred approach. As this trend has occurred, there has been an increasing advocacy of the participatory approach as a prerequisite for projects. This section presents the findings from the in-depth semi-structured interviews. Participants were given interview questions, which they had to answer honestly.

The first objective seeks to examine Sweetwaters' degree of development in terms of completed initiatives and whether or not they enhance community well-being. The aim of developmental local government programs is to enhance the sources of revenue that rural residents receive. When comparing this state of affairs to the developmental projects that have already been carried out in the research area, it is evident that very few of the projects have additional revenue. The average number of people without additional income is higher than the average total number of projects implemented, particularly in the research field. There is an imbalance in the implemented developmental local government projects. This condition stemmed from the inappropriate performance of actions being made to enhance the execution of development initiatives in rural areas (Bazaanah, 2023). From the first objective, which is to identify and assess the developmental local government projects implemented in the Sweetwaters community, some participants claimed it has been some time since the local government implemented new projects in Sweetwaters. In contrast, others indicated that there were quite a few implemented local government projects in Sweetwaters; although they were not sustainable but, they acquired the initial development, and their responses are as follows:

Participant 8: *“There are projects in the ward that were implemented by the local and central governments. Currently, there is a project to upgrade the road from a gravel road to a tar road. This project is happening in the part of Ward 40 called Esebobonono, through the projects brought by the local government.”*

Participant 15: *“There is a program that will be starting soon to re-gravel roads that have existed for a long time and to open a new road that wasn't existing. The community will benefit tremendously from this project since it will employ a lot of qualified youth. A lot of the youth*

*of this community are very hands-on, and we would like to keep them at the centre of the projects.”*

Participant 2: *“Indicated that there are no implemented developmental projects in Sweetwaters. If anything, community members are sidelined in decision-making of which projects are needed in the community.”*

Participant 7: *“I know nothing of any implemented projects from the local government. The only project I have seen they try to implement is the infrastructural project of turning the gravel road into a tar road, which was not fully executed due to a lack of funding to complete the project.”*

Participant 12: *“In Ward Seven, we advocated for the municipality to build us better halls where we can be able to hold meetings and put our ideas forward as community members because frequently, we feel like we are always left out when important decisions regarding our people and regarding which projects to be implemented in our wards so we are glad that the municipality listened to us and is initiating that project.”*

Participant 10: *“The local government of UMsunduzi municipality sometimes does not have projects to hand to people even when needed; this is based on many reasons, including a lack of skills. As a result, this leaves the community with nothing but to find the green pastures themselves.”*

Participant 1: *“We have a project called the skills development program, which I think we were making a significant change to provide people in the community with skills. So, we help show them the best way to make a CV, apply for jobs, and be informed about modern technology,”*

Participant 5: *“We have the gardening program; we work with the community to show and teach them to plant. This way, they use their time wisely, especially those not working in the*

*community. In addition, we give them seedlings, open the garden spaces in the community, and then they plant and be able to grow their produce. However, these are community initiatives, not local government. I believe this can provide a great opportunity for them, including starting their businesses.”*

Participant 14: *“We recently started an old-age sewing project to help old people in the community learn sewing skills. The community implemented this initiative, not local government.”*

Participant 13: *“There is an upcoming prep pill education project currently being researched to be implemented in UMsunduzi. We want to educate the people of UMsunduzi about HIV because as much as we want to help deliver services to the people, we want them to be healthy. We are pleading with the Department of Health to help bring more health projects like this to UMsunduzi since people in the municipality, mostly the youth, suffer from healthcare issues.”*

The above result indicates that there are implemented local government projects in Sweetwaters, which the participants mentioned. The EPWUWP project has had a tremendous change in the community, especially for women, which has helped them show their skills and empowered them. The other project is the tar road project, which has improved the infrastructural challenges the people of UMsunduzi faced, especially those who had businesses. Also, the Prep pill project to try and alleviate the HIV virus has been important, especially for the youth, to try using the approaches that can assist in mitigating the virus as much as possible. The government should also be acknowledged for major infrastructure development initiatives, reports on service delivery indicate that progress has been uneven across the country, with different issues facing different areas, reflecting variable socio-economic conditions and municipal competence (Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2020). The pace of improvement in services and the quality of services provided do not, in many cases, match the expectations of many citizens (Bohler, David, Roberts, and Nomdo, 2016).

Participant 11: *“Currently, nothing is happening; there is no project; the councillor has called no meeting to tell us what plan the municipality has to bring in new projects.”*

Participant 1: *“I feel that the political officials need to implement projects that will benefit the people in the community, and it should be projects that the community members want.”*

Participant 4: *“A few days ago, we spoke to an NGO about bringing in projects that can fix and improve sanitation because we have exploded sewage pipe, which has smelled the whole place for some time now. And the people are no longer happy with this. More than 84,000 people get something called weekly solid waste removal in UMsunduzi. Look at this waste solution; it needs to be improved because the current situation is not good at all, and our local government is fully aware of these conditions.”*

Participant 3: *“The truth is, there are projects that are functional to some extent within our different wards in our municipality, but it is only projects that “we” as a community of UMsunduzi ask for or demand, not initiated by our local government, which we get only after fighting and burning things before our request are taken to consideration.”*

Participant 11: *“The projects I have seen implemented in our wards was the EPWUP project, where the municipality employed people to ensure that our people live in a clean and conducive place. They collect garbage to clean the roads, clinics, and schools.”*

Participant 6: *“There is also a community project for women not working and who do not receive a pension. It is called Omazibambele. They plant vegetables and fruits, which they sell around the area to help people who cannot afford to buy such produce at stores and have them accessible around the wards. In this way, the lives of people in the community are made easy and less expensive. With this project, they can also put bread on their table and even take their kids to school, which they could not do before.”*

Participant 14: *“There is another project the municipality is implementing in UMsunduzi to purify water from the streams to clean water for drinking. However, the water we use now is so dirty that we even share it with the cows. This has been a big issue as this water has infected people with diseases like cholera and stomachache. However, we have been promised that the*

*municipality is working tirelessly to ensure the project is successful, as it is very important to the people of UMSunduzi.”*

Participant 4: *“ We are implementing a maintenance of streetlights project because the people of UMSunduzi have been complaining about the high crime rate within the municipality for quite some time now that they have lost faith in the department as they feel like they have been unsafe in their communities.”*

Participant 13: *“We are busy working together with other stakeholders, including SADTU and the local government department, NPO/NGOs, and EDOS, helping us to find vulnerable people with low quite earning issues within the municipality so that the development can scratch every surface in the municipality and leave no one behind. In this way, we can respond to all of them and all their issues together; currently, we just placed a warrant of meetings, once again in cooperation with these NGOs, NPOs, and SADTU, to help us to be able to develop the youth in the form of training, like TB screening, HIV counselling, manicure, and pedicure training because the truth is that there are no job opportunities now in South Africa, people are struggling daily to get jobs.”*

Participant 7: *added, “I think everyone knows that according to the constitution of South Africa, it is the right of everyone to be safe and have a private space; that is why there is an ongoing sewage toilets project in 4 different wards because we want to make sure service delivery is received in all the corners of our municipality. More than 94 sewage toilets are already made in each ward, so making these lifesaving toilets will make our people have clean private toilets and minimize all the possible diseases they could have endured.”*

