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**Assessing the effectiveness of public participation in improving the  
local community development prospects in Ndwedwe Local  
Municipality**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

I, Lucky S'bongiseni Ngubane declare that

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
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## **ABBREVIATION**

ABCD:	Asset-Based Community Development
AGSA:	Auditor General of South Africa
ANC:	African National Congress
CDW:	Community Development Worker
COGTA:	Department of Corporate Governance and Traditional Affairs
COVID-19:	Coronavirus disease 2019
DA:	Democratic Alliance
EXCO:	Executive Committee of Council
EPWP:	Extended Public Works Programme
IDP:	Integrated Development Plan
IGR:	Inter-government Relations
IFP:	Inkatha Freedom Party
MSA:	Municipal Structures Act
MFMA:	Municipal Finance Management Act
MSA:	Municipal Systems Act
NYDA:	National Youth Development Agency
PMS:	Performance Management Systems
RSA:	Republic of South Africa
SALGA:	South African Local Government Association
VD:	Voting Districts
WC:	Ward Committee

## **ABSTRACT**

Evidence suggests that public participation is among the most crucial factors in fostering both equitable and sustainable local economic development in the local government sphere. Public participation and its various mechanisms are a process of seeking and enhancing the engagement of those individuals and stakeholders potentially affected by or invested in a decision-making. Previous research has established that, in local government, the main purpose of public participation is to enhance transparency, encourage openness in government and build ownership of development decisions as well as programs and projects. Moreover, studies on local economic development in South Africa have shown the importance of public participation in enhancing and fostering local social and economic development. However, previous published have failed to expose how the implementation of certain public participation mechanism may have improved the livelihoods of local communities.

This research examines the role of public participation mechanism in the context of local community development. Drawing on the case study of Ndwedwe Municipality, this study sought to assess the public participation mechanism and system implemented by the Ndwedwe municipality. It specifically evaluates the extent to which the current public participation mechanism and system are successful in fostering both economic and social development in Ndwedwe municipality. Data for this study were collected using semi-structured interviews. Ten (n=10) purposively sampled individuals were selected for the interviews. Data were presented and analysed using the thematic analysis approach.

Findings show that the community is not fully involved in the issues that concerns them as development of their communities. This also means that there is limited public participation thereby making it less effective. It is highly recommended that the communication practices should be closely examined and appropriately adjusted to include different stakeholders. This means that there will be an introduction of new policies that emphasise the inclusion of all stakeholders previously excluded from decision-making.

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# **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

## **1.1. Background**

The governing African National Congress' (ANC) emphasis on public participation has been concerned with educating and mobilising the electorate. Initially, the ANC drive to educate and mobilise the masses was driven by the need to sanitise and legitimise South Africa's new political institutions and its young democracy (Hassim, 2006). From 1994 to date, political scholars and researcher have emphasised the importance of "people to be involved" and for democracy taken to people (Deegan 2002). However, when participation is interpreted as a sign of approval or conferral of legitimacy, it is a rather different entity than normative notions of participatory democracy. Stability of any given democracy depends not only on economic development but also upon the capacity of a system to engender and maintain public confidence in its efficacy (Deegan 2002). To illustrate, in countries that are in a period of transition, for example when new groups become politically active, as in the case of South Africa, access to legitimate political institutions could win their loyalty to the system.

The country's new democracy is considered legitimate regardless of the notions that citizens' expectations of government and its political leaders have been high. This is the especially when it comes to the delivery of services and the participation of the citizens to community development. From 1994, perceptions among the South African public were that democracy would lead to social-economic advancement and the development of their local communities (Lues 2014; Mosala, Venter and Bain 2017). Maphumulo and Bhengu (2019) argued that on some promises and citizen expectations, the government has delivered. However, Enqvist and Ziervogel (2019: 1358) argue that this may be a perilous gauge because, if unfulfilled, the voting public may be susceptible to dissatisfaction, disenchantment and, potentially, political apathy.

The post-apartheid constitution of South Africa has provisions for community participation in the formation, execution and assessment of integrated development planning at community level (Williams 2006). Community participation, that is, the hands and direct engagement of the local citizens in the affairs of governance, planning and inclusive development programmes at the local and grassroots stage, has become an imperative of democratic practice in recent years. Citizen participation is an all-encompassing notion which serves as a canopy term for a new style of development planning intervention (Mohangi 2015). This statement points to the prominence of

public participation at local the local government sphere by communities aimed towards effective and sustainable community development. The big questions that remain unanswered is therefore, to what extent do the elected leaders in local government (mayors and ward councillors) understand the importance of public participation mechanism and systems and their effectiveness in enhancing development of their local communities?

In the case of South Africa, community/public participation has become synonymous with legitimate governance. To that end, for instance, the Municipal Structures Act, Chapter 4, subsection g and h emphasise, respectively, that the “executive mayors annually report on the involvement of community organizations in the affairs of the municipality and ensure that due regard is given to public views and report on the effect of consultation on the decisions of council” (RSA, 1998a: 14-17). Despite this provision, less has been done to integrate the community in issues of local government. The purpose of this research is to evaluate the extent to which the current public participation mechanism and system are successful in fostering both economic and social development in the Ndwedwe Local Municipality, in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Public participation mechanism includes, among other things, community consultations, municipal council outreach, and public hearings.

## **1.2. Problem statement**

As enshrined in the constitution and various acts in South Africa, public participation should be a development tool that is essential to foster communication between the local government and its constituencies (Act No. 108 of 1996). It is an essential instrument for the spheres of government to communicate and interact with citizens, for services delivery; changes which may have an impact on their lives; programmes and new projects and involvement in decision-making. The South African Municipal Structures Act (No. 117 of 1998) provides interesting arguments for public participation, i.e., it states that public participation and involvement is the only available means for citizens and the local government to amalgamate and foster a type of development that benefits all. Moreover, the Municipal Structures Act argues that involving citizens in decision-making awards them a platform on which they can best articulate their needs, help improve ownership of processes and improve the legitimacy of government projects (Nzimakwe 2017). In the process of fostering a sustainable engagement between citizens and the local government, public participation should ensure that all stakeholders are afforded a fair opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes.

Unfortunately, public participation and its implemented strategies have not met the expectations of both the local government and the citizenry in most of South Africa. Previous research has found that most community participation mechanism and forums in post-apartheid South Africa are mainly spectator politics (Davids, Prince, Makiva and Fagbadebo 2021; Zantsi 2020). To illustrate, most citizens have mainly become endorsees of the already designed programmes (Davids et al. 2021). Moreover, community participation has been hampered by the idea that most community members who ought to participate meaningfully are reduced to the items of administrative manoeuvrings and a phenomenon of compromise in the global arena of participatory politics (William 2006). The above problem is buttressed by the poor and a lack of political will in the implementation of these community participation strategies and programmes (Zantsi 2020). In most cases, public participation strategies are characterised by poor implementation strategies, a lack of adherence to the constitutional and municipal act mandates a lack of clear goals and poor communication between the municipalities and the citizens (Molepo, Maleka and Khalo 2016). For example, in Tshwane Municipality, Molepo et al. (2016) found that the City of Tshwane does not always adhere to the constitutional and legislative requirements for public participation because City officials do not understand the public participation processes.

In the Naledi Municipality, Sinxadi and Campbell (2015) found that Naledi Local Municipality is faced with planning, implementation, and monitoring and review challenges during the IDP process. These challenges also include policy or the strategy on community participation processes (Sinxadi and Campbell 2015). The challenges associated with poor implementation of public participation strategies have been found to lead to the problem of stagnant development and slow pace in the development of local communities around South Africa. The challenges have also led to poor service delivery in most communities and have become the biggest trigger of service delivery protests (Enqvist and Ziervogel 2019).

### **1.3. Recent research and rationale**

Recently, researchers have shown an increased interest in the field of public participation strategies' role in fostering local economic development (Molepo et al. 2017; Sinxadi and Campbell 2015). For instance, Sinxadi and Campbell (2015: 9) determine the role of planning in creating sustainable environments through community participation in Naledi Local Municipality. Their findings revealed that public participation strategies face a myriad of challenges. Sinxadi and Campbell (2015) conclude that Naledi Local Municipality is faced with planning,

implementation, and monitoring and review challenges during the IDP process. These challenges also include policy or the strategy on community participation processes. Similarly, Marzuki (2015) examined the challenges in the public participation and the decision-making process and established that the public, armed with considerable knowledge and more understanding on the public participation process, may suggest a more comprehensive public involvement strategy.

In another study, Neshkova and Guo (2012) illustrate how the inclusion of citizens not only contributes to increased knowledge and understanding on the part of citizens toward government affairs, but also has broader social value related to the performance of public programs. However, much of the research on the role of public participation in fostering local community development has been descriptive in nature. It fails to pay specific attention on how the various strategies could have enhanced development in local government. Surprisingly, the effectiveness of public participation strategies as a mechanism for local economic and social development has not been closely examined particularly the extent to which rural municipal designed public participation strategies have been successful in fostering local economic and social development. Consequently, there is not enough knowledge about the effectiveness of public participation strategies and it is not clear what factors affect the implementation of these public participation strategies. As such, this research uses the case study of the Ndwedwe Local Municipality to evaluate the extent to which the current public participation mechanism and system are successful in fostering both economic and social development.

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

Drawing on the case study of Ndwedwe Municipality, this study seeks to assess the public participation mechanism and system implemented by the Ndwedwe municipality. The study seeks to evaluate the extent to which the current public participation mechanism and system are successful in fostering both economic and social development in Ndwedwe municipality. The study also draws on the theory of public participation and the Asset Based Community Development theory. In this study, a clear distinction between local community development and local economic development was clarified. The study assesses the public participation mechanism and system implemented by the Ndwedwe municipality and how they enhance the prospects of local community development.

### **1.5. Key research objectives**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To assess the mechanisms and systems for citizen engagement implemented to enhance development in Ndwedwe Municipality
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of the current mechanism and systems employed to enhance development through community engagement in Ndwedwe Municipality
3. To identify the role of the Ndwedwe local government in ensuring there is sustainable public participation to foster development Ndwedwe Municipality
4. To examine the factors affect the successful implementation of the public participation strategies in Ndwedwe Municipality

### **1.6. Key research questions**

The study addresses the following questions

1. What are the mechanisms and systems for citizen engagement used to enhance community development in Ndwedwe Municipality?
2. How effective are the current mechanism and systems of public participation employed to improve community engagement in Ndwedwe Municipality?
3. What is the role of the local government in ensuring sustainable public participation to foster community development?
4. What factors affect the successful implementation of the public participation strategies in Ndwedwe Municipality?

### **1.7. Snapshot of research methodology**

This study is an exploratory qualitative study that seeks to assess the effectiveness of public participation in improving the local community development prospects in Ndwedwe Local Municipality. Neumann (2014) argues that exploratory qualitative studies are research conducted when there is little or no pre-existing knowledge about the research problem or the case study. The study falls within the interpretivism paradigm because data analysis in this study heavily relies on the interpretation of the researcher. Du Plooy (2014) argues that interpretivism is a easier and more researchers' subjective means in which data is interpreted. What this means is that there is no objective reality or meaning in the data. Instead, meaning drawn from the data is subjectively

constructed by the interpretations of the researcher. The most common research design associated with interpretivism is the qualitative research approaches (Creswell 2011).

This study employs qualitative approaches as it seeks to assess the effectiveness of public participation in improving the prospects of development in Ndwedwe Municipality. A qualitative approach is suitable for this study because the researcher wants to glean some comprehension of fundamental reasons, beliefs, and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative (Du Plooy 2014). This study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the extent to which public participation has been effective in improving community development prospects in Ndwedwe Municipality. It seeks to gain an understanding of the importance of public participation in a natural setting. Kumar (2019) concludes that researchers doing qualitative research study things in their natural environment, trying to make sense of, or understand, experiences in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

This study employs a non-probability purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their study (Du Plooy 2014). In this study, the researcher makes use of purposive sampling to select a suitable sample that assist in answering the researcher questions. For instance, the researcher specifically identified the persons that know the public participation processes in Ndwedwe Municipality.

This study consists of a data sample that was be drawn from two data sources. The first sample consists of secondary data drawn from secondary sources. Secondary sources are those that provide information that has been done in the field of interest (Creswell 2003). It is the information that is already available and can be accessed. The researcher referred to the Ndwedwe Integrated Development Document 2019, relevant policies and legislation on the Integrated Development Programme 2019 plan, journals, and the Constitution of South Africa. The second set of data were collected using semi-structured interviews with ten (10) participants from Ndwedwe Local Municipality. Data were presented and analysed using the thematic analysis approach.

### **1.8. Significance of the study**

This study's main aim was to evaluate the effectiveness of the various public participation mechanism and systems in enhancing the prospects of social and economic in Ndwedwe municipality. Findings from this study have implication on literature and the field of research that focuses on the broader field of public participation and community development. The finding that the community involvement in affairs that affect their lives at local sphere of government is key driver of local community development confirms research findings and conclusion conducted in other municipalities. To that end, the findings are crucial in that they can be transferred to other setting. Moreover, this study has practical implications on policymakers and municipalities. A particular significance of this study is on the need to engage in public-private partnerships to achieve an all-inclusive governance that involves all stakeholders to ensure people centred development.

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

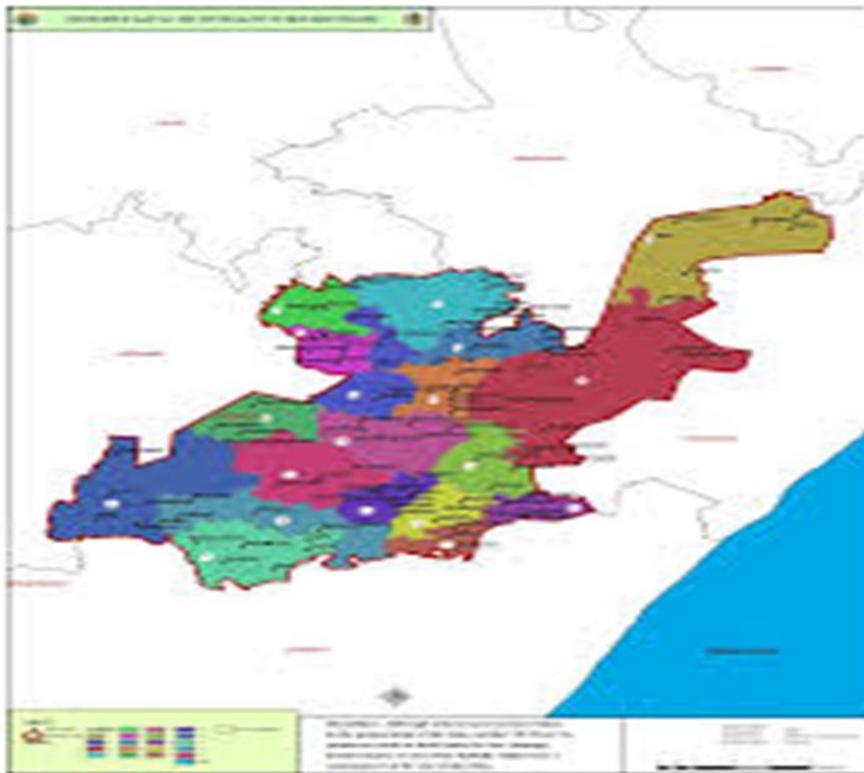
The study encountered limitations related to the acquiring the ethical clearance and the letter of authorisation from the university ethics committee and the Ndwedwe municipality. Moreover, the researcher also encountered challenges in data collection. This study's initial data collection instrument was face-to-face interviews with the participants. However, with the advent of COVID-19 and in keeping with the lockdown regulations in South Africa, the researcher was forced to change the data collection instrument from face-to-face interviews to online interviews. This shift introduced a whole lot of challenged in getting the participants on board. Most of the participants could not be accessible online and those who were accessible, did not always have compatible devices or broadband to participate in the online interviews. To avert the situation, the researcher incurred unplanned costs of providing data and devices to the participants. Notwithstanding these setbacks, the researcher managed to get enough participants on board that contributed meaningfully to the study.

### **1.10. Location of the Study**

The study for this study is Ndwedwe Municipality. Ndwedwe Local Municipality is an administrative area in the iLembe District of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. Towns in the municipality include Ndwedwe, Glendale Heights. The municipal council consists of thirty-seven members elected by mixed-member proportional representation. Nineteen councilors are elected by first-past-the-post voting in nineteen wards, while the remaining eighteen are chosen from party

lists so that the total number of party representatives is proportional to the number of votes received. Below is the map of Ndwedwe Local Municipality.

**Map: Ndwedwe Municipality**



*Source: Google*

**1.11. Layout of the chapters**

**Chapter two** presents the in-depth literature review that helps as a guide in the scrutinising the effectiveness of public participation in improving the local community development prospects in Ndwedwe Local Municipality. The literature under review covers broad areas of public participation and service delivery in local government. The literature assisted the research to contextualise the study into the broader debates around the role of public participation in enhancing the prospects of local community development in local government. The literature is also crucial in that it allowed the researcher to compare the effectiveness of public participation in Ndwedwe with findings from previous studies.

**Chapter three** discusses the theoretical framework that underpins the study. The chapter discusses the theory of public participation and contextualise it to the study key objectives. Furthermore, the study also discusses the concept of community development and its various aspects.

**Chapter four** describes the research methodology that the researcher employed to collect and analyse data that answers the key research questions. Data for this study were collected using semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. Two sets of data were used in this study- interviews responses and secondary documentary data.

**Chapter five** presents the data analysis. All the obtained data from the interviews and gathered documents is analysed here. The analysis follows the Braun and Clarke thematic analysis approach.

**Chapter six** discusses the findings from the study. This chapter collates the findings that surfaced from the data analysis based on the role of public participation mechanism in enhancing the prospects of local economic development in Ndwedwe Municipality. The themes that emerged from this study were presented and discussed in this chapter. Further, they were discussed in relation to findings from previous literature.

**Chapter seven** presents the recommendations and conclusions. Recommendations were informed by the responses to the research questionnaires. Research questionnaires that were used to obtain data were attached in the appendices.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the literature related to the phenomenon under inquiry. A review of literature is imperative in a study because it allows the researcher to contextualise the study within the broader discussion of the phenomenon under investigation. Because the study examines effectiveness of public participation in enhancing the prospects of local community development, this chapter reviews literature that relates to the issues of public participation and community development. This literature review section takes the form of the research questions that are asked in this study. Put in another way, the literature is reviewed thematically in the order of the key research questions.

This literature review section encompasses the following sections. Firstly, the concept of public participation is defined. Secondly, the chapter turns its focus on scholarly discussion on measuring the effectiveness of public participation. Mechanisms and systems for citizen engagement used to enhance community development were discussed. Thirdly, the chapter discusses the legal framework that underpins public participation in South Africa. Fourthly, the common mechanism of public participation to improve community engagement are discussed. Additionally, a discussion on public participation and its relation to community development was presented. In addition, the discussion about the public participation and local economic development is undertaken. Finally, the chapter discusses the factors that affect the successful implementation of public participation strategies.

### **2.2 The concept of public participation**

Several attempts have been made to define the concept of public participation. For instance, Neshkova and Guo (2012) conclude that public participation explains the extent of access that citizens have to government information. Moreover, Marias, Quayle, and Burns (2017) conceptualised public participation as the notion that citizens should be informed about what government is doing or does (transparency) and be provided with enough opportunities to influence this (public participation). However, these depend on the supply of dependable information before, during, and after policy consultation. In the same way, Sinxadi and Campbell (2015) define public participation as an open, accountable process where individuals and groups within selected communities can exchange views and influence decision-making. The definition of public participation by these scholars is particularly important because these scholars emphasise

that public participation is a cornerstone of democracy and is mostly used by government, politicians, civil society organisations, analysts, and advocates of democracy.