From the acquired information, it is evident that the implementation of developmental projects needs to be carefully looked at and revisited as it is clear that as much of the change they bring to people in rural areas, they are still not allocated to the only people who need them the most. With feasible and sustainable developmental projects, populations from rural areas stand a chance at accessing quality basic services such as nutrition, healthcare, education, employment and entrepreneurial support. The overall purpose of development assistance through the implementation of projects is to improve the livelihoods of citizens in recipient rural areas,

especially the impoverished (Hassan, 2021). Poverty reduction is internationally recognized as an important assistance issue, and this calls for better strategies for developmental projects to be sustainably implemented in rural areas. Coetzee and Ligthelm (2020) quote Rodaro (2005) to state that a shift has occurred from a narrow growth approach to a people-oriented approach. This includes the following objectives that people strive for in Sweetwaters community UMsunduzi Municipality:

- To increase the availability and widen the distribution of basic life-sustaining goods such as food, shelter, health and protection;
- To raise levels of living (in addition to higher incomes), by the provision of more jobs, better education and greater attention to cultural and humanistic values, all of which serve to enhance material well-being and generate greater individual and national self-esteem, Mahambehlala (2019) emphasises that development does not exclude development aid but, however, take local conditions, resources and development goals into account. However, the results suggest that not all community members have information regarding the projects implemented in the community. That is why they requested community halls where they would be free to share their ideas and be informed about the day-to-day activities in their community. This contradicts the statement by (Meldon et al., 2004) when they mentioned that people can choose to participate in projects that are beneficial to them. The main question is, how do you choose if you don't have information on what is happening or which projects are available?

The second objective sought to explore the role of developmental local government projects in enhancing the socio-economic well-being of the Sweetwaters community. The main research question was: What is the role of developmental local government projects to enhance the socio-economic wellbeing in Sweetwaters?

Participant 12 *"I will start with the project for EPWUP, which I see has a great impact on society. There are many unemployed people in UMsunduzi municipality, especially the youth, so many young people are working on this project. There are other projects, such as the construction of roads, which also employed many community members who needed the work. This project will greatly benefit the community now and in the future."*

*Participant 11: “These areas mentioned to be receiving this project are helping our children access good infrastructure and possibly producing careers within them that will greatly improve the community. However, it needs to be properly implemented so that all rural communities can be part of the initiatives. However, I can say that there has been a great difference in the community, with people believing in their municipality again.”*

The local government has played its role in enhancing the well-being of people in Sweetwaters based on the participant's responses to them, and the local government has done this by keeping the community members informed and including them whenever possible in the decision-making. However, it is unclear if local government includes all community members when making decisions.

*Participant 15: “There is a project currently being done within the wards called the community development shelter project that exists where the community is taught to keep livestock and teach them how to plant because we are trying to grow the agricultural sector in our municipality there is valuable land for people even to start making businesses out of their produce.”*

*Participant 10: “Since our area is concerned with pollution, we also have a recycling project, so we teach people about the waste collection business where people can sell their old belongings and appliances, which are recycled. Our objective is to raise awareness or education that this waste can be used to put bread on the table.”*

The findings suggest that communities have taken things into their own hands to improve their community by implementing community development projects. In addition, they mentioned that their area is underdeveloped, and they see the need for projects. Everatt and Gwagwa (2005) maintain that it is in rural areas where development projects need to be implemented, and this is because that is where development is ideally required.

The other objective sought to determine the enablers and barriers affecting the implementation of developmental local government projects in Sweetwaters community. The researcher wanted to find the core challenges that the local municipality and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform encounter to facilitate the development of local government initiatives in Sweetwaters.

Participant 15 added, “ *To this by saying: I believe what makes projects successful is an excellent representative system of local democracy which supply goods and services to their people, a community that is accountable and takes participation serious, ethical conduct with good planning processes, competent administrators and sound financial management but UMsunduzi municipality fail to bring projects or make a success of projects because we lack proper leadership, the people in power are in it for themselves not to work closely with the community to find the common goal which is super alarming as we have put them there while they persist authority with corruption and financial embezzlement.* ”

Participant 7: *‘The most important thing and what makes projects succeed is building the right team and including community stakeholders, leaders, and collaborators, ensuring a good relationship between them to get the desired goal and fulfil all their objectives. While also remaining flexible and adaptable when the process is challenged. The whole idea of community organizing is that people can and should come together to talk about what matters to them and then work together to change their communities successfully.’*

Participant 2: *“says what makes projects fail is the leadership in UMsunduzi. The political officials are always angry and non-responsive to all issues we raise regarding which projects we want to be implemented in our communities in a way that we have nothing to say anymore. However, the development in Sweetwaters cannot materialize by decree, nor can it be legislated or waved into existence by declarations. It has to be consciously built and sustained. Local government is at the center of development, and achieving a transformed and effective local government system will require strong leadership through a clear and consistent, long-term strategy.”*

Participant 9: *“I believe if the municipality is working closely with the community members, the projects can be a success and only if the team has well-defined and measurable goals to work towards, ideally if every member of the team is aware of each project objective and the stakeholder’s expectations concerning each. Otherwise, they may spend undue time and resources trying to accomplish something that does not provide the desired value.”*

Participant 1: *“Undoubtedly, the local sphere of government plays an important role in ensuring the effective delivery of services and basic infrastructures. The developmental position accorded to local government requires adequate administrative capacity and the implementation of sound strategic tools for the projects to be effectively implemented; at least, that is what I think. Implementing IDP is critical for enhancing service delivery and basic infrastructure, that is why UMsunduzi municipality needs to update their IDP to make sure that it is community participatory for the successful implementation of these projects in UMsunduzi.”*

Participant 5: *“If this happened before that a project was not completed, it is only because of lack of funding to sustain the project and the municipality working closely with the mayor; in most cases, projects get completed. Another thing is that when the project timeline is not appropriately planned, this tends to make the project take time, fuelling a lot of uncertainty, which in most cases makes community members lose faith in the municipality and cause riots. The Msunduzi municipality does not take us community members seriously, as they think we are uneducated and do not know our rights.”*

Participant 14: *“We know a lot more than they think and that R1 billion per annum is spent on municipal support and capacity building. Yet, there is no progressive change in Msunduzi. There are large numbers of credible municipal strategies, policies, guidelines, and programmes available to facilitate support, monitoring, and interventions within the local sphere. In addition, municipalities are governed through a complex yet robust legislative and regulatory framework. Despite this, in several instances, municipal performance in uMsunduzi municipality is far from optimal.”*

This clearly indicates that there are things that the local municipality and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform are doing wrong, as shown by many of the respondents who dissent on how they handle or facilitate development projects within this community. According to Hickey and Mohan (2004), most government officials use a ‘top-down’ approach. Many researchers have proved this to hinder most projects' desired objectives ultimately. From the findings, it can be deduced that the respondents were involved and others were not involved,

especially in the project conception, planning, and implementation. Furthermore, the findings revealed that community leaders truly believe that the community works in unison, which is not the case as the results showed. There is a large gap between doing things collectively and, to some extent, reaching one common goal regarding development projects. Another thing that the findings revealed is the unsatisfactory responses of the community drawn from the sample on how governmental and municipal officials handle and facilitate projects in their area.

The last objective sought to determine how the developmental local government projects impact the community's well-being in Sweetwater. The sub-question was envisaged to help understand whether community members were satisfied with the implemented projects in their communities and how these projects have changed or not changed their quality of life and fulfilled their well-being.

The first question the participants were required to answer regarding the impact was whether they understood what developmental local government projects and community participation meant. They answered the question according to their understanding.