Madumo (2014) conceptualised public participation as an integral element of democracy. This scholar argues that public participation can be defined as a procedure that helps persons within communities to positively contribute to the general good (Madumo 2014). Central to Madumo's conceptualisation of public participation is the idea that every individual in the community ought to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives. Additionally, Gumbi (2014) argues that public participation is a way of ensuring that local government is responsive to what the public prioritises as their development needs. Gumbi's (2014) conceptualisation of public participation is informative in our understanding of the interplay between local government officials and their constituencies.

More practically, Moore and Warren (2006) define public participation as a set of mechanisms that are government designed to include the citizens in the governing of their communities. These include public hearings, intergovernmental coordination meetings, and advance briefings, solicitations of opinion, as well as government hotlines and Internet communications (Moore and Warren 2006). More broadly, Bishop and Davis (2002) stressed that participation is the expectation that the public has a recognised voice in issues of policy. This scholar emphasised that citizen participation takes different forms. These include "community meetings to citizen advisory committees, administrative law, and more recently the idea of citizens as customers". (Bishop and Davis 2002: 14). Underpinning the notion of public participation in the sharing of power between the government and the public.

Barnes, Sullivan, Knops, and Newman (2017) noted that in Britain, public participation involved measures that bring the citizens and the state to harmony. These scholars argue that the British public participation approach was geared towards "revitalising the democratic health of the nation and included efforts to involve the public at all levels of government through instruments such as referendums, citizens' juries and panels, youth councils, neighborhood forums, and interactive websites" (Barnes et al. 2017: 58). Barnes et al. (2017) stressed that public participation in policy matters is not simply a response to government prompting but also derives from sovereign community action and social movements, from claims for the genuine expression of lived experiences, which have gone ignored or been actively muzzled. Though in most instances public

participation is understood as a concept to provide opportunities for more active citizenship, its real focus is on creating opportunities for participation to people who were previously marginalized in decision-making processes so that they can claim a stake in the making of decisions that affect their lives. Rowe and Frewer (2000) assert that public participation involves the practice of consulting and involving the public in the agenda-setting, decision-making, and policy-forming activities of organizations or institutions responsible for policy development.

The World Bank Group (2015: 15) cited in Burns and Flegal (2015) defines public participation as the process which participants affect and share control over main concerns, policy-making, resource distributions and access to public amenities. To illustrate, participation, in this case, would mean the inclusion in the decision-making process of all individuals and groups that either are positively or negatively affected by a planned intervention or are interested in it. Therefore, this study draws on the above-discussed definitions of public participation. For this study, public participation is construed as the involvement of citizens (directly or indirectly) in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. It also entails the open and transparent communication of reliable information between the citizen and their local government officials (Sinxadi and Campbell 2015).

### **2.3. Measuring effective public participation**

There is a debate among scholars over the means to determine the “effectiveness” of public participation (Bobbio 2019; Liu, Hu, Wang, Yu, Yu, and Wu 2018; Wu and Mackhaphonh 2019; Zhang, Deng, Mou, Zhang, and Chen 2019). It remains unclear what it is that “effectiveness” means when applied to concept and practice of public participation. For instance, Bobbio (2019) argues that to understand the question of the effectiveness of forms of public participation, a definition of success is imperative. However, developing a single definition has proved to be difficult because there are various perspectives on the goals of public participation. (Liu, Hu, Wang, Yu, Yu, and Wu 2018). Additionally, Rowe and Frewer (2004) argue that evaluating the effectiveness of public participation is very difficult based on four reasons. Firstly, the concept of participation is very complex and value laden. Secondly, there are no universal criteria for judging the success and failure of any particular exercise. Thirdly, there are no widely agreed evaluation methods to evaluate the success of public participation. Finally, there are limited reliable measurement tools to assess the effectiveness of public participation.

Scholars have long established that the first step that one should do is to define what means by the term effectiveness is (Rowe and Frewer 2004; Liu, et al., 2018; Zhang et al. 2019). For example, Rowe and Frewer (2004) stress that until there is a clear definition of what it means for participation exercise to be effective, there will be no theoretical benchmark against performance assessment. McLaverty (2017: 45) argues that the problems lie in the fact that effectiveness is not “an obvious, unidimensional and objective quality (such as speed or distance) that can be easily identified, described, and then measured”.

For McLaverty (2017), there are many aspects to the concept of participation exercise effectiveness and these are open to contention. Similarly, Kahila-Tani, Kytta, and Geertman (2019: 50) argue that

...given the variety of perspectives and interpretations of the participation concept, it is unlikely that all researchers would agree on a single universal definition of what does and does not constitute participation.

Drawing on the above, understanding participation from a democratic perspective makes one see participation as something fair and liberal. Moreover, the one who sees participation from a decision-making perspective; effective participation might be observed by an output that is in some sense “better” and alternative criteria related to decision quality might be stipulated (Rowe and Frewer 2004). Equally, an economic framework might be concerned with cost or resource characteristics. Xie, Xia, Hu, Shan, Le, and Chan (2017) argue that each definition of effective participation might be correct in the sense that it is considered to cover the full range of participation examples and not a limited subset of these.

Rowe and Frewer (2004: 10) contains a variety of more “local” definitions are required, in which participation mechanisms are

...divided into sub-groups that vary according to whether they seek certain types of outcomes (such as attaining consensus, education participants or producing the best decision) or involve certain types of process (such as group-based or individual-based activities).

Similarly, Eshetie, Alebel, Wagnew, Geremew, Fasil, and Sack (2018) argue that the definition of effectiveness can also be generated for every individual sub-group. This is because every exercise

is, in fact, unique and ought to be evaluated according to only to its own very specific aims- such as to get organization X to commit to specific activity Y. Moreover, Ahmed-Gamgum (2018) argues that a universal definition of participation is so relevant to develop uniform measures that will ensure the effectiveness of any participation exercise to be ascertained and compared with others. A local and limited definition can only go as far as developing measures that will allow comparison of exercise only to others belonging to the particular subgroups covered by that definition (Xie et al. 2017). For instance, if there is a universal definition that defines effectiveness as being perceived as fair to all parties involved, one could easily develop a measure of fairness that can apply this to any participation exercise to compare its effectiveness with other participation exercises (Ahmed-Gamgum 2018). Rowe and Frewer (2004) argue that a universal definition could be developed that covers the processes and outcomes.

A different perspective for defining effectiveness was advanced by Syme and Sadler (1994). These scholars proposed six criteria for establishing a definition of success. For instance, the first criteria that they advanced were that the criteria for demonstrating that goals have been achieved must be agreed on between planner and public (Syme and Sadler 1994). The second criterion explained the procedure for doing this (where, when, etc.). This perspective implies and offers a mechanism for producing specific evaluation criteria and hence specific definitions of effectiveness for each participation exercise. Another group of scholars weighs in and argue that there can never be a correct definition of effectiveness (Chou and Huque 2016; Graversgaard Jacobsen, Kjeldsen, and Dalgaard 2017; Zhang, Jennings and Zhao 2018). For instance, Chou and Huque (2016) suggest that specific aims of individual participation exercise may always be phrased in terms of general classes that will assist with clear and simple comparative analysis. Additionally, Graversgaard et al. (2017) argue that this will allow for a more general phrasing of what is meant by effectiveness and this is necessary if researchers are to obtain comparable findings.

Different scholars have also established that the question of effectiveness is a challenge when one brings the questions evaluation into perspective (Kivimaa, Kangas and Lazarevic 2017; McLeskey, Rosenberg, and Westling 2017; Michie, Yardley, West, Patrick and Greaves 2017). These scholars possess the question: “effectiveness according to whom?”. For Kivimaa et al. (2017), the question of effectiveness is so difficult to ascertain because in the processes of participation exercises there are different and diverse constituencies that are involved. Michie et al. (2017) argue that the

process of participation involves the sponsors to the participants and the various publics that they are expected to services. Therefore, in this process of interaction of these groups in the participation exercise, what might appear effective to some, might not be seen as effective by others. For instance, participants might be impressed with a deliberative conference process and judge it effectively based on the deliberative space (Michie et al. 2017).

On the other hand, the sponsor might not be satisfied by the same conference and judge it ineffective based on the nature of resulting recommendations that came out of the participation exercise. This illustration shows how complicated a single definition of effectiveness can be. It calls for a single and universal definition that is less ambiguous. This definition should somehow take various perspectives into account. McLeskey et al. (2017: 52) argue that "a priori statement of what it means by effectiveness and how it might be ascertained, to reduce contention and dispute about the merits of the exercise is a necessity".

### **2.3.1. Outcome goals**

Drawing on that, Rowe and Frewer (2004) suggest that a unified definition that can reconcile the two ends together is required. These scholars argued that:

One way to get around this problem is to take an objective perspective, in which the contentment or acceptance of the specific parties involved (whoever they might be) is an important aspect or criterion of effectiveness. Often those defining effectiveness implicitly adopt this approach.

The above assertion suggests a definition that encompasses processes and outcomes. Bobbio (2019) argues that two common criteria can be used to define the "effectiveness" of forms of public participation. These are "outcomes" and "processes". The following section elaborate on the two criteria "outcome" and "process".

Available literature established that "effectiveness" of public participation and its various forms could only be judged by the outcomes (Chess and Purcell 1999; Cornwall 2017; Graversgaard et al. 2017; May and Ross 2018). To illustrate, Chess and Purcell (1999) argue that the results determine whether participatory means are successful. To add, these scholars posed that the definition of positive results may also vary considerably. Cornwall (2017) notes the distinction between public participation efforts that use citizens to garner support for agency efforts and those

that involve citizens while developing policy. May and Ross (2018) argue that public participation programs can be seen primarily as boosterism to channel and contain citizen demands, delays difficult decisions or build support for agency plan, on the other hand, stakeholder to public participation forums may also have goals that are different, for example, improving or blocking an agency proposal. Among other goals for outcome, success is better-accepted decisions, consensus, education, and improved quality of decisions.

Graversgaard et al. (2017) argue that despite the goals that were selected for public participation, the outcomes of any public participation are difficult to measure because of distinct variables. These variables may include concurrent events, the structures of the community and the history of controversy and the type of the environmental challenges (Graversgaard et al. (2017: 191). Chess and Purcell (1999) argue that a complication that comes out from the outcomes process or approach is that it is so difficult to ascertain the stage where the process ends. This means identifying a point at which one can safely say, a certain exercise has ended, and no additional activities will originate from it (Chess and Purcell 1999).

Chess and Purcell (1999) argue that institutional and societal responses to a response of a particular exercise may begin to manifest results months or even years after a particular exercise was completed. However, Cornwall (2017) argues that the assessment of outcomes is needed because these often correspond more directly to the desired aims of the exercise. Contrary to Cornwall's (2017) argument, Chess and Purcell (1999) argues that the assessment of outcomes may be problematic to ascertain promptly. These scholars contend that outcomes may be due to other variables, such as the occurrences of different events.

### **2.3.2. Process goals**

A considerable number of scholars prefer to define the effectiveness of public participation in terms of process goals (Lin and Simmons 2017; Kahila-Tani, Broberg, Kytä and Tyger 2016; Webler, Tuler, and Krueger 2001). For instance, this group of scholars established that rather than defining participation success by outcomes, it can be defined by its participatory procedures utilized in the programs (Lin and Simmons 2017). To that end, the features of the methods instead of the results- used in the public participation programs explain success. In the same vein, Rowe and Frewer (2004) argue that evaluation of process exercise must only be used as a surrogate to the outcomes of the exercise. In this case, if the exercise process is conducted well to one's

definition, then it will seem more likely that the outcomes will be more impressive than they would if the process was not good (Rowe and Frewer 2004).

For instance, it is more likely that decision-makers are more inclined to disregard the recommendation of an exercise if they perceive it to have been poorly conducted than if they see it to have been well conducted. Additionally, in a study that focuses on answering the question of, what is a good public participation process? Webler et al. (2001) established a good process based on maintaining and acquiring legitimacy. Secondly, a good process is the one that facilitates an ideological discussion. A third process focus on the fairness of the process. A fourth aspect conceptualises the participation process as a power struggle. This case, a power-play between local landowning interests and outsiders. A fifth perspective involves the need for leadership and compromise (Webler et al. 2001).

### **2.3.3. The middle ground**

Evidence from previous studies shows that, there is a middle ground in determining the criteria for measuring the success of public participation (Brombal, Moriggi, and Marcomini, 2017; Schroeter, Scheel, Renn, and Schweizer, 2016; Sinclair and Diduck 2017). For instance, Brombal et al. (2017: 49) stressed that “analysts who take a position in the middle of the process-outcome spectrum believe that public participation should meet some balance of outcome and process goal”. These scholars argue that neither good process nor good outcome is sufficient by itself (Brombal et al. 2017; Schroeter et al. 2016; Sinclair et al 2017).

### **2.4. The legal framework for public participation**

The first emphasis on the issue of public participation in South Africa in post-apartheid South Africa is found in the constitution of 1996. The White Paper on Local Government of 1998 cited in Lowndes (2002) stresses that “municipalities should develop a mechanism to ensure citizens participation in policy initiation and formulation, and the monitoring and evaluation of decision-making and implementation”. However, the institutionalization of participation in local government was only realized after the Municipal Structures Act of 1998 and especially the Municipal Systems Acts of 2000. More precisely, Section 16 requires that municipalities “develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance” (Burnell 2017: 45).

## **2.5. Promotion of public participation as a constitutional imperative**

While the concept of a 'democratic state' refers to diverse forms of citizen participation and representation in the political sphere, the specific rights, duties, and obligations of both citizens and the state are enshrined in South Africa's constitutional democracy (Mofolo 2016). Here the ambition to move beyond simple representative democracy (i.e. mere participation in elections) to a more complex participatory democracy framework occurs through constitutional provisions intended to enable citizens to participate in several direct ways to ensure oversight and accountability (Hasan, Nahiduzzaman and Aldosary 2018). These constitutional obligations are there to ensure a 'living' democracy in terms of how citizens perceive that they have the political agency to influence lawmaking. Promoting public participation in the legislatures, according to the Constitutional mandate, is not only important to promote a people-centered democracy, it is also critical because it strengthens the functioning of the legislatures (Van der Bank and van der Bank 2016). Effective public participation can improve the capacity of legislatures to fulfill their role to build a proficient, responsible and responsive state that work out efficiently for its people. (Sinclair and Diduck 2017).

*The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, Section 152 and 195 of the Constitution provide that municipalities are obliged to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in municipal affairs; that people's needs must be responded to; and the public must be encouraged to participate in policymaking. The White Paper on Local Government, 1998: 34) describes 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 improve the quality of their lives”. In this White Paper on Local Government – 1998, the object of community participation is embedded in the following four principles:

- To ensure political leaders remain accountable and work within their mandate;
- To allow citizens (as individuals or interest groups) to have continuous input into local politics;
- To allow service consumers to have input on the way services are delivered;
- To afford organized civil society the opportunity to enter into partnerships and contracts with local government to mobilize additional resources

*The Local Government: Municipal Structures Act* (1998) gives metropolitan and local municipalities the option to establish ward committees as one of the specialised structures to enhance participatory democracy in local government. Municipalities must give effect to the provisions of the Act when establishing ward committees. The municipalities are required to annually report on the involvement of communities and community organizations in the affairs of the municipality (Mughan 2019). The Act stipulates that a municipality's executive mayor or executive committee have to give an annual report on the extent to which the public had participated in municipal affairs. Chapter 6 of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) denotes that Ward Committees and their members can participate in local government in the following ways:

- Assessing and approving the budget
- Planning and developing the Integrated Development Plan -Ward committees should work closely with councilors and other community organizations to identify priority needs and make sure these needs are included in the budget proposals and plans.

*The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act* (2000, chapter 4) says that a municipal council must develop a culture of participatory government and must for this purpose encourage and create conditions for residents, communities, and other stakeholders in the municipality to participate in local affairs. The eThekweni Municipality Community Participation Policy (2006) participation entails that all stakeholders, citizens, and communities are involved in decision-making. These stakeholders within the municipality are to comply voluntarily and commit themselves to the agreement, instead of the Local government forcing their compliance. The Municipality also promises the public to be part of formulating solutions especially for those matters that affect them directly.

*The White paper on Arts, Culture, and Heritage* sets out government policy for the establishment of optimum institutional frameworks and the policy document has amongst many the following underlying values access to participation, and enjoyment of the arts, cultural expression, and the preservation of one's heritage are basic human rights. Under chapter 3, the policy states that it is the role and objective of the ministry to ensure that in adherence to Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which in summary states that everyone shall have the right to 35 freely participate in the cultural life of the community. These policy documents also state the right

of all to freely practice and satisfy artistic and cultural expression, and enjoy the protection and development of their heritage, is realized.

*The White paper on Local Government* provides the pragmatic directives through which new insights into local government could be envisioned and this includes public participation in decision making in their different municipalities. This also implies the facilitation of developmental issues or processes which includes the exercising of municipal powers and functions in a manner that maximizes their impact on social development and economic growth. There has to be playing of integration and coordination roles to ensure alignment between public and private investment within the municipal area whereby democratizing of development, empowerment of the poor, and redistribution of income are in favor of the poor and build social conditions for a favourable development. Parnell et al., (2002) also emphasized that through the White paper, municipalities are empowered to employ integrated development planning, performance management, and local economic development as strategic approaches to democratize development while at the same time creating an environment conducive for people and communities to address their needs.

## **2.6. Public Participation (how)**

Drawing on the above legislations and other reviewed documents, an excerpt is made leading to the following list of core values for the practice of public participation:

- the public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives or livelihoods, it has a right to be informed early and to be proactively involved in a meaningful way;
- participants should get all information they need to participate in a meaningful way to increase the interest and motivation to participate; including the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision;
- the public participation process should respect the historical, cultural, environmental, political and social backgrounds of the communities which are affected by a proposal, inclusive less represented groups like indigenous peoples, women, children, the elderly, and poor people; and
- the public participation process involves participants in defining how they participate and promotes equity between actual and future generations from a perspective of sustainability.

In respect to the governance principles previously identified, public participation should be:

- Initiated very early into the lifecycle of planned intervention and sustained during its entire life.
- Well planned and structured. All actors should know the aims, rules, organization, procedure, and expected outcomes of the public participation process undertaken.
- Tiered and optimized. Any public participation program should take place at the most efficient level of decision-making, e.g. at the policy, plan, program, or project level.
- Led by the neutral authority in its formal or traditional sense and follow rules known and accepted by all parties. Public participation needs to follow some rules of ethics, professional behavior, or moral obligations.
- Focused on negotiable issues relevant to decision making. Because consensus is not always feasible, public participation needs to hear about the values and interests of participants and to focus on negotiable issues.

## **2.7. Mechanisms and channels for citizen engagement**

Scholars have argued in their works about the different mechanisms or channels for public participation and how the effectiveness of these mechanisms can involve the citizens in decision-makings concerning matters that affect their lives (Fung 2006; Haus and Sweeting 2006; Nyalunga 2006). These mechanisms are said to be participatory mechanisms whereby Fung (2006: 74) argued that they are utilized to augment the legality of public action, justice in public governance, and efficiency in the execution of public decisions. By involving citizens in the greater process of governing, there might be less resistance to proposed policies and greater legitimacy of the policy process (Haus and Sweeting 2006). Nyalunga (2006) outlined mechanisms for public participation in local government, which are direct advice and support, ward committees, traditional authorities, and civil society organizations.

### **2.7.1. Direct advice and support**

Direct advice and support entail that "councilors are the most direct form of access people have to the government. Usually, people will turn to a councilor for direct advice and support" (Nyalunga 2006: 15). Barichiev, Piper and Parker (2005) argues that voted diplomats are confronted with challenges in encouraging and boosting participatory governance, specifically in rural areas where local government structures and systems are still evolving. Councilors must to act as envoys of the citizens regardless of their political affiliations.

### **2.7.2. Ward Committees**

Nyalunga (2006: 76) argued that ward committees are a mechanism for engaging people in municipal decision making. The Constitution creates space for public participation in local governance through specific mechanisms such as Ward Committees and Integrated Development Planning and demand that local government promotes public participation. It is against this constitutional perspective that he continued to state that “the role of ward committees is to make sure that voters are involved and informed about council decisions that affect their lives. The ward committees’ main tasks are to communicate and consult with the community in respect of development and service plans” (Nyalunga 2006: 76). The Department of Provincial and Local Government (1998) presented that the term "ward committees" is specifically used within the context of local government systems. The reasoning in this regard suggests that ward committees are regarded as a mechanism to allow for greater interaction. Concerning the role of ward committees, it was stated that the central role of ward committees is the facilitation of local community participation in decisions that affect the local community, the articulation of local community interests, and the representation of these interests within the government system. Ward committees thus bring about communication between communities and their political representatives. Ward committees that work well will give every resident a say in municipal government and will make ward councilors accountable to residents. The Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998, establishes the rules for ward committees. Section 72(3) provides us with some guidance of what the role of ward committees is: The object of a ward committee is to enhance participatory democracy in local government.

Hicks cited in Nyalunga (2006) states that whilst ward committees are a key component of community-based involvement, many municipalities still do not have formal or functional ward committees in place. The author further reiterates that in municipalities where ward committees are operational, these are marked by uncertainty and in some instances, chaos. This largely stems from the fact that there appears to be no clear-cut understanding of the role that ward committees are supposed to perform. Community members have certain expectations of what they expect of their ward committee representatives, yet councilors have different expectations. Furthermore, as Janine argues there is no clarity on the roles of ward councilors as opposed to proportional representation (PR) councilors, there are tensions between ward committee members and ward councilors, and limited resources available to enable ward committees to function better and

improve efficiency. This is perhaps the most widespread challenge facing ward committees in their quest to involve communities in matters of local government. The lack of understanding of roles leads to greater misconceptions about the performance of ward committees and other local government stakeholders in general.

### **2.7.3. Traditional Authorities**

Traditional authorities are said to be the mechanism for public participation in the local government in South Africa and there is also a Constitutional Act that supports this claim. Nyalunga (2006: 17) said that traditional leaders play a significant role in participation and are an vital piece of a councilor's community. He further presented the Act, which outlines the responsibilities of the traditional authorities whereby, this Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003 (hereafter referred to as the Traditional Leadership Act), recognizes tribal authorities as traditional councils with important functions linked to local government. The function of traditional councils is to facilitate the involvement of the traditional community in the development of a local government's integrated development plan.

This traditional system of leadership is still faced with challenges that deter community participation. It remains a daunting task to forge the coexistence of two diverse and conflicting systems of governance (Modern democracy vs. traditional authority). The party politicization of tribal structures invariably compromises the credibility and autonomy of the institution and its leadership. Traditional leaders who are partisans bar the efforts to spearhead community participation. The traditional leadership of 'Amakhosi' is flawed by a lack of clear-cut roles and functions. Lack of capacity on the part of traditional leaders is also a problem. The Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act-2003, which was enacted to redeem these problems, had been lambasted by Amakhosi for being Westernised in its provision and consultation. This has exacerbated the mistrust that exists between traditional and democratic authorities. There is also an ongoing dispute over traditional authority boundaries and the merger of tribes (Nyalunga 2006).

## **2.8. Mechanism of public participation and community development**

The subject on the effectiveness of the mechanism for public participation has been explored in several studies (Bernes et al. 2017; Moore and Warren 2006). In a study that examines the political and legal dynamics of the development of public participation in the environmental sphere in China, Moore and Warren (2006) found that public participation produces effective results. These

results include increasing public awareness and recruitment, establishing networks for public comment to officials, involving the public in enforcement, and linking to global resources and legal frameworks (Moore and Warren 2006). Moreover, these successes were instrumental in the development of the community because the community became involved in environmental issues. Additionally, in a study that assesses the new spaces for participation in public policy in Birmingham and Liverpool, Bernes et al. (2017) found that the implemented public participation forums were instrumental in building social capital. According to these scholars, there was evidence in Birmingham and Liverpool that strengthening public participation assisted in building the capacity of groups and institutions to relate to each other.

This success was achieved by identifying and incorporating the minority, marginalized ethnic groups, and in the decision-making processes (Bernes et al. 2017). What is more, their study also found that public participation forums were vital instruments that created and strengthened individual capacity within the communities. This was made possible by arranging activities that provide opportunities for individuals to associate with one another as well as officials, to exchange information and share personal experiences and to build personal relationships through the process of association and exchange (Bernes et al. 2017). Bernes et al. (2017) argue that public participation forums can be seen as the site for the development of new discourse that is negotiated along the citizen/official continuum, suggesting that deliberative forums are sites in which identity is constituted rather than expressed.

In a study that focuses on the governance aspects of China's environmental policymaking and the conditions for meaningful public participation in sustainable urbanization policymaking, Enserink and Koppenjan (2007) found that successful and sustainable rural development was based on the interdependence of the parties involved. These scholars argued that only collective efforts of public and private shareholders and trade of resources, goals, and outcomes leads to the realisation of the demanding requirements of a sustainable urbanization strategy (Enserink and Koppenjan 2007). What is striking from these findings is the notion that the inclusion and participation of all parties who are interested in rural-urban planning was the main reason why the project registered positive outcomes. Similarly, the World Bank Group (2015) argues that participation is a very critical aspect of the planning process. It advances the value and efficacy of decision-making as it broadens

the knowledge base, encourages ingenuity, and creates social support for policies (World Bank 2015).

Furthermore, Baldwin and King (2018: 66) established that participation produces proprietorship and agency which play a role to social sustainability, community building, and harmonious society. What this means is that the inclusion of the community in the decision-making process allows the individual to feel their worth and be attached to the process. Meaningful participation gives participants the feeling of ownership of the whole process. Parkins and Mitchell (2005) argue that public participation is a crucial aspect of the inclusion of the community in matters of interest. These scholars argue that the key reason for ensuring that the community is involved is that it helps to reduce conflict and help projects to achieve their intended objectives. Grindle (2017) argued that in most western countries, constructing and cooperative forms of planning like consultation and active early involvement have proved effective in the speed and quality of implementation of planning decisions. Grindle (2017: 89) notes that “for strategic planning; in discussions about plans, policies and programs at groups are considered partners in the planning process and procedures”. The role played by these strategies to planning and implement has convinced governments to institutionalize public participation forms.

## **2.9. Public participation and community development.**

Existing research recognises the critical role played by citizen participation in enhancing community development (Kondlo 2010; Marzuki 2015; Neshkova, and Guo 2012; Vil-Nkomo 2012). However, such expositions are unsatisfactory because they did not treat the issue of public participation and community development in detail. For instance, Vil-Nkomo (2012:21) argues that “public servants must always work with the understanding that they are in partnership with the public, with the citizens”. Similarly, Kondlo (2010) concludes that communities should be co-originators of policies rather than endorsers, as this affects their lives. His approach is holistic, especially when he argues that the “dilemma of policy performance is the dilemma of the ‘first’ and this is about co-origination and co-authorship of policy issues with citizens and communities” (Kondlo 2010: 45). Additionally, Marzuki (2015) argues that the implementation of the public participation process is important for the democratisation of social values and better planning and fulfillment of public needs. It is also useful for educating the public, especially regarding government development programs.

In a cross-sectional case study that was conducted in Denmark, Philippines, Canada, and the United Kingdom, Marzuki (2015: 1) argued that the purpose of the participation process was to benefit local community and stakeholders, serving the purpose of enhancing "... knowledge, skills, and abilities relating to the development of public policy, with specific emphasis on the meaningful inclusion of stakeholders and citizens". In a study that examines the relationship between public participation and performance of public programs, Neshkova, and Guo (2012) found that that public participation could be associated with enhanced organizational performance, although there are admittedly administrative costs associated with participation. This study also revealed the inclusion of citizens not only contributes to increased knowledge and understanding on the part of citizens toward government affairs but also has broader social value related to the performance of public programs. In the same way, Madumo (2014) argues that public participation has been proved the most useful tool for effective governance. As such, it results in effective service delivery. As such, public participation continues to be an important aspect of democracy.

Vadeveloo and Singaravelloo (2013) examined the role of local government in community development. In their study, these scholars' main argument was that local government plays a significant role in the development of communities using enhancing cooperation between local government and the community. Similarly, Stoker (2011) finds that local government systems in most of the countries sustain a close relationship with its citizens in giving better services. This relationship would remain in future development by engaging good cooperation between the local government and the citizens. Additionally, Green and Haines also stress that many argue that the outcome of public participation is unimportant as long as there is an avenue for the community to participate. They state that "others contend that the ultimate goal of community development is to improve the quality life of the community, with public participation being simply a means to an end" (O'Faircheallaigh 2010: 10). They further iterate that it is difficult to maintain interest and commitment to community development processes if participants cannot point to successes.

Butterworth and Dale (2011) examined the experiences of community members who were included in community development initiatives. Findings from this study revealed that there was a great feeling of ownership and satisfaction with the process of community development among the citizens because they were allowed to participate in the processes. Butterworth and Dale (2011: 45) revealed that "while they saw the state as obligated to provide development resources as part

of its indebtedness to citizens, community members felt that they held the experience, skills, and local knowledge to more effectively implement programs”. In this study, the scholars stressed that the local government allowed the citizens to contribute to the design and implementation of the projects that were aimed at developing their communities.

However, on the other hand, Butterworth and Dale's (2011: 45) study also revealed that the citizens who were involved in the community development initiatives expressed concern that "the lack of input after project prioritization negatively impacted the sense of community ownership, inclusion, and eventual design and quality of the projects." Findings discussed here support the general argument about public participation and inclusion in decision making that in issues that affect their lives. To illustrate, Phillips and Pitman (2014) argued that participation is important to make sure that the government addresses the real needs of communities in the most appropriate way. Participation also helps to build an informed and responsible citizenry with a sense of ownership of government developments and projects. It allows municipalities to get buy-in and to develop partnerships with stakeholders.

Mansuri and Rao (2012:14) identify the focus on participation in development (from the mid-1980s) as a reaction against large-scale “top-down” investment projects and the social costs of structural adjustment. Participation, in the development context, is a process through which all members of a community or organisation are involved in and have an influence on decisions related to development activities that affect communities. That implies that development projects address community or group needs on which members have chosen to focus and that all phases of the development process are characterised by the active involvement of community or organisation members.

## **2.10. Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed the literature that is related to the phenomenon under inquiry. A review of literature was imperative in this current study because it assisted the researcher to contextualise the study within the broader discussion of the phenomenon under investigation. Because the study examines the effectiveness of public participation in enhancing the prospects of local community development, this chapter reviews literature that relates to the issues of public participation and community development. This literature review section took the form of the research questions

that are asked in this study. Put in another way, the literature was reviewed thematically in the order of the key research questions.

The following areas were covered in this literature review. Firstly, the concept of public participation is defined. Secondly, the chapter turns its focus on scholarly discussion on the “measuring the effectiveness of public participation”. Mechanisms and systems for citizen engagement used to enhance community development were discussed. Thirdly, the chapter discusses the legal framework that underpins public participation in South Africa. Fourthly, the common mechanism of public participation to improve community engagement are discussed. Additionally, a discussion on public participation and its relation to community development was presented. Also, the discussion about the public participation and local economic development is undertaken. Finally, the chapter discusses the factors that affect the successful implementation of public participation strategies.

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

# **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK PARTICIPATORY LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **3.1. Public participation and local economic development**

Local economic development is concerned with local people working together to achieve sustainable economic growth that brings economic benefits and quality of life and improvements for all in the community (World Bank, 2003). According to Meyer (2015), the potential dynamic driving force behind LED initiatives in partnership formation by local stakeholders. It has been argued that local developmental projects driven by local businesses and local communities have more chances to succeed than projects attempted by the government alone. In the same token, Clarke and Moir (2014) as cited in Cloete (2015) echoed that economic development should be orchestrated as a partnership activity between public, private, and institutional sectors, with substantial vertical and horizontal collaboration on the public side.

According to Ansell and Gash (2008), collaborative governance is described as the engagement of public agencies and non-state holders in collective decision-making. The principal objective of collaborative governance is to build collective capacity (Agranoff 2006) for multi-level or multi-scalar stakeholders – private, civic/non-governmental and the public sphere, through the process of deliberation (Fishkin 2009; Innes and Booher 2010) and principled negotiation (Fisher Ury and Patton 2011) to make and/or implement the multi-jurisdictional decision that cannot be addressed by unilateral action (Emerson, Nabatchi and Balogh 2012) or the common good of the society (Agbodzakey 2015; Edigheji 2010; Zurba 2014; Bingham and O’ Leary 2008; Emerson and Nabatchi 2015). However, the theory and practice of collaborative governance for the localised economy seem to be rudimentary in South Africa. Mtutuzeli Mente (2011) examined public participation activities in Lady Frere during the LED strategy formulation process. The results of this study suggest that the municipality fell short of implementing public participation programs that achieved authenticity during the LED strategy formulation process. Careful and well-intentioned use of various public participation tools that embrace increased interaction between municipal employees and the public can assist in achieving better levels of authenticity in their public involvement initiatives.

Kantemeridou, Tsantopoulos, Tampakis, and Karanikola (2013) in a study conducted in Northeast Halkidiki using a structured questionnaire, examine the views of the residents on issues of economic growth of the area and its impact on the environment. The research results showed that the show that the residents wish for local development to focus on tourism and livestock farming and hold governmental bodies responsible for the downgrading of the environment (Kantemeridou et al. 2013). Finally, another interesting viewpoint considers that growth should primarily be based on mining activities; its supporters draw information from the TV and discussions with their family environment and friends. There was a disconnect between what the citizens thought was the right approach and what the coordinators designed as the appropriate strategy. These results had a deep implication on the notion of citizen participation. Kantemeridou et al. (2013) argue that local, regional and national planning for development should not be disconnected from the wishes of citizens. Additionally, these scholars also argued that, to bridge the gap between the various prevailing views, it is recommended that various institutional bodies take on the role of action coordinators, with the participation of experts from various scientific disciplines, and, by following the most appropriate communication strategy, to establish relations of mutual trust and understanding. Public participation and consultation also provide the opportunity to approach the "hidden" knowledge of society at large, and its basic concerns (Kantemeridou et al. 2013).

Institute for Local Government (2015) cited in Blakely and Leigh (2013) argued that the loss of redevelopment agencies coupled with a downturn in the economy has left many cities and countries seeking new ways to approach local economic development. To that end, one of the preferred but underused tools is public engagement- involving community members in charting a path to shared prosperity and improved quality of life. According to Blakely and Leigh (2013), engaging the public authentically and practically can help develop a shared understanding of local economic development policies and programs, increasing their potential effectiveness and impact over time.

Additionally, the Institute for Local Government (2015) cited in Blakely and Leigh (2013) argues that understanding the unique conditions within one's jurisdiction and how they affect diverse community sectors can support short- and long-term priorities in a way that encourages economic competitiveness and improves fiscal health. This assertion is similar to the arguments raised by Phillips and Pittman (2008) who argued that because local challenges and opportunities are as

varied as individual communities, engaging the public can help ensure that the economic development strategy aligns with the community's needs. Engaging the public in local economic development can help build support for the adoption and implementation of future initiatives. Moreover, Phillips and Pittman (2008) argue that economic development is often an elusive and difficult challenge for communities because it relies on a large number of interrelated factors. Physical infrastructure, human capital, and entrepreneurial support networks all play a part in determining the overall economic health of a city. However, public engagement provides opportunities to improve each of these areas using the collective wisdom and insight of the residents who will be most directly affected by the success or failure of any economic development plan.

### **3.2. Literature relating to the factors affecting public participation**

A considerable amount of literature has been published on factors affecting the effectiveness of public participation (Marzuki 2015; Molepo, Maleka, and Khalo 2016; Sinxadi and Campbell 2015). However, much of the research up to now has not dealt with the extent to which citizen participation improves the prospects of community development. More so, research on the subject has been mostly restricted to the bureaucratic and administrative factors. For instance, Molepo et al. (2016) illustrated that the ongoing and increasing service delivery public protests are in part as a result of poor implementation of public participation mechanisms in local government. These scholars found that "the City of Tshwane does not always adhere to the constitutional and legislative requirements for public participation" (Molepo et al 2016). In another study, Sinxadi and Campbell found that Naledi Local Municipality is faced with planning, implementation, and monitoring and review challenges during the IDP process. These challenges also include policy or the strategy on community participation processes. Additionally, Marzuki (2015) illustrates that the public participation process in most local municipalities is sometimes threatened by bureaucratic constraints caused by the lack of a systematic approach and an inadequate public administration system, which contributes to the public exclusion from the process.

Furthermore, Moore and Warren (2006: 3) revealed various factors that affected the development of public participation in China. According to these scholars, issues such as

delays by the government in involving the public on project approval decisions; inexperience and imprecise understanding of the government's responsibility and options

in responding to public opinion; political and economic pressures on officials and private individuals; and gaps in the legal framework for the enforcement of environmental rights.

From the issues identified above, it is clear that the government's processes were a huge set back in the development of the process of public participation and ultimately in the development of the communities in China. In addition, Moore and Warren (2006) found that there was a challenge in reaching a compromise between the government and the community. These scholars said, "the underlying concern with finding 'harmonious' solutions to public conflicts between government and citizens and between different factions of the citizenry." (Moore and Warren 2006: 3). In another study, Lucas (2016) argued that as much as community participation is crucial to the success of municipalities, we should guard against romanticising it.

Communities are far from monolithic and immune from capture by elites who primarily represent their narrow interests. Many communities, particularly in informal settlements, are much fractured. Lucas (2016: 289) argues:

they are highly contested, complex and multi-layered, with fluctuating leaderships, with different strata or factions constantly competing for hegemony. Exactly how representative of the communities the leaders are and how stable, is not always clear. Identifying needs, priorities, and targets in these communities and ensuring participation in the implementation of plans, programs and projects are difficult.

Similarly, Phillips and Pittman (2008) argued that ward committees are often dominated by political party activists, sometimes almost becoming adjuncts to party structures or sites of contestation between political factions, instead of representing the diversity of civil society interests in ward communities. Wards, especially in rural areas, are sometimes too large to make for functional ward committees. Many ward committees are hamstrung by the lack of administrative support, resources, and training of its members. Most municipalities are unable to pay the out-of-pocket expenses of ward committee members.

Ensuring effective community participation in these conditions can be very challenging, but very necessary. Similarly, SEPA Solicitation of Public Comment (2005) cited in Tang, Wong and Lau (2008) reveals that a myriad of challenges still confronts the success of public participation. The findings revealed that there still exist some problems in China's public participation in EIA, concentrated on issues that information is not being fully and timely disclosed; the scope of public

participation is not comprehensive; the representativeness of the people being targeted is not strong; and there is a lack of necessary information feedback [provided to the government] (Moore and Warren 2006). In the same vein, Buccus and Hicks (2006) cited in Cook and Zurita (2019) found that the perception amongst members of the community is that public participation, if and when it occurs, involves the presentation of predetermined positions and programs for limited feedback or information sharing only. On the contrary, when community inputs are solicited, it is often accompanied by poor facilitation of the participatory processes (Buccus and Hicks 2006 cited in Cook and Zurita 2019).

Bernes et al. (2017) revealed that often public participation forums are affected by tension between the organizers and those vulnerable. These scholars concluded that “there were tensions between the institutional contexts within which conditions of participation were framed and the struggle for recognition amongst excluded groups.” (Bernes et al. 2017: 45). Findings here also revealed that tension arose from a misunderstanding of the purpose. Members of groups contested whether voice should be understood as individual advocacy, personal testimony, or collective action with specific changes objectives. Some spoke of the importance of the forum as a site in which experiential knowledge, expressed in personal accounts, could be exchanged. Others saw this as adequate as a basis for achieving change and there was little evidence of testimony informing more general campaigns.