Participant 1: *“Developmental local government projects to me, means infrastructural change within a community, and community participation means that community members must participate in what is happening in their community.”*

Participant 2: *“Developmental local government projects, to me, mean the creation of jobs, though they may be temporary, and community participation means taking part in all activities happening in your community.”*

Participant 3: *“Developmental local government projects and community participation to me means that community being fully involved in changes within their community and those changes are the ones which will better our lives.”*

Participant 4: *“Developmental local government projects to me means a process of bringing change in people’s lives through social structures and community participation, which is basically when community members get involved in activities happening in their community and gain full control of them.”*

The quotes above show that the participants understand the intertwined concepts, and each one mentioned what these concepts entail. They did mention infrastructure, job creation, a better standard of living, and a change in social structures, which are some of the significant key proponents of development. Oni (2005) mentioned the significance of understanding that development does not only entail and affect tangible assets but also the psycho-social and economic entities of the people that need to be developed.

On the concept of community participation, their emphasis is on the full involvement of the community in activities happening in their community. Additionally, the last participant mentioned one important element in development: ownership of development projects by beneficiaries. Theron (2005) and (Mchunu, 2014) concur that community participation, to some extent, inwardly stimulates a sense of ownership of the development projects and development process. Similarly, the development process becomes an integral part of the community and assists them in believing that they own their development process.

The follow-up question sought to validate the answers provided in the above question. Participants were asked if they participate in development projects within their community, and below are what a few of them had to say:

Participant 8; “*Yes, I do participate because it is important, and I get to learn new things with each project.*”

Participant 9: *‘Yes, I make sure that I participate because what I learn from each project prepares me for the next one.’*

The quotes above demonstrate that other community members, as shown from their responses, view development projects as another form of education; though it is not a formal one, there is something that they learned from each project. Their emphasis is on the skills they acquire during their time in these projects. Fundamentally, as Phologane (2014) asserts, development projects are prone to educate and equip residents with the appropriate skills that are to assist them in the future to improve their lives. Furthermore, stresses that development projects should not be limited to improve only the infrastructure but should extend to provide skills to its community members.

However, other participants do not see the importance of participating in development projects within their community, and below is what they had to say when they were asked the same question as the one above:

Participant 5: *“I do not because the meetings are not favourable, and I always get the messages late.”*

Participant 11: *“I do not benefit from any of the projects as an individual, and not everyone gets the message in time, but the chief always knows about these projects, so I do not see the need to participate.”*

Participant 7: *“Most meetings are not formal, and sometimes you find that we are sidelined from knowing about these projects.”*

Participants here display high disinterest in participation in development projects resulting from the manner in which the meetings are facilitated and the fact that they usually get the messages late or do not get it at all. It is evident that most community members still want a formal traditional way of being called for meetings, and how these meetings are facilitated should be in a traditional way, which to some extent is true as this researched community includes many illiterate elderly and young people. Supporting what these participants are saying, Cavaye (2001) and (Sibanda, 2011) highlighted that people are tired of committees that use public meetings, which are in most cases not traditional as default, and by so doing, they are tossing aside their traditional values and beliefs. Subsequently, these participants pointed out that they get the meeting invites when it is too late or not all.

The participants also mentioned that they are not benefiting from the projects, a concern expressed by most community members. They are blatantly saying that they can only participate if they were to gain or learn something in the process, which is not the case for them. With what they have said, it is safe to categorize them under the type of participation that participates for material gain and not to gain skills and knowledge, as explained by (Meldon et al., 2004).

The following question sought to discover any contact and relationship between the community and municipal and government officials. The question was whether the government and Municipal officials inform the community about new development projects in their area and if the way the officials approach them is appropriate.

Participant 2: *“The officials inform us, but I don’t like how they approach us. They often tell us which project will be done instead of asking us what we want.”*

Participant 4: *“They do come to consult with us during the IDP drafting, but when it is time for them to implement the projects, they do the opposite, which is taking decisions for us.”*

Participant 8: *“They do contact us, but for them to come and decide which projects must be done first, it is just not fair and not cool.”*

The replies mentioned above highlight how frustrating the officials are making people feel. Even when officials inform them about the projects that will be executed in their area, the fact that they decide which project should be completed first without consulting them is not appreciated, especially by the residents.

Because they are denied the opportunity to express their opinions and choose which projects should be carried out first, the community's self-awareness of their social reality, which they could realize and unleash with the assistance of both municipal and government officials, is essentially tossed aside. Rather, the officials make decisions regarding the initiatives prioritized in their community on their behalf. Tshishonga and Mbambo (2008), who attest to the statements made by the participants, claim that the officials are employing a top-bottom strategy in this case, which gradually discourages the community from taking part in the entire process of development projects as it is already alluded to by the above participants.

The researcher also wanted to determine the community's attitudes and perceptions regarding the impact of the projects implemented in Sweetwaters by the local government. Some participants are happy with the little change these projects have brought to the community and see a huge difference. However, others are not so convinced about the implemented projects as they feel a lot still needs to be done, and the local government has not scratched the surface yet. Here is what the participants had to say:

Participant 1: *“I think the projects I mentioned, the community is grateful and happy that at least their voices are being heard because these are projects that are needed, and they have been advocating for them to be brought in for quite some time. The community is happy they*

*will have access to good roads and improved infrastructure since it has been a lot of trouble for them, especially when there is rain. They must stop their businesses, and their kids cannot even go to proper schools, and day-to-day activities in the community become difficult, but they are happy that there is a difference. Just yesterday, there was a briefing of subcontractors when we discussed they were looking for at least 12 subcontractors who would be involved in an upcoming project doing v-drains and cabbings, so we engaged and opted for an increase in the number of people to be employed, and that means more people will get an opportunity.”*

Participant 7: *“The public is losing trust in the political leaders, not only in the ruling party, but they see that voting for the sake of voting and waiting for change is an unimportant thing; as a result, you will see that the rate of people voting drops down every time because people still consider voting as an exercise to their right to be in an organization, they believe is helping them. Now, they lose hope in everything related to politics. People are very concerned about what we have seen with the burning of tyres on the roads and community halls, showing their frustrations and helplessness. In addition, we understand that people's anger is legitimate, but how they address it is wrong, which is the biggest problem.”*

Participant 5: *“I will not speak badly of our municipality just because I can, but I am sorry to say but it is useless, sorry for saying it. Maybe it is better in other places or wards, but I stay in Ward 14. The municipality does not help with anything; the crime rate increases daily, people do not have jobs, and young kids do not go to school; they rather hustle because poverty is also leading the way, and life is just awful in the community. The only time we get something, or any initiative, is when the provincial department supports the municipality; then we get that little compensation until it's back to square one again.”*

Participant 6: *“Projects cannot be fully functional and active in Msunduzi because people in power abuse their power to benefit themselves and their families. For example, when the local government brings projects, they sabotage the estimated project money and employ their own families to participate without including all the necessary and deserving community members to support and monitor the project. In my opinion, a lot still needs to be changed.”*

Participant 15: *“To keep the continuity of these projects, it is necessary to sit down and call all the people that are affected, including the indigenous kingdom that is the chief of the area, the leadership of the municipality that is the councillor, the churches that are your pastors, and the community members since their opinion is critical and they think they are always right and they mostly know the projects that need to be brought to the community. All they need is to sit down and be shown the importance of working together for the projects to succeed. Educating people is important because it will open their eyes to things they were unaware of. So, educating people is so important because you can throw all the stones you want, but the people will still reject you.”*