Webler et al (2003) Scholars have found that there is a common problem in the participation process over the question of what is a good participation process? For these scholars, there is a common consensus that all the parties that are involved in a particular process will share the same principles. For Webler et al (2003), fairness and objectivity are the key principles in the process of participation. However, Webler et al (2003) objected to the over-emphasis on fairness and objectivity. They argued that "fairness and competence cannot be the only things about a participatory process that matter." Mack and Szulanski (2017) stress that participants and planners are likely to disagree on what constitutes a good process. Thus, the confusion about the definition of what makes good participation processes possess a huge problem for those who are assigned to design participatory decision-making processes. This observation is similar to the findings from Kahila-Tani et al. (2016) who argued that conflicts often emerge in public participation processes “about process designs because people disagree about what is good in specific contexts.”

Moreover, findings from a study by Tshoose (2015) suggest that participatory processes and systems in South Africa lack transformative qualities and are marred by a mixture of neglect, lack of service delivery, corruption, infrequent feedback, limited involvement and inexperience on the part of planners and officials (Lues 2014:802; Tsheola, Ramonyai, and Segage 2014:393; Mubangizi and Gray 2011:4–7; Booysen 2009:1). Access to information, for instance, is said to be inadequate and uneven, as are the capacities of citizens (and officials) to understand the technical formats in which information is presented (Houston 2001:207). The participation that does occur tends to be brief, in the shape of sporadic *inputs* that decorate particular stages of planning and programming cycles. When they do occur, feedbacks are perfunctory (Friedman 2006:8).

Commentators have questioned the gravity with which public participation is being embraced in local government practice (Buccus and Hicks 2006:2; Buccus and Hicks 2008b: 94; Mathekga 2006: 89). The emphasis, they argue, is placed on meeting various performance targets and service delivery requirements, with public participation featuring as an appendage to those priorities. In the local sphere, municipal officials tend to act as gatekeepers and controllers rather than as facilitative bodies that enable communities to have a greater voice and control over resources and resource allocation. The municipalities are accused of being either unwilling or unable to share decision-making power with communities, especially concerning project identification. Mechanisms are geared mainly towards seeking communities' input into already formulated policy responses.

### **3.3. The concept of community development**

Community development has many varying definitions. Phillips and Pittman (2008) argue that it is difficult to define community development because the concept of community development has evolved over a long period. Phillips and Pittman (2008) said:

Community development has probably been practiced for as long as there have been communities. It is hard to imagine the American colonies being successfully established in the seventeenth century without some degree of community development, even if the term had not yet come into existence.

Some scholars trace the concept of community development to World War 1 where it was used as an approach to reconstruct less developed countries (Ahmed 2020). Others cite the America war on poverty as the origins of the concept of community development (Fahmi and Chandra-Putra

2020). In this phase, emphasis was placed on “solving neighborhood housing and social problems as a significant influence on contemporary community development” (Ahmed 2020: 67). Central to the concept of community development from its inception was the recognition that a community is not just a collection of buildings “but a community of people facing common problems with untapped capacities for self-empowerment” development (Fahmi and Chandra-Putra 2020: 45). Phillip and Pittman (2008) assert that in the contemporary, community development is defined in so many ways. For these scholars the definition of community development can be extended in terms of geography (neighborhood or town) in social terms, such as a group of people sharing common chat rooms on the internet, a national professional association or a labour union (communities of interest definitions) (Phillip and Pittman 2008).

Phillips and Pitman (2008) argue that to understand community development we need to first understand the terms community. For Phillips and Pitman (2008: 55) community refers to “community can refer to a location (communities of place) or a collection of individuals with a common interest or tie whether in close proximity or widely separated (communities of interest).” A close analysis of previous text by Matterssich and Monseley (2004) revealed many definitions of community to include the following:

People who live within a geographically defined area and who have social and psychological ties with each other and with the place where they live. (Mattessich and Monsey 2004: 56)

A grouping of people who live close to one another and are united by common interests and mutual aid. (National Research Council 1975 cited in Mattessich and Monsey 2004: 56)

What is common in these definitions is that is they emphasise the people and the ties that bring them together. It also places emphasis on the geographical locations. The definitions make it clear that without people and the connections among them, a community is just a collection of buildings and streets. Drawing on this, Phillips and Pitman (2008: 45) argue that “community development takes on the mantle of developing stronger “communities” of people and the social and psychological ties they share”. In addition to that, scholars like Lepri, Oliver, Letouzé, Pentland, and Vinck (2018) argue that community development encompasses an educational process to enable citizens to address problems by group decision making. Similarly, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) argue that community development is a process to achieve improvement in some aspect of community life where normally such action leads to the strengthening of the community’s pattern

of human and institutional relationships. Therefore, put together, all the concept defined from various scholars above place focus on the process of teaching people how to work together to solve common problems.

A different group of scholars defines community development in terms of outcome (Igalla, Edelenbos and van Meerkerk 2019; Mattessich and Monsey 2004; Phillips and Pitman 2008). Phillips and Pitman argue that an action, result, or outcome: local decision making and program development resulting in a better place to live and work (Huie 1976 cited in Mattessich and Monsey 2004: 58); or a group of people initiating social action to change their economic, social, cultural and/or environmental situation (Christenson and Robinson 1989 cited in Mattessich and Monsey 2004: 57).

These conceptions show that community development should be considered as both a process and an outcome. Therefore, a working definition of community development in simple but broad terms is:

A process: developing and enhancing the ability to act collectively, and an outcome: (1) taking collective action and (2) the result of that action for improvement in a community in any or all realms: physical, environmental, cultural, social, political, economic, etc.

### **3.4. Approaches to Community development**

#### **3.4.1. The needs-based community development**

Historically, much of community development has been based on needs due in part to government involvement. Grant programs often are managed by government agencies and directed toward meeting the needs that those government agencies have identified in various communities. This approach to community development emphasizes local deficit and looks to outside agencies or resources. Traditional needs-based problem-solving focuses on identifying needs in a failing community and creating external inputs to meet those needs. This approach does not create a sustainable solution because it fails to deliver the tools necessary for that community to create its own success. When the external support is removed, the problem simply returns.

#### **3.4.2. Criticism of Need-based community development**

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) point out that if the needs-based approach is the only guide to poor communities, the consequences can be ‘devastating’ (p. 4). One of the main effects is of fostering leadership that denigrates the community. Leaders find that the best way to attract

institutional resources is to play up the severity of problems. Local leadership is judged on how resources are attached to the community, not on how self-reliant the community has become. Another consequence Kretzmann and McKnight identify is that people in the communities start to believe what their leaders are saying. They begin to see themselves as deficient and incapable of taking charge of their lives and of the community. Not surprisingly, community members no longer act like citizens, instead they begin to act like ‘clients’ or consumers of services with no incentive to be producers.

Yet another consequence of this approach is that local groups begin to deal more with external institutions than with groups in their own community. This reinforces the notion that “only outside experts can provide real help and further weakens neighbour-to-neighbour links” (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993: 4). Funding is made available based on categories of needs rather than for integrated approaches, which leads to ‘the much lamented fragmentation of efforts to provide solutions. . . [This] denies the basic community wisdom that regards problems as tightly intertwined, as symptoms in fact of the breakdown of the community’s own problem solving capacities. To make matters worse, the bulk of any funding tends to go to the institutions filling the needs. Perversely, these institutions begin to develop a vested interest in maintaining this approach. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) describe an alternative approach, one that recognises that it is the capacities of local people and their associations that build powerful communities. The process of recognizing these capacities begins with the construction of a new lens through which communities can ‘begin to assemble their strengths into new combinations, new structures of opportunity, new sources of income and control, and new possibilities for production’

### **3.4.3. Asset-based community development**

ABCD is understood as a methodology for sustainable development of communities based on their various strengths and potential. According to Du Plooy (2009: 56), ABCD involves the assessing of “resources, skills and experiences available in a community; organizing the community around issues that move its members into action; and then determining and taking appropriate action.” Put in simple terms, this strategy to community development emphasizes the use of community local assets and resources as the basis for development. Du Plooy, De Jager and Van Zyl (2012) argues that it empowers individuals by encouraging them to make use of resources they already have. Anderson and Stallman (2013: 94) stressed that ABC “focuses on honing and leveraging existing strengths within the community.” Put together, what this principle advances is that the solutions

to community problems already exist within a community's assets. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) argued that ABCD can be understood as an approach, as a set of methods for community mobilisation, and as a strategy for community-based development.

As an approach to community-based development, ABCD rests on the principle that a recognition of strengths and assets is more likely to inspire positive action for change in a community than is an exclusive focus on needs and problems. At its core are associations of community members, both formal and informal. As engines of community action, and as a source of power and leadership, these associations are considered assets of the community (Greene 2000).

Accompanying this approach is a set of methods that have been used to mobilise community members around a common vision or plan. While there is no blueprint, these methods could typically include:

- collecting stories of community successes and analysing the reasons for success;
- mapping community assets;
- forming a core steering group;
- building relationships among local assets for mutually beneficial problem solving within the community; convening a representative planning group; leveraging activities, resources, and investments from outside the community.

### **3.5. The elements of ABCD**

#### **3.5.1. Constructing shared meanings**

In the initial phases of ABCD, the approach to mobilizing communities has much in common with appreciative inquiry. Appreciative inquiry is a process that promotes positive change (in organisations or communities) by focusing on peak experiences and successes of the past. It relies on interviews and storytelling that draw out these positive memories, and on a collective analysis of the elements of success. This analysis becomes the reference point for further community action. According to Elliott (1999), practitioners of appreciative inquiry assume that reality is socially constructed, and that language is a vehicle for reinforcing shared meaning attributed to that reality. Communities that have been defined by their problems (malnutrition, poverty, lack of education, corruption) internalise this negativity. Elliot explains:

What the appreciative approach seeks to achieve is the transformation of a culture from one that sees itself in largely negative terms—and therefore is inclined to become locked in its own negative construction of

itself—to one that sees itself as having within it the capacity to enrich and enhance the quality of life of all its stakeholders—and therefore move towards this appreciative construction of itself. (Elliott 1999:12, emphasis in the original)

To achieve this transformation, appreciative inquiry adopts what Elliott (1999: 43) calls the ‘heliotropic principle’. Just as plants grow towards their energy source, so do communities and organisations move towards what gives them life and energy. To the extent that memory and the construction of everyday reality offer hope and meaning, people tend to move in that direction. Parents and teachers are familiar with this principle; research demonstrates extensively that children’s performance is shaped by teachers’ and parents’ expectations more than by children’s own innate ability.

In Elliott’s (1999: 43) view, two instruments are central to appreciative inquiry: memory and imagination. While these are flawed from the perspective of conventional inquiry because they lack the hallmarks of objective empiricism, they are effective in constructing a shared history and a shared vision for the future in a community setting. This is then translated into a community action plan and immediate community activity to set the process in motion.

Both ABCD and appreciative inquiry struggle against the prevailing problem focus of community development practice and its accompanying ‘deficit mind-set’. Both reason that, although some problems require urgent responses, other problems may lose their urgency, or be solved indirectly, when an unrelated change in activity or circumstance takes place and the energy that was focused on the problem becomes re-focused. Ashford and Patkar (2001) illustrate this by quoting from the analyst Carl Jung:

All the greatest and most important problems of life are fundamentally insoluble. They can never be solved, but only outgrown. This ‘outgrowing’ proves on further investigation to require a new level of consciousness. Some higher or wider interest appeared on the horizon and through this broadening of outlook the insoluble problem lost its urgency. It was not solved logically in its own terms but faded when confronted with a new and stronger life urge. (Jung 2014: 86)

Focusing on strengths and capacities is one way in which communities can outgrow a problem, or redefine its solution as a product of renewed collaborative action. It would be misleading to underestimate the challenges of accomplishing this, however. Power asymmetries, the intrusiveness of ideology, and varying levels of commitment to the process may all frustrate effective communication. Yet Elliott (1999) argues that the process seems to offer community

members a more powerful opportunity to get involved on a more equal basis. Role reversals take place in such settings, at least for the duration of the inquiry. Power asymmetries in the routine of everyday life may return, but “the object of the inquiry is to splice stakeholders so firmly in the process that when pre-inquiry hierarchies are re-established, they are in fact qualitatively different. The old ground is simply unavailable” (Elliot 1999:285).

### **3.5.2. The potential of associations**

At the core of ABCD is its focus on social relationships. Formal and informal associations, networks, and extended families are treated as assets and as the means to mobilise other assets of the community. By treating relationships as assets, ABCD is a practical application of the concept of social capital.

Prominent theorists on social capital include Coleman (1988) and Putnam (2000), both of whom discuss social capital’s ability to develop trust and norms within social structures. Putnam (2000: 19) defines social capital as “social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them”. Social capital is often developed through the informal interaction of individuals in everyday relations by building networks of trust and norms of reciprocity, which makes individuals more aware of potential assets that are within their social network (Coleman, 1988: 108). Social capital constitutes a prominent feature in community development strategies that focus on engaging residents at the neighborhood level. Emery and Flora (2006), for instance, describe social capital’s ability to produce positive results as spiraling-up, meaning that communities can augment a wide range of assets. Chaskin (2001) includes social capital as one of the keys to building community capacity.

Empirical research shows that social capital can lead to better government performance by helping a group articulate wants and needs to public officials (Andrews 2011). LeRoux (2007) suggests that community nonprofits encourage voting and facilitate contact with public officials. Meanwhile, Fung and Hsieh (2004) finds that social capital, formulated through civic engagement strategies at the local level, helps garner more responsive schools and police services in Chicago. Overall, there appears to be a theoretical link in which participating in civic or voluntary groups serves as a first step in building political capital. In a slight variation, asset-based community development strategies do not necessarily seek to utilize social capital to build political capital, but rather stress social capital’s ability to augment any of the other six forms of community capital.

### **3.5.3. Learning about the distribution of power**

A central theme of ABCD is the relocation of power to communities—power that has otherwise been held by external agencies. Attention to power and control has also been at the core of at least two decades of participatory development research and practice. Arising as a reaction against mainstream approaches to development that marginalised the poor and powerless, participatory development work has pushed for change that builds the capacities of the disadvantaged and transforms inequitable social relations, whether these are within a community or in the relations the community has with external agencies.

In recent years, however, critics have argued that participatory development has become increasingly mainstream in international development practice, largely because of the assumptions about the efficiency benefits of participation rather than its potential to result in social transformation. The results of so-called ‘participatory’ initiatives have therefore been mixed. NGOs and government agencies have often set the terms of community engagement, limiting it sometimes to consultation rather than community decision making. While there is often an assumption of incremental stages towards decision making and self-mobilisation, experience suggests that NGO involvement can often, inadvertently, stifle such progression. Thus, less direct involvement from the outside might be more successful in bringing about change (Fowler 2000).

At the same time, there has been a surge of interest in citizen participation in decentralized local governance. This is seen as having the potential to re-politicise the concept of participation in development and re-activate the debate about the rights conferred by citizenship and the institutional environment required to ensure that those rights are enjoyed by all who are entitled to them. Where ABCD and the legacy of participatory development intersect is in helping to define the space for citizen engagement in both representative democratic spaces (for example, through local government) and in participatory democratic spaces, created and defined by the people themselves.

In terms of engaging in representative democratic space, and resonant with the principles of an ABCD approach, Edwards (1999) argues that civil society plays an essential role in ‘humanising capitalism’ by nurturing social and economic assets that exist in even the poorest communities, and by advocating, and holding governments accountable for, a more equal distribution of assets. If civil society is to flourish, however, it requires the acceptance of basic rights of freedom of

association and information, and of the rule of law (see Serageldin 1995). Efforts to strengthen civil society are therefore inextricably linked to the promotion of accountable governance at local, national, and international levels. Enhancing the capacities of people who previously have been excluded from participating in decision-making and from enjoying the rights of citizenship is also essential, as is creating the institutional mechanisms for their voices to be heard.

#### **3.5.4. Critics of community participation**

Arnstein (1969: 56) argues that “there is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process.” For this scholar meaningful participation is not simply a matter of course, instead in it is a matter of deliberate intention. Similarly, Fletcher-Watson, Adams, Brook, Charman, Crane, Cusack, Leekam, Milton, Parr and Pellicano (2019) argued that with the society becoming more advanced and people more able to express their views, meaningful participation is now a requirement for successful implementation of national or local government policies. In a different study, Teder and Kaimre (2018: 45) established that meaningful participation entails a real contribution for the stakeholders that are involved in the process. These scholars argued that “consultation where stakeholders are allowed to express their concerns, issues and ideas and where the initiator of plan, programme or policy takes their remarks seriously is the mildest form of real participation.” (Teder and Kaimre 2018: 45). Plummer and Taylor (2001) argues that notification and attendance do not constitute meaningful participation. For these scholars notification and attendance to participation processes should be understood as pre-requisite for a meaning participation process. Additionally, these scholars content that meaningful participation only starts when the community is given an opportunity to express their views freely.

Boyd, Hayes, Wilson and Bearsley-Smith (2008) argued that the local community possess unique knowledge that must be harnessed in finding solution that affect them. For these scholars “experiences and knowledge of local people, though lacks scientific explanations are a strong weapon in solving local problems” (Boyd et al. 2008: 189). In a study that focused on environmental sustainability and public participation, Adams et al. (1994) found that the local knowledge could ensure community participation, and indigenous knowledge could be used to facilitate development of irrigation projects that are environmentally sustainable and meets national and community development objectives. Adams et al (1994) approach points to a holistic approach that that takes on board the interests and needs of local communities. In line with the

above assertion, it is argued that community participation should be considered as mandatory in development projects and locals must be perceived as equal development partners that must participate fully in the design, implementation and benefit sharing for any developmental project. According to these scholars, such inclusion could minimize conflict.

### **3.6. Local economic development**

Literature on economic development is substantial. For instance, Phillips and Pitman (2008: 67) argue that ‘as with community development, modern economic development grew out of the need to develop and improve less developed countries and the America war on poverty. Economic development is the process of creating wealthy through the mobilization of human financial, capital, physical and natural resources to generate marketable goods and services. The economic developer’s role is to influence the process for the benefit of the community through expanding job opportunities and the tax base. Phillips and Besser (2016) argues that economic development concentrate on job creation. These scholars hold that “job creation generally the key to wealthy creation and higher living standards” (Phillips and Besser 2016: 89). Phillips and Pitman (2008) argue that job creation generally involves the “three-legged stool” of recruiting new businesses, retaining and expanding businesses already in the community, and facilitating new business startups. Similarly, Phillips and Besser (2016) stress that economic developers originally concentrated mainly on recruiting new businesses.

### **3.7. The relationship between community and economic development**

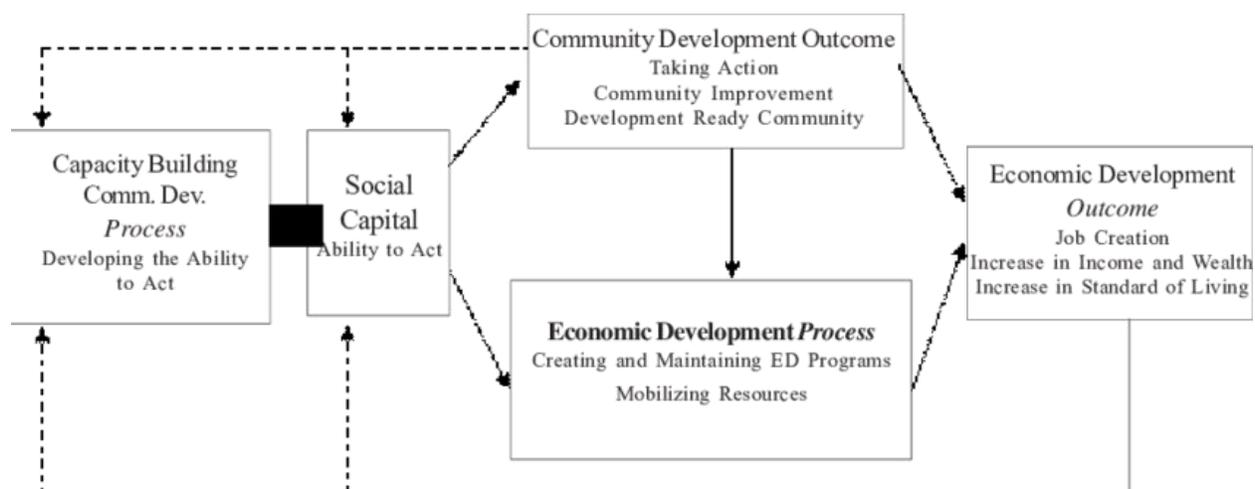
Even though abounding evidence shows that the definition between community development and economic development vary, in practice, available evidence shows that these two are intrinsically linked. Phillips and Pitman (2008: 28) argue that the relationship between community and economic development is “linked on many levels and are highly synergetic.” To illustrate these synergies, Green and Haines (2002) reasoned that there is a link between the two if one defines community development as:

Community development is . . . a planned effort to produce assets that increase the capacity of residents to improve their quality of life. These assets may include several forms of community capital: physical, human, social, financial and environmental.

Placing a careful consideration of the definition of economic development that was presented above, it is clear that there is link between the two concepts. Previously, economic development was defined as

The process of creating wealth through the mobilization of human, financial, capital, physical and natural resources to generate marketable goods and services. The economic developer's role is to influence the process for the benefit of the community through expanding job opportunities and the tax base.

**Figure 2.1 Community and economic development chain**



*Source: google*

The two definitions are parallel. To illustrate, scholars have argued that the two concepts complement each other for a same goal. For instance, Phillips and Pitman argued that the main aim of community development is to produce assets that may improve the community, and the purpose of economic development is to mobilize the same assets to benefit the community. Barraket, Eversole, Luke and Barth (2019) argued that both concepts (community and economic development) refer to the same community assets. These assets include human capital, financial capital and physical (environmental or natural resources). Furthermore, Barraket et al. (2019) argue that a close look at the concept of economic development goes beyond a mere creation of wealth and jobs, instead, it involves the improving of the quality of life and standard of living for all citizens. According to Barraket et al. (2019), perceiving economic development in this manner makes it more harmonious with community development. In the same manner, Carlson, Johnston and Dawson (2018) argue that the only driver to economic development in any sector of society is the availability of a ready community of people. Carlson et al. (2018: 2) argue that “a key to success in economic development – new business recruitment, retention and expansion of existing businesses, and new business start-up – is to have a “development-ready” community.” In a

business study, MacCarthy and Atthirawong (2003) found that when business is making location decisions, they consider a host of factors that affect their costs and profit such as:

Available sites and buildings; transportation services and costs (ground, water, Air; labor cost, quality and availability; utility costs (electricity, natural gas); suitability of infrastructure (roads, water/sewer); telecommunications (Internet bandwidth); public services (police and fire protection).

According to MacCarthy and Atthirawong (2003), business also consider the quality of life factors in a location before they move in. These includes education, health care, climate recreation. Moreover, this scholar stressed that if a community in question scores poorly in these factors, many companies would not consider in development ready. MacCarthy and Atthirawong (2003) argued that one factor could result in a location being eliminated for community development ready. Additionally, Philip and Pitman (2008) argue that if a community is not development ready in the physical sense of available sites, good infrastructure and public services, it will be more difficult to attract new business.

Moreover, Phillips and Pitman (2008) argues that the process of community development plays a critical role in advancing economic development. To illustrate, the process of community development (developing the ability to act in a positive manner for community improvement) leads to the outcomes of community development and a development-ready community. Blakely and Leigh (2013) argues that some of the factors necessary for economic development in a location are made available by the process of community development. In support of this previous assertion, Kemmis (1990) stressed that business organization when looking for places to invest do consider places where the communities are devised among factional lines. Similarly, Phillips and Pitman (2008) argue that

Companies do not like to locate in divided communities where factions are openly fighting with one another, city councils are deadlocked and ineffective, and citizens disagree on the types of businesses they want to attract (or even if they want to attract any businesses).

In addition, Phillips and Pitman (2008) stress that companies that brings economic development to a community requires the support of the community for infrastructure improvements, good public education, labour training, and many other factors. Communities that are not adept (or worse, are totally dysfunctional) at the process of community development are less likely to win

the location competition. Furthermore, company executives would probably prefer not to live in such a place.

### **3.8. Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature. The literature review section took the form of the research questions that are asked in this study. Put in another way, the literature was reviewed thematically in the order of the key research questions. To that end, the literature review section was arranged as follows. Firstly, public participation as a set of mechanisms that are government designed to include the citizens in the governing of their communities. Secondly, the debate on “measuring the effectiveness of public participation” was presented. It emerged in this discussion that there are no single universal criteria to measure effectiveness. Thirdly, the chapter discussed the legal framework that underpins public participation in South Africa. It was highlighted in a chapter that public participation is a constitutional imperative. Fourthly, the common mechanism of public participation to improve community engagement were discussed. Additionally, a discussion on public participation and its relation to community development was presented. In addition, the discussion on public participation and local economic development was done. Finally, the chapter discussed the factors that affect the successful implementation of public participation strategies. It was indicated in this section that misunderstanding of the purpose and goals of public participation between organizers and participants is one of the major drawbacks that hinder public participation.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The main aim of this chapter is to expound the logic for the research design, research philosophy, the methods used to collect and analyse data and the case selection. In this chapter, the methodological strategy, that was used to cogently buttress the answer to the research questions of this study were:

1. What are the mechanisms and systems for citizen engagement used to enhance community development in Ndwedwe Municipality?
2. How effective are the current mechanism and systems of public participation employed to improve community engagement in Ndwedwe Municipality?
3. What is the role of the local government in ensuring sustainable public participation to foster community development?
4. What factors affect the successful implementation of the public participation strategies in Ndwedwe Municipality?

### **4.2. Research paradigm and design**

This study is an exploratory qualitative study that seeks to assess the effectiveness of public participation in improving the local community development prospects in Ndwedwe Local Municipality. Neumann (2014) argues that exploratory qualitative studies are research that is conducted when there is little or no pre-existing knowledge about the research problem or the case study. To date, there are few studies conducted that assess the effectiveness of public participation in improving the local community development prospects. The study falls within the interpretivism paradigm because data analysis in this study heavily relies on the interpretation of the researcher. Du Plooy (2014:12) argues that "interpretivism is a softer and more subjective way in which to interpret data". What this means is that there is no objective reality or meaning in the data. Instead, meaning drawn from the data is subjectively constructed by the interpretations of the researcher. The most common research design associated with interpretivism is the qualitative research approaches (Creswell 2011).

This research is going to adopt the exploratory research over all the other researches. According to Stebbins (2001), exploratory research makes clear the exact nature of the problem to be solved.

It also serves the purpose of making sure that more research is done during an experiment and determining what should be researched first and data collection that may not be easy to recognize without exploratory research. According to Babbie (2007), an exploratory research design is conducted for a research problem when the researcher does not have sufficient information from the past or when there are a limited number of researches the researcher can reference. The exploratory research design has been chosen because the researcher wanted to gain background information as well as being able to explain the terms of the research problem. Exploratory research provides answers to questions related to actually administering a big and costly research project.

#### **4.3. Qualitative research approach**

The qualitative research comes from anthropology, sociology, the humanities and evaluation. The philosophical assumptions of the qualitative approach are those of the constructivist/transformational knowledge claims. Qualitative approaches employ phenomenology grounded theory, ethnography, case study and narrative as strategies of inquiry. The approach employs methods like the open-ended questions, emerging approaches, text or images. This study employs qualitative approaches as it seeks to assess the effectiveness of public participation in improving the prospects of development in Ndwedwe Municipality. A qualitative approach is suitable for this study because it is used when the researcher wants to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative (Du Plooy 2014). This study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the extent to which public participation has been effective in improving community development prospects in Ndwedwe Municipality. It seeks to gain an understanding of the importance of public participation in a natural setting. Kumar (2019) concludes that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

#### **4.4. Quantitative approach**

Quantitative approach include strategies of inquiry associated with quantitative research were those that invoked the post positivist world views that came originally from psychology. This approach employs surveys and experiments. The methods employed by quantitative approach are the closed-ended questions, predetermined approaches and numerical data. This approach tests or verifies theories or explanations, identifies variables to study, uses standards of validity and reality

as well as reliability as well as observes and measures information numerically. Statistical procedures are also employed by the researcher using quantitative approach.

#### 4.5. Mixed method

Mixed methods research is the combination and integration of qualitative and quantitative methods in the same study. Mixed method research has developed rapidly in these past few years, emerging as a research methodology with a recognized name and distinct identity (Denscombe, 2008), especially in some field such as education, health sciences, psychology and sociology. The overall purpose and central premise of mixed methods studies is that the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems and complex phenomena than either approach alone. Better understanding can be obtained by triangulating one set of results with another and thereby enhancing the validity of inferences.

#### 4.6. Case study strategy

This study adopts the case study of Ndwedwe Municipality to assess the effectiveness of public participation in fostering community development. A case study is a research strategy and an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context. This study focuses on assessing the effectiveness of public participation in Ndwedwe Municipality. Creswell (2011) argues that “case studies are based on an in-depth investigation of a single individual, group or event to explore the causes of underlying principles”. The case study strategy specifically applies to this study because the researcher aims to examine the extent of public participation fosters community development. The scope of the study is limited to Ndwedwe Municipality.

**Table 4.2: Chart for linking research questions and method for the study**

Research questions	Data sources and method	Justification	Secondary Data Source
1. What are the mechanisms and systems for citizen engagement used to enhance community development in Ndwedwe Municipality?	Interview Document review	Interviews provide indepth understanding of the mechanism  Document review allows for a review of the success of and failures of the mechanism as documented.	Molepo et al. 2017
2. How effective are the current mechanism and systems of public participation employed to improve community engagement in Ndwedwe Municipality?	Interview Document review	Interviews provide indepth understanding of the mechanism  Document review allows for a review of the success of and failures of the mechanism as documented.	Sinxadi and Campbell (2015)

<p>3. What is the role of the local government in ensuring sustainable public participation to foster community development?</p>	<p>Interview Document review</p>	<p>Interviews provide in-depth understanding of the mechanism</p> <p>Document review allows for a review of the success of and failures of the mechanism as documented.</p>	<p>Marzuki (2015)</p>
<p>4. What factors affect the successful implementation of the public participation strategies in Ndwedwe Municipality?</p>	<p>Interview Document review</p>	<p>Interviews provide in-depth understanding of the mechanism</p> <p>Document review allows for a review of the success of and failures of the mechanism as documented.</p>	<p>Molepo et al. 2017</p>

**Table: 4.3. Approach to the research process**

<b>Why data was collected (Research Objectives)</b>	<b>What data was collected</b>	<b>Where data was collected</b>	<b>When data was collected</b>	<b>How data was collected</b>	<b>How data was analysed</b>
<p>What are the mechanisms and systems for citizen engagement used to enhance community development in Ndwedwe Municipality?</p> <p>How effective are the current mechanism and systems of public participation employed to improve community engagement in Ndwedwe Municipality?</p> <p>What is the role of the local government in ensuring sustainable public participation to foster community development?</p>	<p>Qualitative data using interviewing method Observations, document review and artefacts</p>	<p>Ndwedwe</p>	<p>February-March</p>	<p>The researcher carried out the data collection by visiting the hotels in the case study. Interviewing employees, leaders of the hotels using semi- structured interview questions, Tape recorded or hand written. Document review, observations and artefacts. Interviews in Twi language were verified by a language expert to ascertain accuracy of translation. Interviewees were informed of their responses after transcription for their approval.</p>	<p>Themes/patterns emerged from all 4 case hotels were used to explain the findings.</p>

#### **4.7. Target population**

In any given study, the researcher is supposed to identify the specific group of respondents or participants. These are called the target population. Du Plooy (2014) holds the view that the population included by a scholar in research is called the accessible population. Neumann (2014) defines the target population as the total group of individuals from which the sample might be drawn. For this research, the target population includes the nineteen (19), municipal council members. The municipality consists of 19 ward committees.

#### **4.8. Sample and sampling strategies**

This study employs a non-probability purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their study (Du Plooy 2014). In this study, the researcher makes use of purposive sampling to select a suitable sample that assist in answering the researcher questions. For instance, the researcher specifically identifies the persons that know the public participation processes in Ndwedwe Municipality.

This study consist of a data sample that were drawn from two data sources. The first sample consists of secondary data drawn from secondary sources. Secondary sources are those that provide information that has been done in the field of interest (Creswell 2003). It is the information that is already available and can be accessed. The researcher refered to the Ndwedwe Integrated Development Document 2009, relevant policies and legislation on the Integrated Development Programme 2009 plan, journals and the Constitution of South Africa. The secondary sources that were used are as follows:

- i. Ndwedwe Integrated Development Document 2019
- ii. Relevant Policies and Legislation on Integrated Development Programme 2019;
- iii. Journals and the constitution of South Africa;
- iv. Stakeholders' reports from the municipality and consultancy reports;
- v. Information from the archives of the municipality associated with the community planning process in the Integrated Development Planning process;
- vi. Minutes of the consultative meetings, and – Izimbizo minutes.

#### **4.9. Primary data**

The second sample consists of municipality officials and community members from Ndwedwe Municipality. This sample consists of 10 (n=10) participants. The participants were selected based on the assumption that they are actively involved in the community participation programs and that they are familiar with the community participation processes in Ndwedwe municipality. These include community members are drawn from ward committees, street committees and municipal officials. The participants that were selected are as follows:

- i. Five (3) ward committee members were drawn from ward 5, 8, and 15.
- ii. Five (3) community members were also selected from street committees of ward 11, 13 and 15.
- iii. Four (4) municipal officials were selected from five wards in Ndwedwe municipality (5, 8, 11, 13 and 15). These include One (1) IDP Manager of Ndwedwe Local Municipality; One (1) Integrated Development Planning Provincial Manager; Two (2) Community Development Workers from wards 16 and 18.

#### **4.10. The recruitment strategy**

After receiving permission from the Ndwedwe municipality (Gate-keeper) and ethical clearance from the university for the study to proceed, the identified potential participants were invited via emails and phone calls. The list of potential participants were received from the municipality department of community participation. They have records of all municipal workers involved in community participation programs and community members who are actively involved in community participation.

#### **4.11. Data collection**

Qualitative data collection method was used. The qualitative methods of data collection do not involve the collection of data that involves numbers or a need to be deduced through a mathematical calculation rather it is based on the non- quantifiable elements like the feeling or emotions of the researcher.

##### **4.11.1. Quantitative method**

Quantitative methods are presented in numbers and require mathematical calculations to deduce. An example would be the use of questionnaires with close-ended questions to arrive at figures to be calculated mathematically. Also method of correlation and regression, mean, mode and median.

#### **4.11.2. Questionnaires**

This is the process of collecting data through an instrument consisting of series of questions and prompts to receive responses from individuals administered to. Questionnaires are designed to collect data from a group. A questionnaire can be administered in large numbers and is cost effective. It can be used to compare and contrast previous research to measure change. Questionnaires can also cover all areas of a topic.

However, questionnaires cannot produce qualitative data. Questions might be left unanswered and respondents may be dishonest or may lose interest midway.

#### **4.11.3. Telephone In-depth Interviews**

In this study, the telephone in-depth interviews were applied as part of the data collection methods. The researcher chose to conduct interviews online because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher aims to avoid physical contact with the participants. An in-depth interview is a data collection method that permits the researcher to pose questions to a participant/ respondent to learn more about their views, opinions and beliefs on a specific issue (Du Plooy 2014). Moreover, an in-depth interview is one way a researcher can find in-depth information. The researcher conducted 10 interviews in total. Interviews were done telephonically with the participants and physical while observing strictly the COVID-19 regulations. Each interview was between 10 to 30 minutes. The researcher used the interview guide developed by the researcher with the assistance of the supervisor. The researcher used both the tape recorder and note taking to record the interview.

#### **4.12. Data analysis**

Document analysis is a significant area of information gathering. For this research, document analysis was carried out for background information and to undertake the literature review. According to Bowen (2009) document analysis is the practice of scrutinising and analysing documents to give direction, understanding as well as meaning to develop empirical knowledge. Documents that were reviewed as part of document analysis comprise a range of documents such as Ndwedwe Integrated Development Document 2019; Relevant Policies and Legislation on Integrated Development Programme 2019; Journals and the constitution of South Africa; Stakeholders' reports from the municipality and consultancy reports; Information from the archives of the municipality associated with the community planning process in the Integrated Development Planning process; Minutes of the consultative meetings, and Izimbizo minutes.

#### **4.12.1. Thematic analysis**

Thematic approach was used. Thematic analysis is one of the most common forms of analysis within qualitative research. It emphasises identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data. Data were organised into meaningful groups. Themes were reviewed and refined. Each of the themes were named and described in relation to what is interesting about the theme and why it is interesting. Lastly the researcher produced a report.

#### **4.13. Trustworthiness**

The researcher made sure that the research findings from this study are trustworthy, valid and reliable. Trustworthiness refers to the degree of confidence in data interpretation, and methods used to guarantee the quality of the study. Creswell argue that in every single study the researcher must establish the protocols and procedures necessary for a study to be considered with of consideration by readers. Lincoln and Guba (1985) outlined the acceptable procedure a researcher should follow to ensure trustworthiness. These criteria include credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

In this study, the researcher attains dependability by ensuring that the study process is rational, traceable, and well-documented. Readers are better able to appraise the research's dependability when they can analyse the research procedure (Creswell 2009). In this study the researcher worked with other researchers to audit the research study's methodology.

An audit trail gives readers proof of the researcher's decisions and choices on theoretical and methodological concerns throughout the investigation, which necessitates a clear reason for such conclusions. When another researcher can clearly follow the decision trail, a study and its conclusions are auditable. Kumar (2005) also claimed that if given the identical data, perspective, and scenario, another researcher could reach similar, but not opposite, results. Keeping raw data records, field notes, transcripts, and a reflective journal allows the researcher to systemize, relate, and cross-reference data, as well as make the research process reporting easier.

Confirmability is concerned with proving that the researcher's interpretations and findings are clearly drawn from the facts, and it necessitates the researcher demonstrating how conclusions and interpretations were reached. Confirmability is established when trustworthiness, generalisability, and dependability are all met. Researcher incorporate markers such as the reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire investigation, according so that others may understand how and why decisions were taken.

When core searchers or readers are confronted with an event, they can recognize. The "fit" between respondents' views and the researcher's representation of them is referred to as credibility. When ensuring credibility, activities including prolonged involvement, persistent observation, data collection triangulation, and researcher triangulation were used by the researcher. The researcher also used peer debriefing to verify preliminary findings and interpretations against the raw data, as well as reviewing referential adequacy as a way to check preliminary findings and interpretations against the raw data.

The generalizability of an investigation is referred to as transferability. This only applies to case-to-case transfer in qualitative research. The researcher has no way of knowing which sites might want to use the findings; therefore, the researcher provides detailed descriptions so that individuals who want to use the findings on their own site can assess transferability.

#### **4.14. Validity**

Validity in qualitative research means "appropriateness" of the tools, processes, and data. Whether the research question is valid for the desired outcome, the choice of methodology is appropriate for answering the research question, the design is valid for the methodology, the sampling and data analysis is appropriate, and finally the results and conclusions are valid for the sample and context. Therefore, to ensure validity in this study, the researcher made sure that the informants are very clear on the nature of the research. For example, the informants should understand why the researcher is conducting the research, what he is investigating? How he collected data and what he does with it. The researcher also build a trust-relationship with the subjects and staying in that setting for a long period. The researcher kept detailed notes to note the variations in response over the course of time. Additionally, the researcher shows the notes collected from the informants to a third person who is familiar with research. In doing this, researcher assumes that a third person quickly sees where or how a fieldworker is being misled or co-opted.

#### **4.15. Ethical considerations**

In this study, anonymity of my interviewees was ensured. Coding was employed to each interviewee by a system of numbers so that their identities were not revealed and in the dissemination of my research, these interviewees remained coded. Data was analyzed using constant comparative method where the respondents' interview transcripts were coded and categorized into themes in order to present findings (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). The research participants were also asked to complete the consent forms.