Participant 3: *“The project from converting the gravel road to a tar road has changed a lot of our people's lives as unemployment is a big issue not only in UMsunduzi municipality but in South Africa as a whole, so we really think implementing these projects in our municipalities bring empowerment and mutual learning.”*

The ward councillor also added some insights on the community's attitudes regarding the implemented projects in UMsunduzi, and here is what he had to say:

*“The first important thing that we pride ourselves in as a municipality is that we teach our citizens, and we do anything to help them; we have just seen some of the community members started opening their businesses, and there are operating salons within the area people have started their businesses One of our helpers finished opening an internet café that can assist people around the neighbouring areas. We can just say that these projects have a big impact on the livelihoods of our communities now. We continue to offer youth training to encourage them to start more businesses. Another thing is the funding problem; you find that a person has a business idea but doesn't have funding, but by involving the NYDA they offer help. But, many projects fail tremendously because of a lack of resources and funds. You find that a project has been planned, but because there are no funds, it takes time to complete.”*

As the participants were able to share their attitudes and perceptions regarding the implemented projects, they were also asked what techniques may be undertaken to increase community benefits from local government projects to improve community well-being in Sweetwaters. What follows below is what they had to say:

Participant 3: *“I strongly think that the officials should not decide for us which projects should be of priority, as they don’t understand the importance of why we suggested and gave them those projects in sequence.”*

Participant 5: *“My opinion is that when the officials come to us to implement the projects, they must not change the sequence of our listed needs because it is we who understand our social and basic needs.”*

The respondents above highlight that officials must consider how they have listed projects they need according to their needs, as they understand and know their social reality regarding the basic standard of living. Therefore, to them, it is not fair when the people who are supposed to be intervening in bettering our lives reshuffle their prioritized list of needs and decide on which needs to be done first without consulting them again. The participant's frustrations are highlighted by Tshishonga and Mbambo (2008), who assert that community members need to feel that they are in charge of what is bound to change their lives than being dictated on what needs to be done to better their lives in the context of community development. In addition to what has been said, the following participant hinted at what most people from areas where development was needed it was realized. And this is what they had to say:

Participant 3: *“What these officials are doing wrong, how they make most of us as a community feel because I strongly feel that they take advantage of our educational background and use it to decide what needs to be done first. I think they must implement these projects according to how we have listed them.”*

Participant 6: *“What the officials are doing is wrong from where I am standing, the fact that they undermine the decision-making capacity of the community by not telling them why they are not doing things the way they have listed them. Therefore, I believe that people at the grassroots level of development should be consulted on every change that is made regarding what they have discussed during their meetings. Even better, community members need to be included in those meetings.”*

The above participants demonstrate the level of ignorance and how they are taken for granted by government officials. As they have rightfully said, their literacy level should not be used as a platform to deprive them of having to make final decisions on which projects must be implemented first when final decisions are being taken. Brown and Schafft (2011) highlighted that the level of illiteracy of community members leads to officials not consulting the community members during the whole process of projects.

Desai et al. (2013) support what the participants have highlighted by indicating that it is significant for municipal and government officials to consult community members transparently, and should the community feel that they are ignored, it creates confusion as most of the community members in areas that need development are mostly illiterate. Consequently, this will cause them to lose interest in participating in future development projects simply because they are not consulted. Therefore, consultation and transparency should be essential to community participation and development projects.

The question that follows sought to establish what community members think should be done to have sustainable development projects within their community, and below is what they had to say:

Participant 14: *“There should be training that is provided to the community as to what is expected from them throughout the project phase and also make them feel that they are in charge of how the project is as a whole.”*

Participant 2: *“The community needs to be empowered and taught skills to help them survive even after the project cycle is complete. That is why we have monitored all our projects to give our people skills so they can stand on their own even when the projects are not there.”*

Participant 10: *“Empowering us and making us own up to the projects will help us understand the importance of keeping the project running, and also, we should be awarded the opportunity to make our own decisions, not having people decide for us.”*

The quotes above demonstrate the need for these community members to be empowered so that the projects can be sustained, and with the relevant skills, as they have said, the projects can be sustained. Also, they articulated that their development and sustainability will be

attained if they have a sense of ownership. They further emphasized the need for them to be given a platform to make their own decisions regarding projects meant explicitly for them. Oni (2015) asserts that relevant and desired skills and knowledge towards community development projects enable community members to comprehend the significance of keeping the project running, as this will inwardly stimulate their sense of self-reliance. Furthermore, he explains the essentiality of empowering community members regarding their development projects as it enhances their capacity building, and this ultimately helps them make sound and meaningful decisions about the direction the projects should take. Additionally, (Sibanda, 2011) highlights that once the community is empowered, they can take ownership as the development projects belong to them.

Qualitative findings revealed that issues need to be addressed concerning community participation in developmental local government projects. Based on the outcome of the interviews conducted, it is evident that the problems highlighted are the ones that are hindering development in the researched area. Overall, the qualitative method elicited the study's aim and objectives, and each objective's findings were thoroughly discussed.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

Revitalizing rural centers can be a way to ensure that all rural residents enjoy better public service. The municipality must ensure that it does not allow itself to engage in political issues but instead focus on service delivery. This will ensure that the personnel recruitment process is not politically motivated but only based on merit. Deployment should be aligned with qualifications. The majority political party within a municipality should lead the way by ensuring it commits to effectively implementing municipal policies, developmental projects and activities that will assist the municipality in sustaining itself (Mabizela, 2020). This means that community members should hold the municipal council accountable. Members of the majority political party should not engage in numerical arrogance. They must regularly be held accountable. Transparency, democracy and good governance should be a municipality's key pillars and cultures (Mthiyane, 2022). In addition, the municipality needed to plan properly how it wanted to achieve its set objectives of delivering essential services to communities. Likewise, they need to have strategic plans to effectively and efficiently utilise resources. Otherwise, inadequate planning can contribute to mishaps with service delivery to communities, which is evident in Sweetwaters UMsunduzi Municipality.

Furthermore, the municipality needs to be more responsive to the needs and demands of communities, as seen by lengthy delays in addressing critical matters such as water shortages and other service delivery issues. If community members are not involved in the municipality, the municipality cannot focus on delivering services that are essential to communities. The study found an element of noncompliance with financial legislation by the municipality. Municipal officials do not comply with procurement policies. This, in turn, creates a burden on the municipality's finances as the municipality routinely disregarded procurement processes and procedures. This contributes to the inadequate delivery of services as funds for the provision of such essential services are usually exhausted due to illicit and irregular expenditure.

In this chapter, data from the respondents was presented, analyzed, and interpreted. The respondents highlighted the factors hindering the effective implementation of initiatives in their communities, the challenges of community participation, the level of community participation in the projects, and the strategies to increase community benefits from local government projects to improve community well-being in Sweetwater. Therefore, recommendations are presented in the chapter that follows.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **6. FINDINGS SUMMARY DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses mainly on the significant findings and how they have answered the research questions. What follows is a discussion of the major findings and how these findings have answered the research questions. The conclusions will be discussed under the following themes:

1. The developmental local government initiatives projects in Sweetwaters?
2. The role of developmental local government projects to enhance the socio-economic wellbeing in Sweetwaters?
3. The enablers and barriers affecting the implementation of initiatives in Sweetwaters?
4. The developmental local government projects impact the community's well-being in Sweetwater.