In these consent forms participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from participation at any stage for any reason whatsoever. They were also advised that if they chose to withdraw at any stage, there would be no adverse consequences to them. Likewise, there were no objective benefits to them if they chose to participate. I encountered some participants who asked about the benefits that they would receive in answering the interview questions. Participants were advised that there were no direct benefits to themselves in participating in the process.

The researcher also advised participants that the research was for academic reasons, and that the research may be published for the utilisation of the public including public institutions like Ndwedwe Municipality. Participants voiced their opinions that their participation would not change anything especially where they were not satisfied as the process had been completed and could not be reversed. These participants were the business people in the community who expressed that they do not engage in political issues as it is 'just the waste of time'.

The informed consent form was used to address issues of trust and suspicion. It was often necessary for me to verbalize and discuss the informed consent due to respondent lack of understanding and suspicion of the process. After verbalisation of the informed consent form which specifically outlines expectations of respondent's participation, and the form that the interview took. Respondents were reminded that their participation was voluntary.

Two research participants believed I was sent by the municipality to conduct interviews in order to ascertain whether community members were in opposition to the mandate of the municipality. These suspicions were again allayed by verbalizing the informed consent. The language barrier was not a problem because all the participants were able to express themselves in both languages English and isiZulu. Interviews were conducted with research participants who gave verbal consent to participate in the process. As such, all University ethical procedures were adhered to. There are two referencing styles employed in this study.

#### **4.16. Conclusion**

This chapter has chronicled the data collection procedure that the researcher took to gather, collect and analyses data. The research design and paradigm were explained. The case study research strategy or design was explained. How it applies to the research questions for this study was explained. The qualitative research approach was used in this study. The link between the research questions and the data collection methods was clearly defined.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF DATA**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the data analysis and findings from the 10 participants that took part in this study. The data were collected using telephone in-depth interviews. The researcher chose to conduct interviews online because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study sought to assess the effectiveness of public participation in improving the local community development prospects in the Ndwedwe Local Municipality. Data analysis was done in order to bring out meaning out of raw data. There is also integration of pieces of information so that a conclusion can be made. Data analysis and discussion also helps by exposing gaps that may have been created during data collection. It also helps to prompt further research in the related field.

The broader objectives of this study are listed below:

- To assess the mechanism and systems for citizen engagement implemented to enhance development in Ndwedwe municipality.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the current mechanisms and systems employed to enhance development through community engagement in Ndwedwe municipality.
- To identify the role of Ndwedwe local government in ensuring there is sustainable public participation to foster development of Ndwedwe municipality.
- To examine the factors affecting the successful implementation of the public participation strategies in Ndwedwe municipality.

After receiving the permission for the study to proceed from the Ndwedwe municipality (gatekeeper), the identified potential participants were invited via emails and phone calls. Potential participants were those who work for the municipality as well as community members, received from the municipality department of community participation. They have records of all municipality workers involved in community participation programs and community members who are actively involved in community participation. The researcher guaranteed to maintain confidentiality of the informants, using informed consent forms and that all the data that were be collected were kept anonymous.

### **5.2. Presentations, Findings, Analysis and Discussion**

Presentation of the data in this section made use of the Braun and Burke (2020) thematic approach. That is to say, data is presented in the form of themes. These themes are organised in terms of how they appeared in response to the key research questions of this study. The first section of this presentation and analysis answers the questions that were asked in this study.

### **5.3. Theme: Community Involvement**

Community involvement often means participating in government in a state that they have elected. The community is supposed to be included in every decision that is to be made for service delivery so that communities are not given the service that they do not need. In response to the question on what they understood about public participation, almost all the participants highlighted that the communities must be involved in the decision making so that they take charge of service delivery.

I think that public participation is about the ways which are used to assist the community regarding the services they need from the municipality, what they need to know and what needs to be done, and what the community needs. (Participant 8, 23/04/2021)

Even though I would not have a precise answer, but I have worked with the community for some time now, public participation is to work together in dealing with community issues, more especial things that assist the community to develop, that occurs in different structures. (Participant 9, 25/04/2021)

P9 gave structures such as involving war rooms, where there are ward committees, ward councillors and traditional leaders. In these war rooms issues about development, which speaks to education and infrastructure and assisting students from poor backgrounds or agricultural and all SAPS structures, and volunteers who fight crimes speaking about the safety of communities.

P10 understands public participation as

Assisting community in many ways, we take note of all what community needs and wait for responses. We have war where people are invited to come and table their needs with all other departments, so that when people present their matters there would be direct responses from departments such as home affairs, SAPS, CCG's and all other departments and the ward councillor and ward committee. (Participant 10, 26/04/2021)

It emerged from their responses that communities should be given an opportunity to choose a service that is a priority to them at a particular point in time.

To support the above illustration, P1 said:

Communities must be involved in their development. For instance, whatever the municipality will be doing should be driven by the communities so that public participation improves local development. (Participant 1, 14/03/2021)

This participant continued to state that community structures must be in place and there must be a level of consultation by the municipality, which must be undertaken from the ward level to the sub regional clusters or to local task teams so that there is public participation. The

participant also highlighted that faith based, groups, cultural groups and traditional healers are very important structures and must be involved especially in issues like COVID-19 pandemic.

The government must do things in consultation with them since they also help in ensuring that there is effective public participation in the local municipality. On the same note, P2 also indicated what he understood by public participation and according to P2

It is the community taking charge of service delivery. People are consulted for the service needed. (Participant 2, 01/04/2021)

It is highlighted in the response that in order for services needed by the community to be provided then there must be involvement of the community members in the development of local communities. Furthermore, P2 said:

It is the strength of good governance. It is where the community take charge of service delivery. It is where the service provider in the sense, the local government, province and even nationally consult the people for the service needed. It is avoiding thumb sucking. (Participant 2, 01/04/2021)

The participant further said that you provide the service that needed in the community through community participation.

#### **5.4. Theme 2: Community development**

When asked about their understanding of community development, most participants indicated that community development is broad, and it speaks of all the sectors of the community. Most participants felt that community members must be given the opportunity to stand on their own, whether they are skilled or unskilled or unskilled to develop the community. For P2 who is a community development worker, he felt that community development is broad as it involves all the sectors of the community. P1 thought that all sectors come together for the community to stand on their own.

Community development is very broad in such a way that it is a field of study itself. It is broad. It speaks of all the sectors of the community. It is where different sectors especially in the rural areas focus a lot in agriculture and engage in agricultural activities to form cooperatives so that they can develop each other. (Participant 1, 14/03/2021)

There is a lot involved in community development. I understand it as the development of our local communities through the partnership of everyone who is interested in the affairs of that community. For instance, the parties must be there when we talk of community development are local government, private sector. But you can't do community development without the citizens.

The idea that community development is broad is shared by P3 and P4 who said that it is necessary to look at a community to say

what are the people's needs at a particular community? (P3 14/03/2021)

We need to look at all aspects of the community when we look at the issue of community development. It is very huge that starts from the smallest and "least" important person in the community until to the president himself (P4 14/03/2021).

When we look at the concept of community development. We are looking at all sectors and facets of the community that can come together to improve the livelihoods of the local citizens and beyond. So, for me, we look at issues of job creation, economic development, and the improvement our lives as local people (P7 14/03/2021).

What it is that you need to develop the people and the infrastructure within the particular community (P9 14/03/2021)

There are issues of job creation, economic development, and social development. Both those who are trained and untrained must get a chance to be part of community projects so that they are employed, display their skills and gain skills if they are untrained personnel.

#### **5.4.1. Sub Theme: Initiatives targeting the vulnerable**

When giving a response as to how P1 understands community development, P1 went further to highlight that there must be involvement of the vulnerable groups in the community such as the disabled.

There must be programs that speak to the disabled and make sure that they are able to get what the government is providing, for example, the disabled must be given device tools to use such as wheel chairs so they cannot be excluded from the activities that the municipalities and government is doing. (Participant 1, 14/03/2021)

P1 further stated that:

The disabled must be given opportunity which speaks to business since some want to be in business. Some are interested in getting bursaries, career exposure in terms of high school and some want internship in the municipality or elsewhere and the municipality must be able to play a link as a municipality in terms of coordinating them and lobbying industries to invest in them. (Participant 1, 14/03/2021)

P2 felt that the disabled must be given first preference whenever the budget is being made. P2 stated that:

The local government must give first preference to those people that are disabled because there are some resources that they cannot reach out for because of their physical condition. (Participant 2, 01/04/2021)

P8 stressed that, like all other citizens, people with disabilities have both rights and responsibilities. He said,

The local government must ensure that a comprehensive, well organised service delivery system on disability is approached in a collective manner to ensure sustained development. (Participant 8, 28/04/2021)

P10 reasoned that, other key challenges that continue to exclude people with disabilities from mainstream society are prejudice and social stigma, isolation, lack of access to support networks and resources for an independent daily existence, lack of access to infrastructure, services, communication, transport, opportunities, resources, education, technical aids, etc. that allow them independence and promote their dignity, self-sufficiency and responsibility. He said:

.... selected categories of people with disabilities such as children, women and older persons are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, abuse and encounter barriers to participation in society. These categories require distinct attention. (Participant 10, 28/04/2021)

P 7's views concerning the issue of disabilities is that:

The plight of people with disabilities was much worse than that of other marginalised and vulnerable groups of society. The vast majority of black people with disabilities were peripheral beneficiaries, if at all. The human, social, political and economic rights of People with disabilities were ignored as was the critical issues of full inclusion and integration of people with disabilities into mainstream society. There must be a proper improvement on the initiatives targeting the vulnerable even up to date. (Participant 7, 16/04/2021)

### **5.5. Theme 3: Forms of public participation**

One of the key questions that the participants were asked was on the forms of public participation that they have in their municipality. All the participants do have forms of public participation in their municipality. From the responses, the forms of public participation include local task teams, Facebook and social media, notice boards where adverts for posts are done and IDP road shows. The Ndwedwe municipality also has ward committees which are elected from the community and people or community members are also called to public meetings for them to say what they want the municipality to assist them with in order of priority.

P1said:

At this level you speak of all social issues and you try to deal with issues to do with backlog in terms of service deliveries but we also have communication which is through Facebook and social media which

is managed by manager of communications of the municipality where we advertise things that communicates with the public to get responses from them. We also have notice boards that are for the municipality, which are in form of Bhamsele Tusong centre, ward 1 centre where any communication that the municipality and advert for post needs to do with the public is done through the noticeboards. (Participant 1, 14/03/2021)

P3 who is a community member said:

We have Izimbizos to tell the community what they have, for example, if they have a budget for electricity or any service and give them that information. This happens maybe once or twice in years, for example, when elections are close they call the people to tell them what they have and they end up not doing as per their promises. (Participant 3, 01/04/2021)

P4 when responding to the question on forms of public participation mentioned similar forms, thus, IDPs and that the municipality is told by the people in their meetings that the assistance must come in order of priority.

P8 said:

The municipality uses public meetings, in all VDs, these community needs are assembled". When answering the same question (Participant 8, 16/04/2021)

P9 said:

I have mentioned the war rooms, they don't take the whole community but community structures, ward councillors, on average a ward has 7000 people in Ndwedwe, the ward councillor cannot reach out to all the people, that's why there are committees, ward committees can convene meetings in the ward assisting the councillor, it is where the community is able to interact with leaders or be able to raise issues they have. Municipality has IDP, Integrated Development Planning which illustrates how the municipality want to develop the area we are living in, they follow processes, writing, social, environment and economy, when it is adopted. The Mayor and the speaker should present it to the community where the community is able to make submissions, issues, advices or priorities they want to reflect, because Ndwedwe municipality is very small, probably rated at grade 3. There are issues that were raised long ago regarding tourism, which have not been attended to even today; such things need to be communicated better. (Participant 9, 25/04/2021)

Furthermore, P9 highlighted that sitting of ManCo and EXCO and council are other ways to communicate with community,

There are traditional council structures of local chiefs in Ndwedwe, which are about 16 chiefs and they also call community meeting or Izinduna in different area under one chief to discuss issues. (Participant 9, 25/04/2021)

According to P10 municipality calls public meetings in VD's where there are developments. They are informed about details, and they indicate if there will be job opportunities too.

#### **5.6. Theme 4: Mechanisms and Systems of citizen's participation**

When asked on the mechanisms and systems of public participation that they have in their municipality. Most participants responded by saying they use radios, loudspeakers and Izimbizos or public meetings. Below are some of the responses from the participants. P1 responded by saying that they have local radio stations where the Mayor goes there monthly/quarterly basis to report on progress on things that are going to be done, for example, Siyathuthuka FM is used as a radio station to communicate. P3 also spoke of radios and meetings in order to report progress and things to be done. P1 further mentioned that there is also coordination of local leadership where the Mayor sits with the traditional leadership. Nyalunga (2006) outlined mechanisms for public participation in local government that are direct advice and support, ward committees, traditional authorities and civil society organisations. Moreover, responding to the same question on mechanisms and systems of public participation,

P3 raised a concern that the meetings are called for during the week when other people are at work and they are unable to attend, as a result old people end up attending. According to P3,

...the old people just listen instead of asking questions or giving suggestions. (Participant 3, 01/04/2021)

It can be interpreted to mean that P3 was worried about their concerns that were not being represented and taken to the responsible authorities since the working class and people of various ages could not attend the meetings. The idea driven here is that public meetings should be held when most people are free, for instance, at weekends so that the people can communicate their concerns and suggestions. P3 and P4 spoke of the use of loudspeakers/loud hailing as a way of conveying messages to community members about IDPs and Izimbizos, for instance, in Ndwedwe ward 3.

P4 further said that

.. people's wishes must be recorded during meetings. (Participant 4, 01/04/2021)

This might mean that for the members to feel that their contributions are taken into consideration, they would want them recorded whenever they held meetings.

### **5.6.1. Sub-theme 4 (i): Usefulness of the mechanisms and systems**

Another question that was asked to participants is whether the mechanisms and systems were useful in the development of their community. One of their key issues that dominated the responses from the participants was the issue of improvements not only for the municipality alone, but on the entire community. P1 agreed that the mechanisms and systems are useful but they could be improved on. According to P1

...there are necessary needs for improvement with the community involved and not only on the part of the municipality. (Participant 1, 14/03/2021)

P2 who is also the CDW and P4 who is from ward 3 shared the same sentiments with P1 as they mentioned that the local government has not reached the ceiling yet. Almost all the participants mentioned the areas where they felt that there is need for improvement such as improvement on social network, recruiting someone to handle issues on the social platform in order for people to get responses quickly as highlighted by P1. Responding to the same question, P2 shared his experience with the municipality saying that some of the systems are being for compliance.

As the CDW he further stated that whatever the municipality is doing, it is not considering the community. For instance, P2 said that

When ward committees sit for meetings, they sit for compliance so as to sign the registers not thinking about the community they represent and yet they have been elected for 5 years in office. The question still stands, if you have a ward committee that complies for 5 years, where do you put your community? (Participant 2, 01/04/2021)

P4 said that his concern is with the system of requesting 10 people in a meeting so that they represent 1000 people. P4 further said

...it is not a true reflection of the total number of people in that community. (Participant 4, 01/04/2021)

P4 also made an emphasis on that people's submissions must be recorded and put into consideration.

However, P3 clearly denied the usefulness of the system and mechanisms saying that he feels that they do not develop the community. P3 concurs with P4's notion that a few people are called to represent a large population and P3 pointed out that

.....the people they call for meetings are the ones that they are connected to. (Participant 3, 01/04/2021)

A unique and interesting issue raised by P1 is that the municipality is playing coordination on issues to do with electricity. He said that

..... although it is owned by Eskom, the municipality must ensure that there is proper service delivery because people did not vote for Eskom but for the municipality. (Participant 1, 14/03/2021)

According to P1, its responsibilities cannot be neglected but rather be coordinated on behalf of the people that voted for them.

### **5.7. Theme 5: Implementation of mechanisms and systems**

Most of the responses from the participants were that the systems and mechanisms are not being implemented. P2 believes that it is more of compliance than implementation. The participant feels that there is no full implementation because it is centralised to a certain sphere of government of which every sector in that sphere of government is there to serve the people.

P2 said that everyday must be accountable to public participation.

P4 from ward 3 shares the same sentiments as P2 and he further blames corruption for the improper implementation of the systems and mechanisms. He also raised the issue of compliance and that they do not prioritise what the community wants. P4 said:

For instance, they build a clinic instead of a sport field that people want because officials from the municipality want to manipulate and abuse funds. (Participant 4, 01/04/2021)

P3 emphasised the issue of calling for meetings midweek that limits the participation of people.

The level of education of those who attend meetings was also of concern since the participant felt that those who did not finish matric don't understand some of the things. Only one participant was of the view that 90% of the systems and mechanisms are being implemented. He further mentioned that all councillors know what is expected of them and they know what should be done. The councillors must be able to meet weekly at CCGs although it differs with a particular councillor and dynamics of the ward. (Participant 3, 01/04/2021)

However, P1 said:

community strikes in wards will show that a particular councillor is not serving the people or is not communicating frequently on what is to happen, when it is to be done, what is the backlog and how it is to be addressed. (Participant 1, 14/03/2021)

### **5.8. Theme 6: Most successful and less successful mechanisms**

On the question on most successful and less successful mechanisms, P1 indicated that Operation Sukuma Sakhe was one system that has worked for them. This strategy operates from a ward level called ward war room meetings. The champion of the meetings is the ward councillor and consists of people from various departments such as sport development, civil society and traditional faith based organisations. People from the community are allowed to come and sit in the war room and get a report from the councillor. Those with personal problems like failing to get a national identification card can also bring their issues to the ward war room in order to get assistance from various stakeholders. On the less successful ones, P1 mentioned the weaknesses of social media due to level of infrastructure and connectivity. P1 suggested that this challenge could be improved by having free WiFi at ranks and sport fields. Izimbizos were said to be successful as well as IDPs although the report backs have been a disaster. According to the responses of the participants, it is because a draft was never presented until approval stage. P2 as the CDW further said that this has been fluctuating among the terms. P3 maintained that since meetings are called during the week, most of the systems and mechanisms are less successful. From ward 3, P4 said that loud hailing as a communication mechanism is effective and a system of recording people's wishes is less successful and less effective.

P1 said:

Operation Sukuma Sakhe is one system that has worked for us. It operates from ward level and is called ward war room meetings. The champion of the meetings is the ward councillor and it consists of people from sport development, civil security and traditional/faith based organisations. People from the community are allowed to come and sit in the war room and get the report from the councillor. For example, people who have issues of failing to get a national identity card can bring their issues to the war room. (Participant 1, 14/03/2021)

P1 further said the less successful mechanisms:

Social media has weaknesses due to the level of infrastructure and level of connectivity. If we were a more developed municipality we would have free Wi-Fi, for instance, at ranks and sport fields. People do not have data; they cannot respond frequently what they want to do. (Participant 1, 14/03/2021)

P2 said:

Imbizos were successful, IDP forums were also successful but the report backs as part of public participation have been a disaster. A draft budget was never presented and the community engaged on it until approved stage, this has been a disaster. (Participant 2, 01/04/2021)

P3's is that: Most of the systems and mechanisms are less successful because they are called during the week causing fewer participants and fewer contributions.

P4 said: Loud hailing as a communication mechanism is effective. A system of recording people's wishes is less successful and less effective.

### **Question 3: How would you describe the role of the municipality in ensuring public participation?**

#### **5.9. Theme 7: Role of the municipality**

When asked about the role that the municipality has in ensuring public participation, most respondents highlighted that the role of the municipality is to ensure that there are public participation structures and the platforms. P4 gave an example of an operation in KwaZulu-Natal, that of Sukuma Sakhe. The operation was said to be very helpful and that others must adopt it because it allows government departments and municipalities to work together. P3 said that the municipality must ensure that people living around know what is happening inside the municipality as well as know what they must get from the municipality, thus, service. P2 concurred with P4 because he also spoke of working hand in hand with the structures for the benefit of the community. According to P1, there are things that the municipality is mandated to do so, people must be told what the mandate is. He further said that whatever the municipality does, it must be informed by the people and be able to report back as in terms of the municipality budget. Existing literature also supports that the role of the municipality is the facilitation of local community participation in decisions that affect the local community, the articulation of the local community interests and presentation of these interests within the government system, thus through ward committees (Provincial and Local Government, 1998).

P1 said:

There are things that the municipality is mandated to do so people must be told what the mandate is. Whatever we do must be informed by our people and be able to report back in terms of the budget that we have as a municipality. People must be able to see progress; we must be able to account for that, why it is so. (Participant 1, 14/03/2021)

P2's view is that:

There is need for the establishment of public participation structures and ensure that there are platforms that work hand in hand with the structures for the benefit of the community. (Participant 2, 01/04/2021)

P3 said:

The local government must ensure that people living around know what is happening inside the municipality and know what they must get from municipality, service delivery. People must be allowed to come and give information and make people free to visit the municipality anytime. (Participant 3, 01/04/2021)

P4 said:

In KwaZulu-Natal there is Operation Sukuma Sakhe where they have been working in integrated forms. This operation has been very helpful and others must adopt it because it allows government departments and municipalities to work together. The role is working in integrated manner. (Participant 4, 01/04/2021)

### **5.10. Theme 8: Public participation strategy developing the community**

When asked whether the public participation strategy could help in developing the community, most or all of the participants indicated that indicated that it could develop the community. They also indicated that, it is if, the strategy is properly implemented or if the strategy was able to be a catalyst of all other strategies that are already in the municipality. P1 feels that youth development, sport development and HIV/AIDS strategy must be reviewed from time to time in terms of certain things have been achieved through the strategy. Furthermore, he said that it should be seen as an approach to speedy service delivery. P2 and P4 share the same sentiments that it could develop the community if it was properly implemented. P3 feels that favouritism was disturbing the strategy from developing the community. A community member responded by saying that the strategy might be good if they make sure that community meetings are announced earlier and gives people to prepare for the meeting. Mitchell and Parkins (2005) argue that public participation is a crucial aspect of the inclusion of the community in matters of interest.

P1 stated that:

Public participation strategy can develop the community but the strategy must be able to be a catalyst of all other strategies that already exist in the municipality. He further stated that it must not be seen as something different from service delivery but as an approach on how we speedy service delivery that is needed by people. (Participant 1, 14/03/2021)

P2 said:

I am very positive that it can develop the community if it is properly implemented, not necessarily that it is there for compliance. (Participant 2, 01/04/2021)

P3's view is:

I think the strategy might be good if they make sure that community meetings are announced earlier and give people time to prepare for the meeting. The message must reach everyone so that people will come and participate. They must do away with favouritism because some people do not deserve the services. (Participant 3, 01/04/2021)

P4 said:

....I think it can if it was properly done. It is not about being seen but to be compliant. (Participant 4, 01/04/2021)

#### **Question 4: What has been the greatest challenge in the implementation of public participation mechanisms?**

##### **5.11. Theme 9: Greatest challenge in implementing**

From the analysed data, one of the most interesting aspects that arose among the participants was historical background or political dynamics of groups who will not accept the current government.

For instance, P1 highlighted that

The National Youth Development Agency as an organisation is not welcome to an IFP or DA led ward because they think the government wants to change the mindset of young people and their political understanding. (Participant 1, 14/03/2021)

P2 said that

Some of the initiatives are great but because of who drives them, they don't get good reception to people they are supposed to uplift. (Participant 2, 01/04/2021)

The findings show that P2 and P3 also share the same sentiments that the public's response is the greatest challenge. This is seen according to P3 through the reactions of people when called for a meeting, if they do not attend the meeting it is difficult to implement the mechanisms. This participant further revealed that even if ways are found to collect people especially coming from very far areas, using buses, the people do not fill up the buses. One participant from ward 3 highlighted the issue of corruption. For instance, he gave an illustration that if people say they want A and then the government officials record it as B, that on its own is corruption because people will be intending to make money out of the projects, which does not benefit the people.

## **5.12. Theme 10: Any other challenges**

The participants managed to raise other challenges in the implementation of public participation mechanisms. One challenge that was indicated by P1 as the most recent one is the taxi rank strike killings that he said that it limits the holding of meetings in certain areas because of community unrest. The issue of rural municipalities that are self-sufficient on grand funding and land disputes and corruption to acquire land were mentioned as other challenges in the implementation of public participation mechanisms. From the analysis, the issue of consistency was also raised by one participant. He said that consistency is a problem because people can go for 3-4 months without holding a meeting that must be held monthly. The other challenge raised by P4 is that not everyone is allowed an opportunity to speak even during public gatherings.

According to P2,

Consistency is a problem because people can go for 3-4 months without holding a meeting that must be held on a monthly basis. (Participant 2, 01/04/2021)

Furthermore, P2 warned the authorities against approaching the people in the communities when they have goodies to ensure that the government is still there.

### **5.12.1. Sub-theme 10.1: Challenges affecting participation do affect community development**

From the analysed data, it is interesting to say that all of the participants confirmed that the challenges that affect participation also affect community development.

P1 believes that the challenges do affect community development because it is not possible to move forward in terms of development when the municipality does not know what the people want or their challenges.

P2 agrees with P1 and gave an example that

...when there is lack of communication between the people and the municipality, development cannot be guaranteed.

Moreover, P2 gave a practical example of a hall that was vandalised by the very same community due to lack of participation. As a result, development was affected.

P4 raised a different view as he mentioned the issue of corruption as the reason for lack of development. An example of the corrupt activities that he mentioned is that

...if the community wants a factory that will benefit families, then the officials corruptly changes the proposed project, then development will be affected. (Participant 4, 01/04/2021)

### **5.13. Conclusion**

This chapter has presented and analysed the results gleaned from the responses of the participants. The results were presented thematically following the Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis approach. From the presentation and analysis of the participants' response, a total of ten themes and two sub-themes were identified. These are: community involvement, community development, forms of public participation, mechanism of citizen participation, implementation of systems of public participation, public participation strategy and the community. These were presented inline and response to the key research questions that underpin this study. The following section discusses the findings. In that section, the findings that emerged were compared with literature and their implication to previous studies and theory discussed.

## CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 6.1. Introduction

This chapter is devoted to a discussion of the findings that emerged from this studies analysis of the responses from the participants. It discusses and offers a comparison of the findings that emerged from this study with findings and conclusion from studies and literature conducted elsewhere. This chapter goes further to integrate the findings with the theories that underpinned this study, in particular the public participation theory, the Action Community Based development models. In addition to that, the findings are also discussed kith and kin to the role of public participation in local government in South Africa’s municipalities.

From this study’s analysis, various themes and sub-themes emerged, that are presented in the table below. It is imperative to highlight that the themes are largely aligned to the key research questions that emerged from this study. They are also aligned to the ABCD approach that used as a theoretical framework for this study.

**Table 6.1 Thematic findings**

Theme	Subtheme
Community Involvement	
Community development	❖ Initiatives targeting the vulnerable
Forms of public participation	
Mechanisms and Systems of citizen’s participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Usefulness of the mechanisms and systems</li> <li>❖ Implementation of mechanisms and systems</li> <li>❖ Most successful and less successful mechanisms</li> </ul>
Role of the municipality	
Public participation strategy developing the community	
Challenge in implementing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Greatest challenge in implementing</li> <li>❖ Any other challenges</li> <li>❖ Challenges affecting participation do affect community development</li> </ul>

## **6.2. Community Involvement**

From the above responses from this study's participants, there was overwhelming demonstration of the understanding of what public participation entails. All the participants stresses that public participation mean community involvement in issues that affect their daily live, either directly or indirectly. Further, in the case of Ndwedwe municipality, the participants expressed the point that there are groups or individuals that are supposed to be part of the local community development prospects in Ndwedwe local municipality to ensure that there is effectiveness of public participation. As a result, the participants stressed the need for government-citizen collaboration through means of consultation with cultural groups and traditional healers in the local municipality.

From these findings, it is therefore safe to conclude that public participation is as a cornerstone for local government development that is predicated on a collaboration between government, citizen, and other stakeholders. The previous assertion seems to agree with findings from previous studies. For instance, these findings support the conclusions made by Migchelbrink and Van de Walle (2021) when they emphasises the benefits of government and citizen collaboration in local economic development. Reed, Vella, Challies, De Vente, Frewer, Hohenwallner-Ries, Huber, Neumann, Oughton, Sidoli del Ceno, and van Delden (2018: 17) argued that government-citizen collaboration provides the opportunity for communication between agencies making decisions and the public. The benefits of public participation apply when public participation is a two-way process—where both the agency and the public can learn and gain benefit.

Moreover, the ABCD model underpin this study's findings that community involvement and government collaboration are cornerstone of local economic development support. To illustrate, among the key assets of that the ABCD stress as crucial local economic development is the individual and the association of individuals (Blickem, Dawson, Kirk, Vassilev, Mathieson, Harrison, Bower and Lamb 2018) According to ABCD proponents, at the heart of the community are residents who possess skills and gifts. The gifts and assets that humans possess must be harnessed by means of inviting the individual in the processes of public participation (Nel 2018).

The issue of community involvement that has been raised by these participants is also consistent with secondary data revealed in this study. For instance, the constitution and various acts in South Africa emphasizes that community involvement and collaboration with agencies and government is a key driver local economic development (RSA Constitution 1996). Public

participation should be a development tool that is essential to foster communication between the local government and its constituencies (Act no.108 of 1996). It is an essential instrument for government spheres to communicate and interact with citizens. The participants have highlighted all these issues as part of their understanding of public participation. The South African Municipal Structures Act (No.117 of 1998) provides interesting arguments for public participation, that is, it states that public participation and involvement is the only available means for citizens and the local government to amalgamate and foster a type of development that benefits all. Findings discussed above are of interest in that they add value to previous studies that have repeatedly emphasised that public participation is important in improving the local development prospects.

### **6.3. Community development**

From this study's analysis, it emerged that local economic development is concerned with local people working together to achieve sustainable economic growth that brings economic benefits and quality of life and improvements for all in the community (World Bank 2003). The potential dynamic driving force behind LED initiatives in partnership formation by local stakeholders (Moyer 2015: 632). Almost all participants expressed that local developmental project driven by local businesses and local communities have more chances to succeed than projects attempted by the local government alone. This must be the reason why most participants were advocating for the tenders to be given to the community. It is because they know that when they are doing or involved in projects of their communities, it is for their benefit, and helps them as communities to stand on their own.

The findings from this study corroborates and supports both literature and theory. For instance, findings highlighted above fits well in the conclusion made by Clarke and Moir (2014) cited in Cloete (2015) who conclude that economic development should be orchestrated as a partnership activity between public, private and institutional sectors, with substantial vertical and horizontal collaboration on the public side. If the public is engaged in development projects, this can help develop a shared understanding of local economic development policies and programs, increasing their potential effectiveness and impact overtime. Additionally, the findings that emphasises on community partnership brings to light the arguments pushed by the proponents of the ABCD theorist who conclude that the collaboration of citizens and institutions is a key driver towards realisation of meaningful and sustainable community development.

For the ABCD proponents, the involvement of paid groups that generally are professionals who are structurally organized (government, business, schools) and small informal groups (clubs, working with a common interest) is critical to community mobilisation and partnership than can foster local economic development. To illustrate argued institutions are valuable resources because the assets of such institutions can assist the community to capture valuable resources and establish a sense of civic responsibility (Blickem, Dawson, Kirk, Vassilev, Mathieson, Harrison, Bower, and Lamb 2018). On the other hand, the associations are crucial assets for community mobilization that underpins development through community consensus.

#### **6.4. Initiatives targeting the vulnerable**

Evidence from the data shows, that the municipality does not have programmes that speak about the vulnerable groups in the community. If they do have them, it can be safely said that they are not properly implemented because of the concerns that have been aired out by almost all the participants. The revelation that the local municipality either does not have programmes or that they are not effectively implemented resonates with findings from studies conducted elsewhere in South Africa. For instance, in a study that investigate those challenges of strategy implementation in South African municipalities, Enwereji and Uwizeyimana (2019) concludes that most municipalities fail to implement their programmes for various reasons.

These scholars argue that municipalities struggle to implement their stipulated strategies due to factors such as resource barriers, issues with organisational leadership, technological barriers, culture-strategy conflicts, and councillor oversights (Enwerej and Uwizeyimana 2019) Similarly, in a study that investigates the Local Economic Development (LED), Challenges and Solutions using the case of the Northern Free State Region, South Africa, Meyer (2014) found that municipalities in South Africa do not have adequate economic strategies in place to address the issues of poverty, unemployment and inequality. This scholar further argues that “LED is currently still not a priority at most local authorities, and limited funding is made available from national government.” (Meyer 2014: 634)

Moreover, findings discussed above that emphasise the need for proper implementation of municipal public participation programmes. These findings bring the arguments of the ABCD to life. The needs-based community development highlights that grant programs that are managed by government agencies and directed toward meeting the needs that will have been identified in various communities (Aquino, Lück and Schänzel 2018). Participants responses were crucial in reminding the responsible authorities that as they identify the needs in failing communities, they must also put into consideration those that are disabled. The findings have

also shown that communities are not developed by and for a selected group of individuals in groups but for and by everyone that is if all people are involve including the marginalised.

Further, findings from this study revealed that the public participation mechanism available at Ndwedwe were not user friendly for the disabled. As a result, the disabled person was always excluded in the public and community participation processes. To illustrate, the vulnerable people face a lot of discrimination, isolation, and lack of access to resources. The issue is also consistent with existing literature. Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek and Leahy (2015) concludes that the people with disabilities are often overlooked in the public participation processes. This is because, municipalities do not have a comprehensive policy that defines and fosters social and economic inclusion of the disabled. This is true to Ndwedwe municipality. Findings from this current study suggest that the municipality does not have a well-articulated policy that explains how it will ensure inclusion of the disabled. Moreover, a report by the DSD revealed that most municipal infrastructure in South Africa is not user friendly. For example, a person who has a wheel chair needs a ramp and wider door space to gain access to buildings; a person who is deaf/lives with a hearing impairment needs sign language interpreters or hearing devices to hear/listen. This principle speaks to the need for services to be appropriate and relevant to the type or category of disability in local municipalities and all public spaces.

It also speaks to the need for the services that are provided to be accessible to the intended target group or beneficiary. Thus, social services interventions for the people with disabilities must be specific and responsive to all types and categories of disability. From the participant's responses, it is evident that there is lack of specific responses to all types and categories of disability, hence the reason why they are raising issues on initiatives targeting the vulnerable in the community. According to Social protection mechanisms in Southern Africa (2006), attempts to set in place long term social protection mechanisms are constantly derailed by pressures to respond to immediate crises. Short-term emergency responses must be complemented by predictable programs of support for the chronically vulnerable, and by long-term risk management interventions that ultimately reduce the need for emergency food aid.

### **6.5. Forms of public participation**

From the response of the participants, it emerged that Ndwedwe municipality has forms of public participation, the community is directly involved since they are invited to attend meetings such as Izimbizos where they are given information about, for example, the budget.

From the analysis of data, evidence surfaced that Ndwedwe municipality is up to date technologically since they also use the social media and Facebook to communicate with members of with community and keep them up to date, for instance, communication on available posts in the municipality. The Mayor's office also actively participates in the forms of public participation through holding IDP road shows. Almost all participants expressed their involvement in the budget through Izimbizos, which normally happens once or twice in years, for instance, when elections are close. The idea that the various forms and platforms (consultations and Imbizos) are key drivers of community development is supported by previous research. For instance, Baloyi and Lubinga (2017) concludes that the adoption of Imbizo as effective channels of communication necessitates a provision of quality feedback by government to service delivery concerns raised at the Imbizo. Additionally, Wu and Lo (2018) events of shopping centers can realize community functions such as increased social interaction and strengthen social bonds to a certain degree.

The participant felt that since the meetings are called for towards elections, their meetings would be politically motivated by those who would want to be voted into power, although they do not do what they would have promised the community after being voted into power. This is evidence from the findings that the municipality does have some corrupt activities going on in form of propaganda. These findings are interesting because they are also consistent with existing literature (Bidwell and Schweizer 2021, Kuang and Lin 2021) which states that the public should get information they need to participate in a meaningful way in order to increase the interest and motivation to participate, including the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.

These findings also add weight on the aspect of the ABCD model that emphasises the importance of connection of community development. The gathering at Imbizos should be understood as a platform to forge such connection that the proponents of ABCD vouch for. For instance, ABCD proponents argue that "Asset Based Community Development recognises that the exchange between people sharing their gifts and assets creates connections, and these connections are a vital asset to the community" (Hanachor and Wordu 2021: 522).

Evidence from the data shows that Ndwedwe municipality has various mechanisms and systems for public participation. Since the citizens are informed through the radio stations, loud hailing and loudspeakers, they are able to know about the projects and plans of the municipality (Ndwedwe) on time. As postulated by Arnstein (1969) ladder of citizen participation, Arnstein

emphasises that the citizens must be informed at an early stage because if they do not know on time, it makes it harder to truly get involved and exercise influence (Arnstein, 1969). The findings indicate that ward councillors call for meetings, report in terms of progress as well as coordination of local leadership, this shows that the Ndwedwe municipality has an approach to participation by informing them and inviting their contribution and this is described as a legitimate step towards their full participation.

For Arnstein (2020), the most used approaches for consulting the citizens include, attitude survey, neighbourhood meetings and public hearings. This is consistent with what is being done by Ndwedwe municipality when they call people for Izimbizos or public meetings although one respondent raised a complaint about the days that the meetings are being held as well as the people that attend the meetings. The findings confirm the argument by Arnstein (1962:32) who argued that what citizens achieve in all this activity is that they have participated in participation. And what power holders achieve is the evidence that they have gone through the required motions of involving “those people”.

#### **6.6. Usefulness of the mechanisms and systems**

From the above theme, key results emerged. Firstly, it emerged that the systems and mechanisms are useful. Secondly, they must be improved on since there are necessary improvements. The results from one of the participants show that there is need for the community and municipality to work together in order to improve on the services offered. Evidence from the study shows that the participants know where the municipality is lagging behind and how they are supposed to improve the situation. For example, most participants highlighted the need to improve the social network platforms. Our findings suggest that there is a need to recruit personnel to deal with issues on social network platform to improve on how people can be quickly responded to as and when they have asked questions on the platform. Moreover, these findings point to the important role that the social network and social media occupies in the public participation matrix. This finding supports the arguments made by Xu, Sun, Yang, Zhao, Wang, Zhao, Wang and Su (2021) that social media platforms provide the chance to inform a wide range of people about issues and to invite users to become involved in a variety of ways. In Ndwedwe, the use of social media would in public participation would be a game change in that social media platforms provide opportunity for greater involvement of stakeholders and should be used to compliment other outreach activities.

Findings from the study about practising the system for compliance and holding meetings with few people that they are connected to are not consistent with existing literature. This is

evidenced by Nyalunga (2006) when he highlights that ward committees bring about communication between communities and their political representatives. Ward committees that people work well will give every resident a say in the municipal government and will make ward councillors accountable to residents. This does not appear to be the case with these participants as they made it clear that meetings are called to people that they are connected to and that the representatives will be few as compared to the population being represented.

It looks like the municipality is being accused of being corrupt in a way or that there is no clear-cut understanding of the role of that ward committees are supposed to perform. As revealed in related literature, this is perhaps the most widespread challenge facing ward committees in their quest to involve communities in matters of local government. The lack of understanding of roles leads to greater misconceptions about the performance of ward committees and other local government stakeholders in general (The Department of Provincial and Local government, 1998).

#### **6.7. Implementation of mechanisms and systems**

From the results, the key issues that emerged are that the mechanisms and systems of public participation are not being fully implemented in the municipality. Some of the participants spoke of corruption as the major cause that hinders implementation. It looks like government officials want to engage in big projects like building a clinic in order to get an opportunity to manipulate funds for their own benefit instead of for example, a sport field that the sport field that the community wants which in turn hinders proper implementation of mechanisms and systems. The other reason why the participants raised what is hindering implementation is that of not being able to invite everyone through the use of loudspeakers.