#### **6.2. Major Findings**

After the collected data was analyzed in chapter five, the researcher found major findings as discussed below:

##### **6.2.1. The implemented developmental local government projects in Sweetwaters**

There is an imbalance in the implemented developmental local government projects. The imbalance is brought by some respondents claiming there are several implemented development projects while others do not know of this. This shows that there is no communication between the municipality and the community members regarding which projects to implement, and this shows not all community members participate in those projects, as many of them are unaware of the projects. Many participants have claimed that they are not told of such projects.

### **6.2.2. Barriers affecting the implementation of developmental local government initiatives in Sweetwaters?**

The findings revealed that the local government has taken a significant and positive stride towards the promise of developmental local government projects. However, uMsunduzi municipality is still plagued by significant challenges in implementing developmental local government initiatives.

Challenges affecting some of the local government initiatives within the municipality include the lack of effective participation by local community members in the decision-making process or within the planning and implementation of the developmental local government initiatives. Community members are the only people aware of the problems they face and what services they need to be delivered for the development of their community; (Petunia and Selepe, 2020) added that if adequately engaged, communities add value to government planning and developmental project implementation, through providing expertise and local knowledge. However, corruption and maladministration exist in the implementation of such projects and seem to be the main impediments to the growth and development of many developmental local government initiatives in UMsunduzi municipality.

Other participants found it to be true that there is bias in developmental local government projects. As a result, this is partly attributed to urban constituencies being more organized than rural communities. Besides, the marginalization of rural communities. Kosec and Wantchekon (2020) argue that rural areas present logistical challenges due to their remoteness, which can make government accountability and service delivery, especially the implementation of developmental programmes to be slow and challenging. It can be argued that this political marginalization of rural areas gave little space for the rural poor to influence government policies and developmental initiatives. Therefore, it calls for strategies that would provide rural people with basic skills to interpret local government policies, and this should consider the high rate of illiterate that prevails in these areas.

Another major challenge is the lack of capacity-building opportunities to enhance community participation, weak administrative capacity coupled with poorly trained staff, and cadre deployment of unskilled personnel within the municipality who fail to implement developmental local government initiatives successfully. Tshishonga (2021) alluded that weak administrative capacity coupled with poorly trained staff is inter alia some of the reasons municipalities fail to deliver services. For example, the project entirely depends on

unskilled labourers for implementation, making the project's life difficult. Hence, to an unskilled person, it is normal not to question the superior's opinion, even though they know beyond a reasonable doubt that the opinion is impractical for the project execution.

Lack of accountability from the side of the community: no one is informed enough to question the standard of the developmental local government initiatives under implementation in the sense that the project leader does his or her will to implement the project. On the contrary, there is a lack of monitoring on the side of the government to hold the project leader or implementer accountable, thus leading to a lack of service delivery, which many of the participants are fighting against in the municipality. According to the participants, the challenge of service delivery is daunting, considering that demand for service exceeds the resources available. The local government's failure to fulfil its mandate and perform effectively has led to widespread disillusionment, resulting in communities losing trust in the institution. Thus, people's distrust of local government has led to democratic deficit and participation fatigue. Tapscott (2020) describes it as growing tired of the rhetoric of participation and empowerment without any material gain.

The other contributing challenge is that ward counsellors are not fully operational, resulting in poor community communication. Ward counsellors have been the focus of considerable attention by the government and civil society, with substantial investment already made to ensure that these structures have the capacity and resources required to fulfil their envisaged roles as the voices of communities. There is a broad lack of knowledge among the ward committee members about implementing developmental local government initiatives, leading to a high number of developmental local government initiatives failing in uMsunduzi Municipality. (Smith, 2008) stresses about this that ward committees have been the focus of considerable attention by the government as well as civil society, with substantial investment already made in an attempt to ensure that these structures have the necessary capacity and resources required for them to fulfill their envisaged roles as a 'voice' of communities. At the same time, questions have been asked about how effective these institutions are, whether they are useful conduits for community involvement in local governance, and whether, as 'created spaces' for public participation, they are inherently capable of playing the critical role expected of them, and whether they create opportunities for real power-sharing between municipalities and citizens.

### **6.2.3. The level of community participation in developmental local government projects**

The findings revealed an imbalance in the level of community participation. This imbalance is brought up by the challenges the community is encountering, as revealed in Chapter 5. However, not everyone participates, according to the participants; some participate, and those who do not participate do so based on their reasons or gains, according to their responses. Therefore, it is evident that these community members do not share or have a common objective in participating in development projects. To be sure that the participatory democracy is complete, it must include all its principles, such as inclusivity, diversity, transparency, flexibility, accessibility, accountability, trust, commitment, respect, and building of the community capacity. To achieve citizen participation, it is vital to attain service delivery objectives to the people (Carothers, 2014). According to Hacker et al. (2012), by displaying the involvement of capacity building, the community must be well informed and know exactly what it is to be developed and the benefits attained. The development must be needs-driven, not imposed on the community.

### **6.2.4. Challenges of community participation**

Findings reveal that there are major challenges regarding community participation in development projects. The challenges start from the community not working in unison, although their traditional leader and political leaders assume that their community shares the same interests, which is not the case. Also, the community demonstrates the need to be empowered, as this will help them acquire power and be effective. Municipal and government officials also contribute to these challenges by not involving community members in decision-making, not consulting with community members regarding changes made during the project cycle, not being transparent, and using a top-down approach regarding development projects for these community members. Masango (2003) states that local officials and ward councils must express community identity and establish community goals, have political management and decision-making structures, provide a diversity of services, and offer residents an opportunity to participate in decision-making. The findings demonstrate a lot that the community leaders and municipal and government officials need to do to address these challenges that the community is encountering.

#### **6.2.5. Strategies that can be used to encourage the increase of community benefits from local government projects to improve community well-being.**

The findings reveal that the community wants to be made part of every decision taken throughout the development project stages and to be informed regarding every change regarding the projects within their area. By so doing, they believe that they will have an opportunity to contribute to what needs to be done regarding the changes and planning of the projects. Web, (2022) supported this by saying community development works on the principle that everyone should take equal responsibility and participate in development projects. Therefore, this gives them some sense of ownership of their own development projects. Therefore, this will win their full and maximum participation, and they will be content.

Findings also show the need for community engagement, which brings together diverse perspectives to improve the impact of policies and projects on people. Hussey (2022) states that constructive relationships between communities and government institutions make community engagement desirable, necessary, and viable as it is likely to lead to more equitable, sustainable public decisions and improve the liveability of local communities. Furthermore, the findings show that local government should allow individuals, stakeholders, and community groups to understand and contribute to projects and policies. Engaged communities are thriving communities. In addition, local governments can identify issues while unlocking innovation when they engage a diverse section of the community. This influx of creative energy helps create places and spaces that people are connected to. Community engagement also creates a culture of trust, transparency, equity, resilience, and innovation.

#### **6.2.6. How do developmental local government projects improve health and community well-being in Sweetwaters?**

Findings show that an equitable, inclusive community engagement approach to public decisions ensures that the people most affected and most marginalized, especially those who have been historically left out of these conversations (e.g., low-income people, returning citizens, communities of colour, recent immigrants, speakers of English as a second language), have a say in the decisions that affect their lives. Inclusive civic engagement results in government processes, practices, and decisions that are more responsive to community priorities, avoid many unforeseen consequences, and create relationships that hold local governments accountable (Dam, 2023). Effective community engagement can also lead to decisions that result in a more equitable distribution of the drivers of good health, like where

public transit infrastructure is located or investments in neighbourhood parks, schools, or housing. Additionally, giving people more control over the decisions that affect their lives and their communities has positive impacts on health. Most important, improvements in government practices, such as local agencies' engagement strategies, can lead to lasting changes in organizational culture, policies, and processes that extend long after any one public decision-making process. With a greater commitment to intentionally increasing equity in their community engagement efforts, local governments are in a better position to address social and health inequities and promote access to resources, services, and programs that help people lead healthier lives. (Haldane et al., 2019).

### **6.3. Recommendations that address the challenges mentioned above affecting the implementation of developmental local government initiatives in Sweetwaters**

#### **6.3.1. Public participation**

Improving and encouraging the culture of public participation that promotes inclusive participation and actively incorporates public input on vital governance issues remains vital in this democratic era. It should be stressed that public participation is a key tenet of democratic governance. Municipalities should engage and consult civil society more frequently in policy formulation and implementation and incorporate them in governance structures (Meyer and Venter, 2013).

The process ensures community participation is a core principle of legislation. There is a wide consensus that local democracy entails participatory and inclusive decision-making processes in which the beneficiaries have a substantial say in determining local government developmental agendas (Masango, 2001). Therefore, to achieve this, community awareness of rights and obligations must be enhanced so that citizens can play an instrumental role in municipal affairs and implement developmental local government initiatives in their localities. For local government to live up to its potential, it depends not only on the availability of skilled personnel and financial resources but also on the role played by communities in the structures (Meyer and Venter, 2013).

#### **6.3.2. Curbing corruption and promoting financial compliance**

There is an urgent need to rethink the innovative ways of curbing corruption and other administrative malpractices within UMsunduzi municipality. Local government

transformation in South Africa has pressured municipalities to manage their financial resources effectively, economically, and efficiently to meet their developmental mandate (Nene, 2019). Therefore, municipalities need to improve sound financial management requirements as envisaged in the statutory framework by appointing qualified and capable officials, including chief financial officers and internal auditors, with the right and appropriate skills. Importantly, municipal officials must account for results, not only for budget spending, and as more resources are transferred to local government, there is a need to strengthen the institutions that enforce accountability of public resources (Meyer and Venter, 2013). The ever-worsening trend revealed by socio-economic indicators in developing nations, increasing cognizance of the deleterious effects of corruption, mounting anxiety about organised crime, rigorous research that measures the impact of corruption; and anti-corruption websites and networks are the main drivers that have fuelled anti-corruption movements and have showed strengths in municipalities (Chule, 2023). Other research scholars can also do more research into anti-corruption mechanisms to devise a more successful rate of implementation of developmental projects in rural areas.

A strategy aimed at addressing mismanagement is expected to prioritize good governance. In contrast, a plan to address unemployment and inequality will probably revolve around economic policies aimed at revitalizing the South African economy. These include verifying the quality and appropriateness of internal audit and audit committees. Therefore, this requires effective monitoring by the officials in managerial positions (Ambe, 2012).

### **6.3.3. Capacity building**

Building municipal officials' capacities becomes essential for municipalities to fulfil and optimally achieve their obligations envisaged in the constitution and other national policies. Capacity building is one of the most essential tools available to local government in bridging the gaps in what is expected of municipal officials and what they can deliver. In the context of the overall transformation of local government, skill development is critical as it lays the basis for a more people-oriented local government system that can meet the people's demands for democracy, reconstruction, and development (Ndou, 2015). In addition, for local government to work, there is a need for investment in capacity building for the councillors and officials, including the stakeholders involved in such initiatives, to organize their programs for greater impact and link them more accurately to the national democratic transition.

According to Thornhill and Madumo (2011), developmental local government is intended to have a major impact on the daily lives of South Africans. As a result, it should seek a new focus on improving the people's standard of living and quality of life. Thus, developmental local government means strong leadership and a clear vision for local government. This requires municipal officials to discharge their responsibilities with prudence and in an efficient, transparent, and accountable manner, thus promoting good governance (Ndou,2015).

Ward committees have been introduced to local government as community structures and should play a critical role in linking and informing local government about the needs, aspirations, potentials, and problems of the communities (Tshabalala,2007). By working directly with the municipalities, ward committees serve as a channel to give a voice to previously disadvantaged communities. Therefore, ward committees have an essential role in actively participating in and determining core municipal processes such as integrated development planning (IDP), budgeting, and the municipal performance management process (Putu, 2018).

This study further argued that the two-tier system in rural local government needs to be observed and evaluated closely in terms of whether it contributes to the proper implementation of developmental local government initiatives or hinders the speedy delivery of services. The study further argued that most people working for rural municipalities have insufficient skills to implement local government services in rural areas, which needs to be carefully examined.

1. It is the duty of the municipality to develop the capacity of the community to enable effective participation in development projects (Zweni, 2023). Municipalities should be characterized by a high standard of professional ethics, impartiality, effectiveness, and transparency. Municipality officials should conduct skill audits of the communities so as to understand their level of understanding and other deficiencies. Service delivery should become a priority as municipalities optimize access to all communities, emphasizing improving the quality of life for all (Govender, 2023).
2. The municipal officials should work hand in hand with ward committees and CDWs to ensure that the communities are fully involved in the development programmes in the villages. In addition, ensure that the elected Councilor understands the IDP documents and IDP processes first, then the communities. This approach can assist since the Councillor's role includes providing strategic vision, guiding policies, setting service

standards, and monitoring the performance of the community (Mnqayi,2021). When there are public hearings, municipal officials must ensure that the dates of these meetings are well broadcast. These meetings are the most common method of public participation. It is where the community is given a chance to air their grievances and needs. It provides the community with a fair and open opportunity to state its case on the matter (Mudzanani, 2017). In return, for the officials or other stakeholders who drive the IDP and project life, it is their time to address the community and talk about the implementation processes and what is expected from the community for the developmental projects to be effectively implemented (Majam, 2018).

3. The councillors also need to report back to the community why other service delivery are not going to be done on a certain period and will be done another time (Vries, 2021). The ward committees have been established as the tools to encourage community participation for the municipalities that have opted to have them. They are there to assist with problems experienced by the people at the ward level. Duma (2019) states that the councillors, who are elected by citizens and ratepayers, therefore, have an exciting and challenging role and function to fulfil. Communication is a very important tool in facilitating participatory governance.

#### **6.3.4. Recommendations to address the research problem based on the study's findings.**

This section details the recommendations based on the above conclusions. Due to the significance of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Community leaders must ensure that their community works in unison and shares a common goal for development participation. In addition, municipal and government officials should see to it that with every project they introduce, they must empower community members, ensure transparency, and consult with them on matters concerning their development projects. They must also use the bottom-up approach in community development projects to avoid the confusion and frustrations of community members.
2. The consultation, feedback, and people's participation need to be carefully reviewed. In the current system of governance, most activities need to be people-driven. Observation showed that councilors only report to selected individuals in their wards. Other community members were excluded because of the fear that they would challenge

issues. Therefore, they were not always available to address community concerns. Consequently, community members would get disillusioned on community matters and not allocate time to attend community meetings.