The participants felt that since people will be occupied by their jobs, they do not participate and therefore, the systems and mechanisms are not fully implemented. The participant's suggestion for meetings to be held on Sundays shows that there is so much concern about the number of people that attend meeting and would want a better turn out in order for the ward to be said has been represented fully. From existing literature, Plummer and Taylor (2001) argue that notification and attendance do not constitute meaningful participation. For these scholars' notification and attendance to participation, processes should be understood as pre-requisite for a meaning participation process. Additionally, these scholars content that meaningful participation only starts when the community is given an opportunity to express their views freely. These findings from Plummer and Taylor (2001) while instructive on how the public participation process could be successful. It is important to note that they differ great deal

findings from this current study in that in Ndwedwe, there were no available comprehensive mechanism to use for the organization and implementation of the communication of these meetings before hand.

### **6.8. Most successful and less successful mechanisms**

Operation Sukuma Sakhe is one system that was said to be the most successful one as it operates from ward level and involves representatives from various departments. This concurs with the existing literature which states that “only shared efforts of public and private stake holders and exchange of resources, goals and expectations will lead to the realisation of the demanding requirements of a sustainable urbanisation strategy” (Enserink and Koppenjan 2007:495). Existing literature also found that what is striking is the notion that the inclusion and participation of all parties who are interested in rural-urban planning was the main reason why the projects registered positive outcomes. P3’s view that less participants results in less contribution are supported by the World Bank Group (2015) which argues that participation is a very crucial aspect of the planning process. It advances the value and efficacy of decision-making as it broadens the knowledge base, encourages ingenuity and creates social support for policies (World Bank, 2015). Similarly, to the findings, the participants’ responses that noted some systems as less successful, the reason is that people were deprived of the opportunity to fully participate and give their concerns and contributions.

### **6.9. Role of the municipality**

The issue of ensuring that people know what is happening inside the municipality dominated the findings when they were answering the question on the role of the municipality in ensuring public participation. P1’s view that there are things that the municipality is mandated to do is supported by the 4 principles of the local government that state. That is; (a) to ensure political leaders remain accountable and work within their mandate; (b) to allow citizens to have continuous input into local politics; (c) to allow service consumers to have input on the way services are delivered; and (d) to afford organised civil society the opportunity to enter into partnerships and contracts with local government to mobilise additional resources (Local government 1998).

The above principles are in agreement with what the participants were giving as the role of the municipality in ensuring public participation. P4 highlighted that the role of the municipality is working in an integrated manner supported by the principles in existing literature. The Municipal Structures Act, (1998) supports what P1 highlighted in his response: that the municipality must be able to report to the community and must be able accountable. The Act

states that municipalities are required to annually report on the involvement of communities and community organisations in the affairs of the municipality (Mughan 2019). The act stipulates that a municipality's executive Mayor or executive committee must give an annual report on the extent to which the public had participated in municipal affairs. This is consistent with the findings, and it shows that the participants are aware of the role of the municipality.

#### **6.10. Public participation strategy developing the community**

In almost all the responses, community members continuously emphasised the issue that the message about meetings must reach everyone so that people will come and participate. This finding can be interpreted through the Arnstein arguments. However, Arnstein (1969) said that the citizens have no legitimate function of power. Instead, the elites use them to prove that the citizens are involved in the decision making process within their communities. On the contrary, some scholars argue that the key reason for ensuring that the community is involved is that it helps to reduce conflict and help projects to achieve their intended objectives. Vadeveloo and Singaravelloo (2013) examined the role of local government in community development. Similarly, Stoker (2011) finds that local government systems in most of the countries sustain a close relationship with its citizens in giving better services.

Findings from this study revealed that they want to feel ownership and satisfaction with the process of community development among themselves if they are allowed to participate in the process. Phillip and Pitman (2014) who argue that participation is important to make sure that the government addresses the real needs of communities in the most appropriate way support P3. This is consistent because P3 had complained about favouritism from the findings. The results also show that participation also helps build an informed and responsible citizenry with a sense of ownership of government developments and projects. It allows municipalities to get-in and to develop partnerships with stakeholders, thereby helping in the development of the community.

#### **6.11. Greatest challenge in implementing**

The results from the data showed the attitude of the people is the greatest challenge. This is evidenced by the response from most the participants that the reaction of the community is the greatest thing that is hindering implementation of public participation mechanisms. The respondents also highlighted that some of the initiatives are great but because of who drives them, they do not get good reception to people they are supposed to uplift. This means that there is an issue of resistance whereby those who are not in support of those in power resist the initiatives of those in power. However, Fung (2006) argued that the mechanisms are used to

enhance the legitimacy of public action, justice in public governance and effectiveness in the implementation of public decisions. By involving citizens in the greater process of governing, there might be less resistance to proposed policies and greater legitimacy of the policy process (Haus and Sweeting, 2006). The findings also show that the municipality gives justice to the people, but the community does not respond well in terms of ownership of some legislations or ownership of implemented projects.

From the review of participants' responses, various participants raised other challenges. The issue of taxi rank killings gives us a hint that for implementation of these mechanisms to be successful, there must be peace in the community. It is a clear indication civil, or community unrest also hinders development of communities. The issue of rural municipalities that are self-reliant on grand funding also show how and why rural communities seem to remain underdeveloped and why they do have poor service delivery. This is an important finding in the understanding of challenges in the implementation of public participation.

In a study that focuses on the governance aspects of China's environmental policy making and the conditions for meaningful public participation in sustainable urbanisation policy making, Enserink and Koppenjan, (2007) found that successful and sustainable rural development was based on the independence of the parties involved. These scholars argued that only shared efforts of public and private stakeholders and exchange of resources, goals and expectations will lead to the realisation of the demanding requirements of a sustainable urbanisation strategy (Ensenrink and Koppenjan 2007). This literature is consistent with the findings since the literature goes on to comment that the inclusion and participation of all parties who are interested in rural urban planning was the main reason why the project registered positive outcomes. This means that unless and until there is grand funding of rural municipalities that is when people should expect successful implementation of mechanisms as well as development of communities.

### **6.12. Challenges affecting participation do affect community development**

The findings from this part of the study show that challenges affecting participation also affect community development. Existing literature also recognises the critical role played by citizen participation in enhancing community development. This is consistent with the findings of this study, where participants gave practical examples of how the community vandalised infrastructure because of lack of their involvement in the process. Kondlo (2010) concluded that communities should be co-originaors of policies rather than endorsers, as this affects their lives evidences this. The act of vandalising property by community members also that the

inclusion of citizens does not only contribute to increased knowledge and understanding on the part of the citizen toward government affairs but also has broader social value related to the performance of public programs.

Public participation has proved to be the most effective tool for ineffective governance. As such, it results in effective service delivery (Madumo 2014). Public participation continues to be an important aspect of democracy. P1 proposed a way that he feels that it can help minimise the challenges of public participation when he stated that there must be consultations through budget forums and community representatives who will know what will happen. According to P1 forums will reduce the challenges. Phillips and Pitman (2014) argued that participation is important to make sure that the government addresses the real needs of communities in the most appropriate way.

### **6.13. Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the key findings that emerged from this study. The emerging findings were then explained and linked to both theory and previous literature on local economic development and public participation. Key findings that were noted in this chapter are that the participants in Ndwedwe municipality had a clear understanding of the concept of community development. It was also discussed that some mechanisms were effective while some were poorly implemented and hence less effective. The following chapter focuses on the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1. Introduction**

This research started by discussing existing theory around public participation and consultation. Existing research into service delivery and the forms of public participation were described. The nature of the study and the methodology used to carry out the research were also described. Furthermore, the collected data was described and analysed drawing conclusions from the data. This chapter is going to give a summary of the findings, summary of chapters, conclusions, recommendations, limitations, and suggestions for further study.

### **7.2. An Overview of Public Participation**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of public participation in enhancing the prospects of local community development. In order to accomplish the goals of this study, the concept of public participation was defined, and there was a scholarly discussion on measuring the effectiveness of public participation. Mechanisms and systems for citizen engagement used to enhance community development were also discussed in this dissertation. The other aspect that was looked at by this study was the legal framework that underpins public participation in South Africa. The common mechanisms of public participation to improve community engagement are some of the issues that have also been discussed. Furthermore, a discussion on public participation and its relation to community development was presented. There was also a discussion about the public participation and local economic development. This chapter reports the conclusions and recommendations that resulted from this study.

It was very crucial to choose a research design that best suits the research questions and hypotheses based on this framework. Although there are quite a number of designs, the exploratory research was used by the researcher in this study. Data were collected from fifteen participants using telephone in-depth interviews. The researcher chose to conduct interviews online because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

All respondents were asked about what they understood about public participation, the various forms of public participation as well as the mechanisms and systems of citizen's participation. The study also sought to understand and reveal the usefulness of the various mechanisms and systems. Respondents were able to answer all the questions with various views and sentiments. Respondents were asked on the challenges that affect public participation and given the room to discuss any other challenges they were experiencing. With survey instrument developed for

this study, data was collected which addressed the research problems highlighted in the first chapter of this dissertation.

### **7.3. Summary of the Chapters**

The study comprises of seven chapters. Below is a summary of the six chapters.

#### **Chapter One:** Introduction and overview

The first chapter provided a summary of the relevant aspects in relation to the study. Readers have been given an overview of the direction of the research and included an explanation of the rationale for and significance of the study.

#### **Chapter Two:** Literature review

This chapter showed the existing body of knowledge related to the topic under investigation. In this case, the literature focused within the South African context with a focus on public participation, forms of public participation, mechanisms and systems of public participation. The chapter emphasized the importance of public participation in local government planning as well as on development initiatives.

#### **Chapter Three:** Theoretical Framework

This chapter provided the reader with theoretical framework, defined both public participation and local economic development, provided reader with literature relating to the factors affecting public participation, and the approaches to community development. Described the relationship between community and economic development.

#### **Chapter Four:** Research Methodology

This chapter described the nature of the study, which is qualitative research. The chapter also justified the chosen design, population, and sample as well as described the data collection instrument. Ethical issues were also described since the study includes human subjects.

#### **Chapter Five:** Data Analysis and Presentation

In this chapter, responses from participants to every question during the interview were presented, analysed and conclusions on the significance of these responses were made. There was an inclusion of qualitative analysis as well as detailed findings for each question.

#### **Chapter Six:** Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The last chapter reminds the reader about the most significant aspects of the study. This involves an overview of the structure of the study and the overarching findings of the study. This chapter also highlights recommendations for further studies, noted limitations of the study.

#### **7.4. Summary of Findings**

This section focuses on the findings that have been made by the researcher, thus from the findings.

##### Objective 1

- The study found from the responses on the question about public participation the views and responses from participants can lead to the conclusion that most participants understand what public participation is. It can be concluded that the community is not fully involved in the issues that concerns them as development of their communities. This also means that there is limited public participation thereby making it less effective.

##### Objective 2

- The study found that the forms of public participation that were mentioned by the respondents were similar and this leads to a conclusion that Ndwedwe municipality is technologically advanced since the social media and Facebook are some forms of public participation that are used by the municipality in order to communicate with the members of the community. There is also evidence of public participation through holding of IDPs and road shows and izimbizos that the participants have testified that they are participants in these meetings.

Still on that note, it can be concluded that there are some corrupt tendencies in the municipality since some respondents highlighted that the izimbizos and road shows are normally held when elections are close. This leads to a conclusion that the municipality leaders will bribe community members to vote for them when it is election time.

##### Objective 3

- When asked on the mechanisms and systems of public participation that they have in their municipality, it can be concluded that radio stations, loudspeakers and izimbizos are widely used by the Ndwedwe municipality that also enables the leadership to report progress on things that need to be achieved.

- Another conclusion is that although the municipality has some mechanisms and systems of public participation, the municipality is not concerned about who attends these izimbizos to come up with a balanced/fair representation of what the community really wants since all age groups and social classes will be equally represented.
- It can also be concluded that there is need for improvements on the mechanisms and systems for public participation. These improvements are also possible if the municipality and community work together in order to improve the services. This leads to a conclusion that the community's participation is quite limited meaning that the community is not participating fully.
- Another conclusion on the issue of implementation is that the system and mechanisms are not being fully implemented. Corruption is the reason why there is no proper implementation because the municipality does not value what people want but rather doing things for compliance.
- It can be concluded that Operation Sukuma Sakhe is one of the systems that has worked for them. The social media is one of the less successful systems and this is due to the level of connectivity and infrastructure.
- From the question whether public participation strategy can develop the community, the conclusion is that the public participation strategy can develop the community that is if the strategy is properly implemented.
- It can be concluded that the greatest challenge in implementing is the reaction and attitude of the community. This is evidenced by resistance whereby the community resists the initiatives of those in power.
- Violent acts such as taxi rank killings limit the holding of meetings in certain areas because of community unrest and the emerging forums of amadela ngokubona.
- It is conclusive that challenges that affect participation do affect community development.

## **7.5. Recommendations**

From the findings of this study, some recommendations can be made:

1. The community must be involved/ included in every decision that is to be made for service delivery so that communities are not given the service that they do not need. Public participation should be development tool that is essential to foster communication between the local government and its constituencies (Act no.108 of 1996). It has been argued that local developmental projects driven by local businesses and local communities have more chances to succeed than projects attempted by the local government alone.
2. Public participation and communication policy development and implementation

It is highly recommended that the communication practices should be closely examined and appropriately adjusted in order to include the public. This means that there will be an introduction of new policies or rather inclusion of the role players in various meetings in which they have been previously excluded. Communication can be improved with existing community structures and technology based solutions. Another strategy is that of community satisfaction surveys (quarterly) to encourage community suggestions should be discussed in every municipal council meeting and feedback should be provide to the communities through war room meetings.

3. Public participation and consultation enhancement

From the responses during the interviews, participants mentioned that meetings have been characterized by poor community attendance. This has been due to poor public consultation on the part of the municipality. The recommendation is that the municipality must review the implementation of the IDP every 5 or 6 months in all wards in order to keep the community informed of the service delivery progress as approved in the IDP.

Another recommendation is that project steering committee members from a particular ward. This will help in making sure that more than one person is able to provide project updates so as to be able to share with community members of their ward.

4. Meetings should not be politically motivated by those who would want to be voted into power.
5. There is need for improvement on social network such as recruiting someone to handle issues on the social platform in order for people to get responses quickly.

6. Corrupt acts and tendencies should be dealt with through audits, supervision, monitoring and evaluation to foster transparency within the municipality.
7. Rural municipalities should receive grand funding from the government to improve rural municipalities that are self-reliant.

### **7.6. Limitations of the study**

The goal of this study was to understand one case (Ndwedwe municipality) as well as to describe the experiences of participants from that municipality. The study has its limitations that should be acknowledged.

The limitations include the imbalance gender distribution in the participants as well as the bias towards ruling party representation. There could be no controlling for gender and political party affiliation.

### **7.7. Suggestions for further research**

From the findings and conclusions that came from the in-depth interviews with ward committee members who are also community members and municipal officials, the following studies can be undertaken to better understand the nature of public participation as well as the link to service delivery:

5. The study should be repeated in a rural municipality in a different province to be able to compare the results to check for consistency.
6. Conducting a document survey that will include registers, minutes from meetings and reports in order to check for adequate public participation in the different IDP processes.
7. The study should be repeated but ensuring that there is greater representation in terms of selecting participants. This will help in ensuring that both male and female participants from each ward are interviewed.
8. There is also a need for a study that examines the importance of technologies as a means to foster public participation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **7.8. Conclusion**

It can be concluded that public participation and service delivery are in a state of despair. This is evidenced by the responses from the interviews where participants highlighted the challenges that are resulting in the lack of public participation.

This investigation has helped with the necessary base from which further investigations can be conducted. It is quite possible that this research and other future research in this area will result in a better understanding of the problems faced in these local government settings. In turn, this understanding will help in reducing problems to do with service delivery in South Africa.

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## Annexure A: Ethical Clearance



01 February 2021

Mr Lucky Sbhongiseni Ngubane (219060400)  
School Of Built Env & Dev Stud  
Howard College

Dear Mr Ngubane,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00002207/2020

Project title: Assessing the effectiveness of public participation in improving the local community development prospects in Ndwedwe Local Municipality.

Degree: Masters

### Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 13 October 2020 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 01 February 2022.

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.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

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

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

## **Annexure B: Informed Consent**

### **UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)**

**APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL**  
For research with human participants

#### **INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE**

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

#### **Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research**

Date: 03 March

Good morning/day/afternoon/sawubona. My name is Lucky S'bongiseni Ngubane from University of KwaZulu-Natal, doing my Master's degree under the School of Built Environment and Development Studies.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study titled: Assessing the effectiveness of public participation in improving the local community development prospects in Ndwedwe Local Municipality. The aim of this research is to assess the effectiveness of public participation in improving the local community development prospects in Ndwedwe Local Municipality. The study is expected to enroll 15 participants. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the participants via the phone. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be more or less 45 minute.

We hope that the study will not create direct benefits rather the influence in policy drafting by the government so to enhance the contribution of agricultural cooperatives in the local economy.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number\_\_\_\_\_).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at +27 73 425 5876 or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details 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)

Dear Respondent

I Lucky S'bongiseni Ngubane am a Social Sciences master's student in the School of Built Environment and Development Studies, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled:

'ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN IMPROVING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS IN NDWEDWE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY'

The aim of this study is to:

- i. To assess the mechanisms and systems for citizen engagement implemented to enhance development in Ndwedwe Municipality
- ii. To evaluate the effectiveness of the current mechanism and systems employed to enhance development through community engagement in Ndwedwe Municipality
- iii. To identify the role of the Ndwedwe local government in ensuring there is sustainable public participation to foster development Ndwedwe Municipality
- iv. To examine the factors affect the successful implementation of the public participation strategies in Ndwedwe Municipality

Kindly take note that your participation is voluntary to this project. You are allowed to refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any given time with no negative consequence. Your participation involves no monetary gains. However, since you are an official of Ndwedwe Local Municipality your organization or community may benefit from the findings of this study. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the School of Built Environment and Development Studies at UKZN. Your identity will not be revealed, or your name used in connection with this study. If you so permit, the interview will be recorded to allow you to listen to your responses after interview and to assist the interviewer to capture your actual responses. Please indicate on the consent form whether you agree or disagree to have your interview recorded by ticking your choice.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, please contact me or my supervisor at the number listed above.

It should take you about forty-five minutes to complete the interview questionnaire with me. I hope you will take the time to participate in the interview.

Sincerely

Investigator's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This page is to be returned by participant

**CONSENT (Edit as required)**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have been informed about the study entitled Assessing the effectiveness of public participation in improving the local community development prospects in Ndwedwe Local Municipality by Lucky S’bongiseni Ngubane.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study (add these again if appropriate).

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at 073 435 5876 or at e-mail address [291060400@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:291060400@stu.ukzn.ac.za)

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

**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)

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion                      YES / NO

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness  
(Where applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Translator  
(Where applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Annexure C: Interview Schedule**

### **IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

#### **WARD COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OFFICERS FROM ‘‘NDWEDWE MUNICIPALITY’’ AREAS**

#### **IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE**

#### **Moderator’s Instructions :**

##### **Research question 1**

What do you understand by public participation?

What is your understanding of community development?

What are the forms of public participation you have in your municipality?

What is the mechanism and systems of citizen participation do you have in your municipality?

Do you think these mechanism and systems of participation are useful in developing your community?

##### **Research question 2**

Do you think the mechanism and system of public participation is implemented?

Could you identify the ones that were most successful and those that were less successful?

##### **Research question 3**

How do you describe the role of the municipality in ensuring public participation?

Do you think the municipality public participation strategy can develop the community? If yes, how.

##### **Research question 4**

What has been a greatest challenge in the implementation of public participation mechanism?

Identify the specific challenges that affect public participation in your community.

Do you think the challenges affecting participation affects community development in any way? If yes, how?