3. Community members should have gatherings to address issues that affect them as a community to enable them to have one common goal or objective regarding development matters.
4. Municipalities and government should include community members in decision-making from the project design to project handover to ensure active participation by community members.
5. Local government programmes are more effective and sustainable if implemented with community-based traditional knowledge.
6. One important aspect is to know the local government and municipal officials whether the project is relevant to short and longer-term beneficiaries and how the intervention will contribute to the specific development objectives. This approach can boost the readiness of beneficiaries to collaborate. As a result, in many cases, relevancy and weak design have been the main reasons for the success and failure of an intervention in developmental projects.
7. In terms of financial commitment, the government needs to take ownership, which cannot only be the signing of the agreement. The real commitment is in the actual disbursement of the course of the projects. (In form and on time). However, the focus shouldn't be on the money in any case. My point is that if the government is interested in the project and its desired results, they need to commit and provide the funding or co-funding, and they are also in the driver's seat; hence, ultimately, they should even hold donors to live up to their commitments. (And the other way around). Otherwise, closing one's eyes and continuing as if nothing happens will likely end in one more non-effective project.
8. Strengthening civil society organizations and promoting their inclusion in the implementation of development projects can help sustain development outcomes and hold governments accountable for the resources invested in projects.
9. Recruit a project management team that possesses the requisite capacity (both as individuals and as a team) to deliver development projects: Project Management Professionals are few, and even though possessing this qualification does not necessarily guarantee quality delivery, coupled with experience, motivation, and

commitment, it does serve as a recipe for success. The project knowledge areas are critical for project management success and should not be underestimated.

10. Effective stakeholder analysis and management throughout the project life cycle is essential: This will ensure smooth implementation, promote ownership, and guarantee sustainability. But, very importantly, the continued utilization of the outcomes by beneficiaries is likely to be achieved. Otherwise, we have seen projects that end at the completion of construction work; for instance, markets are built but not utilized beyond the project life. Often, these projects are brought to communities by some influential retired civil servant or politician, usually without due regard for the interests and influences of other actors within society, so the project ends up as a white elephant.
11. Project Sustainability Plan and Exit Strategy are needed: One of the reasons for the lack of sustainability of many projects is the lack of a sustainability plan and exit strategy. Projects phase out without proper handover of interventions to existing institutions or structures for continuity. These institutions or structures need to be well prepared (capacity building) to take over the management and operationalization of project outcomes, which must be carefully identified and appreciated with the involvement and input of the beneficiaries, who are the end-users of the facilities. Implementing a sustainability plan/Exit strategy is a painstaking effort but can guarantee development project success if carefully done.

#### **6.4. Conclusion**

Coordinating rural development initiatives that contribute to sustainable livelihoods through global, regional, national and local efforts. Strategies to deal with rural development should take into consideration the remoteness and potential in rural areas and provide targeted differentiated approaches. A healthy and dynamic agricultural sector is an important foundation of rural development, generating strong linkages to other economic sectors (Pawlak, 2020). Rural livelihoods are enhanced through the effective participation of rural people and rural communities in the management of their own social, economic and environmental objectives by empowering people in rural areas, particularly women and youth, including through organizations such as local cooperatives and by applying the bottom-up approach. Close economic integration of rural areas with neighbouring urban areas and the creation of rural off-farm employment can narrow rural-urban disparities, expand opportunities and encourage the retention of skilled people, including youth, in rural areas. There is considerable potential for

rural job creation in farming, agro-processing, and rural industry and in building rural infrastructure for the sustainable management of natural resources, waste, and residues. Rural communities are still faced with challenges related to access to basic services and economic opportunities, as well as some degree of incoherence with regard to planning related to the rural-urban divide and implementation of developmental projects (Hasan, 2022). Investments in environmental protection, rural infrastructure, and rural health and education are critical to sustainable rural development and can enhance national well-being. Beyond meeting basic needs, investments must be linked to the potential to raise productivity and income. The vulnerabilities of the rural poor to the economic and financial crisis and water shortage must be addressed.

This study covered the background of the study, problem statement, aim of the study-specific objectives, critical questions, limitations, and delimitation of the study. In the problem statement, the researcher demonstrated how the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and other statutes emphasize the significance of involving the public through public participation in matters affecting them in bettering their lives. The study's main aim was to explore the implementation and impact of developmental local government projects on the socio-economic well-being of the Sweetwaters community and the UMsunduzi Local Municipality.

This chapter discussed the major research findings guided by the research questions. The researcher highlighted the literature regarding the developmental local government, the implementation of the developmental local government projects, how they have influenced community participation, its level of participation, and even the strategies to be used for the community benefits from such projects. It even touched on the legal framework to outline the local government's duty in line with the study. The researcher further outlined and presented the research methodology used in the study by focusing on the data collection methods and how data was analyzed and interpreted. The researcher synthesized the findings, gave recommendations, and concluded the study. Based on the study's findings, the recommendations were formulated to address the challenges mentioned above and the research problem.

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## Annexure A: Ethics approval letter



05 September 2023

Londeka Siphesihle Ngubane (219017397)  
School Of Built Env & Dev Stud  
Howard College Campus

Dear LS Ngubane,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00005972/2023

Project title: Exploring the implementation and impact of developmental local government projects on socio-economic well-being of Sweetwaters community uMsunduzi Local Municipality.

Degree: Masters

### Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 08 August 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

This approval is valid until 05 September 2024.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

#### Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: [hssrec@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:hssrec@ukzn.ac.za) Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

## Annexure B: Gate Keepers Letter

### ***The Msunduzi Municipality***

Private Bag X 321  
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3200  
Φ (033) 392 3000

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Pietermaritzburg  
3200  
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08 June 2023

**Re: letter of Support to Exploring the Implementation of Developmental Local Government Projects and its Impact on the Community's Well-Being**

Dear Londeka Siphesihle Ngubane,

The Ward Cllr and Ward Committee grant you the permission to conduct your research as requested at Vulindlela community under Msunduzi Municipality **to Exploring the Implementation of Developmental Local Government Projects and its Impact on the Community's Well-Being**: A case study of Msunduzi Municipality. This study will help us to investigate the implementation of developmental local government projects and their impact on the community's well-being in the Sweetwaters rural area of Pietermaritzburg.

We also support the aims of your study to analyse the **To Exploring the Implementation of Developmental Local Government Projects and its Impact on the Community's Well-Being**:

Please upon the completion of your study, the researcher please note that you will provide Msunduzi Municipality/Ward Cllr/ ward committee with a copy of the full research report.

Yours Sincerely  
Commissioner Of Oaths (Ex Officio)  
**Ward 2 Councillor**  
Msunduzi Municipality  
City Hall, Chief Albert Luthuli Street,  
Pietermaritzburg  
Cllr SR Ntuli

## Annexure C: Invitation to participate A: Zulu



Mhlanganyeli Othandekayo

Igama lami ngingu Londeka Siphesihle Ngubane. Njengamanje ngenza izifundo zami zeMasters kwezokuThuthukiswa koMphakathi eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu-Natal, eKhampasi yaseHoward College. Isihloko socwaningo lwami sithi Ukuhlola ukuqaliswa kanye nomthelela wamaprojekthi ohulumeni wasekhaya athuthukayo enhlalakahleni yezomnotho yomphakathi wase-Sweetwaters uMsunduzi Municipality.

Izinjongo zocwaningo zimi kanje:

1. Ukuhlonza kanye nokuhlola amaprojekthi ohulumeni wasekhaya athuthukile asetshenziswa emphakathini waseSweetwaters.
2. Ukuhlola iqhaza lezinhlelo zokuthuthukiswa kohulumeni basekhaya ekuthuthukiseni inhlalakahle yenhlalakahle yezomnotho emphakathini waseSweetwaters.
3. Ukuhlola amandla kanye nezithiyo ezithinta ukuqaliswa kwemiklamo yohulumeni wasekhaya enentuthuko emphakathini waseSweetwaters.
4. Ukuphenya ngomthelela wezinhlelo zohulumeni wasekhaya ezithuthukisayo empilweni yomphakathi waseSweetwaters.

Uyamenywa ukuthi ubambe iqhaza ocwaningweni. Lolu cwaningo luphenya ukuqaliswa kwemiklamo yohulumeni basekhaya enentuthuko kanye nomthelela wayo enhlalakahleni yomphakathi endaweni yasemakhaya yaseSweetwaters eMgungundlovu. Lolu cwaningo luhlose ukuhlola ukuqaliswa kwemiklamo yohulumeni basekhaya enentuthuko nokuthi ukuqaliswa kwayo emiphakathini yasemakhaya kunethonya kanjani (okuhle noma okubi) inhlalakahle yomphakathi. Kuzothatha cishe imizuzu eyi-10 kuya kweyishumi nanhlanu

ukuqedela uhlu lwemibuzo. Sicela waziswe futhi ukuthi azikho izinzuzo zemali zokubamba iqhaza ocwaningweni. Ukubamba kwakho iqhaza kuhlala kuwukuzithandela futhi kungase kuhoxiswe noma nini uma ubona kunesidingo, futhi ngeke ujeziswe ngokuthatha lesi sinyathelo.

Idatha ezotholwa izotholakala kimina nakubaphathi bami kuphela. Ngakho-ke, izinsiza ezisetshenziselwa ukuqoqa idatha zizogcinwa efayeleni elivikelwe ngephasiwedi, elizokwaziwa yimina kuphela nomphathi wami.

Uma kuba nezinkinga noma ukukhathazeka/ imibuzo, ungathintana nomcwaningi usebenzisa iimeyili yesikole sami ku-219017397@stu.ukzn.ac.za [REDACTED] noma umphathi wami uNkk A.S Ngcobo ku-ngcobo@ukzn.ac.za noma iKomidi le-UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics; imininingwane yokuxhumana imi kanje:

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

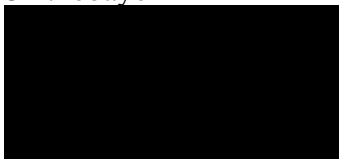
Durban 4000 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Ukuhlanganyela kwakho okuqotho ocwaningweni kuzokwaziswa kakhulu.

Ozithobayo



Londeka Siphesihle Ngubane

## Annexure D: Invitation to participate B: English



Dear Participant

My name is Londeka Siphesihle Ngubane. I am currently pursuing my Masters in Community Development at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus. The title of my research is Exploring the implementation and impact of developmental local government projects on socio-economic well-being of Sweetwaters community uMsunduzi Local Municipality.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify and assess the developmental local government projects implemented in Sweetwaters community.
2. To explore the role of developmental local government projects in enhancing the socioeconomic well-being in Sweetwaters community.
3. To explore the enablers and barriers affecting the implementation of developmental local government projects in Sweetwaters community.
4. To investigate the impact of the developmental local government initiatives on community well-being in Sweetwaters community.

You are invited to participate in the study. This study investigates the implementation of developmental local government projects and their impact on the community's well-being in the Sweetwaters rural area of Pietermaritzburg. This study aims to explore the implementation of developmental local government projects and how their implementation in rural communities impact (whether positively or negatively) the community's well-being. It will take approximately

10 to fifteen minutes to complete the questionnaire. Kindly be informed as well that there are no monetary benefits for participating in the study. Your participation remains voluntary and may be withdrawn at any stage should you deem it necessary, and you will not be penalized for taking such action.

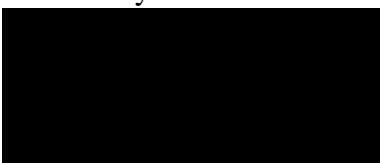
The data that will be obtained will only be available to me and my superiors. Therefore, the resources used for collecting data will be stored in a password-protected file, which will only be known by myself and my supervisor.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions, you may contact the researcher using my school email address at [219017397@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:219017397@stu.ukzn.ac.za) contact number [REDACTED] or my supervisor Mrs. A.S Ngcobo at [ngcoba@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ngcoba@ukzn.ac.za) or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee; contact details are as follows:

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**  
Research Office, Westville Campus  
Govan Mbeki Building  
Private Bag X 54001  
Durban 4000 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA  
Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609  
Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Your honest participation in the study will be highly appreciated.

Sincerely



Londeka Siphesihle Ngubane

**Annexure E: Concern form A: Zulu**

**IFOMU LEMVUME LOKUBAMBA IQHAZA**



Mhlanganyeli Othandekayo

I.....Ngazisiwe      ngayo  
yonke imininingwane yalolucwaningo olusihloko sithi: **Ukuhlola ukuqaliswa kanye nomthelela wamaprojekthi ohulumeni basekhaya athuthukayo enhlalakahleni yezomnotho yomphakathi wase-Sweetwaters uMsunduzi Local Municipality.**

ngalokhu ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi ngiyakuqonda okuqukethwe kulo mbhalo kanye nohlobo lweprojekthi yocwaningo, futhi ngiyavuma ukubamba iqhaza kuphrojekthi yocwaningo. Ngazi kahle futhi mayelana nalolu cwaningo, nokuthi ukuhlanganyela kungokuzithandela. Ngingakwazi ukuhoxa ohlelweni nganoma yisiphi isigaba ngaphandle kwezinhlawulo zokuhoxa kwami. Ngakho-ke, ngiyazi ukuthi lonke ulwazi olutholwe kimi phakathi nalolu cwaningo luzohlala luyimfihlo nokuthi ubuwena buzovikeleka kahle kunoma yikuphi ukushicilelwa kolwazi olutholiwe. Ngiyavuma ukuthi inqubo yenhlolekhono izorekhodwa ngekhompyutha, futhi lonke ulwazi oluqoqiwe luzogcinwa luyimfihlo. Ngakho-ke, ngiyavuma ukuthi le nhlolekhono irekhodwe.

Uma ngeneminye imibuzo / noma kukhona engikhathazekile ngakho okuhlobene nalolucwaningo ngazisiwe ukuthi ngingaxhumana nomcwaningi ku (0660494414).

Uma ngenemibuzo noma ukukhathazeka ngamalungelo ami njengomhlanganyeli ocwaningweni, noma uma ngikhathazekile ngengxenywe yocwaningo noma kubaphenyi ngingaxhumana:

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KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

**Annexure F: Consent form B: English**

**CONSENT FORM**



Dear Participant

I, ....., hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participate in the research project. I have also been well informed about this study, and that participation is voluntary. I can withdraw from the process at any stage without any penalties for my withdrawal. Therefore, I am aware that all information obtained from me during this research study will remain confidential and that my identity will be well protected in any publication of the obtained information. I agree that the interview process will be electronically recorded, and all collected information will be kept confidentially. Therefore, I consent to have this interview recorded.

**Kindly sign at the bottom as part of having understood the content of this letter and your participation in this study.**

..... **Date:** .....

**Signature of participant**

I understand that the information that I provide will be stored electronically and will be used for research purposes now or at a later stage.

**Consent to be audio recorded**

Signing your name below means you accept to be audio recorded in this research study.

.....  
**Signature of participant** **Date:**.....

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name and signature of interviewer** **Date**