



The Role of Community Participation in Support of the Successful Implementation of the Integrated Development Planning in South Africa

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Abstract

This article aims to examine the role of community participation in ensuring the successful implementation of Integrated Development Planning (IDP) within municipalities. The main objective of the study is to investigate to what extent can community participation contribute to the successful implementation of Integrated development planning. The study adopted a qualitative method with specific reference to a conceptual approach relying heavily on secondary data. The South African democratic government introduced the Integrated Development Plan as a five-year strategic plan used to guide municipalities to eradicate service delivery backlogs, inefficiencies, and ineffectiveness. However, for the Integrated Development Planning to be more credible, successful, and effective it is very important to encourage members of the community to fully participate in the processes of the IDP to ascertain that all the objectives outlined in the IDP are successfully implemented. In a democratic setup like South Africa, community participation in matters of local government is a priority. The community is the primary stakeholder of the municipality. Municipalities are vested with the sole responsibility of providing economic and social services to communities within their jurisdictions endeavoring to eradicate the injustices and inequalities disseminated by the apartheid government. The paper also examines the role of community participation in the Integrated Development planning process. The study adopted a conceptual approach to investigate the role of community participation in ensuring the success of Integrated Development Planning.

Keywords: *Municipality, Public Participation; Community; Participation; Integrated Development Planning; And Government*

1. Introduction

Community participation is a process through which the community influences and shares control over development initiatives, decisions, and resources that affect them. The Local Government:

Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000), Chapter 4, section 16(1) (a), deals with community participation. The Act requires municipalities to develop a culture that promotes participatory governance and encourages and creates conditions for the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality, including the Integrated Development Plans (IDP)'s performance management systems, performance monitoring, budget preparation and strategic decisions (Molaba, 2016:43-44).

The South African democratic government introduced Integrated Development Plan as a strategic plan used to guide municipalities to eradicate service delivery backlogs (Makalela, 2017:10). However, for the Integrated Development Planning to be more credible and sustainable is of paramount importance to promote community participation throughout the process of planning and implementation. This simply means that community participation is a critical element of democracy. Mathebula, (2016:22) defines community participation as a fundamentally democratic and ethical principle for allowing members of the community to control actions that affect them directly while promoting sustainable socio-economic development, aspects of empowerment, communication, and gender imperative. In other words, community participation is a process through which community members influence and take control over development initiatives and decisions that affect them. Phago, (2008:238) argues that in a democratic setup as in South Africa community participation in local governance matters is a right. In terms of Section 5(1) (a) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) it is the right and duty of community members to contribute to the decision-making processes of the municipality. The paper seeks to investigate the role of community participation in ensuring the success of the Integration Development Planning of municipalities.

2. Objectives of Community Participation

Mckenzie and Mostafa (2017) outline the objectives of community participation as follows:

- To promote an environment where communities are involved in participatory planning and budgeting.
- Plans should be prepared internally to solve problems most of the plans employed are non-participatory and prepared by outside experts that cannot inspire people.
- New models should be carefully studied not to discard the Integrated Development plan but to run it coherently with the IDP.
- Local Government Excellence in South Africa can be achieved if the municipalities carefully examine the dynamics based on cultural background or ethnicity.
- To achieve democratic values and principles enshrined in the constitution in terms of chapter ten (10).
- To create an inclusive economic growth and developmental environment for future generations; and
- Empowerment of communities through their involvement with the decision-making processes from top levels to low levels is crucial to support pro-poor policies, programs, projects, improved service delivery, poverty alleviation, and reaching millennium development goals.

3. Factors That Impact Negatively on Community Participation

According to Naidoo and Ramphal, (2018), community participation is affected by several factors such as lack of accountability and transparency, ineffective communication, gender representation, power struggles, people-centeredness, social background, and unhealthy relationships. The latent factors are the underlying factors such as facilitating and impeding which determine the level of municipal service delivery, which is the dependent variable. Transparency is about being easy to understand and being open, frank, and honest in all communications, transactions, and operations. Accountability is about being responsible to citizens for actions taken, and about being able to explain, clarify, and justify actions. It implies that citizens have a right to know and to hold the local government accountable and that the local

government has a duty to explain and account for its actions. Accountability and transparency go together and involve being aware of to whom local governments are accountable, what the important pieces of information are, and how they can be communicated most effectively to the public. Power struggles are avenues for gaps in public participation and service delivery in local governments; and with power struggles, the authors assert that collective participation and transparency, and accountability can hardly be realised. The development of participatory culture and capacity among public officials through communities of practice and more effective communication will ensure community participation. The lack of fulfillment of the goals of developmental local government and the lack of effective communication between the local government and community members contribute negatively towards non-community participation. It is evident that service delivery gaps must be bridged if effective public participation and service delivery are to be attained. Facilitating inclusivity, including gender representation, is important for effective service delivery. The size of a municipal territory directly impacts public participation in municipal service delivery. Smaller municipalities foster people-centered practices in public participation. There should also be healthy relationships among all the stakeholders for effective participation and service delivery to take place.

The model of the South African developmental local government regarding participation is problematic in the following ways:

The participation process is still firmly controlled by the local council and not by the community. The process is outlined as follows:

- The legislation does not provide real decision-making and democratic structures.
- The legislated local government structures do not provide for participation by individual members of the community.
- The mechanisms for the incorporation of community inputs are not clearly spelled out, such that the prerogative of how and when to include them still lies with the council.
- The lack of gender expertise and sensitivity among IDP officials implies the omission of gender issues in the final plan.

IDPs can be reduced to a mere wish list if there is no genuine political will.

- The liberal framework model of participation, whereby individuals avail themselves for participation on a voluntary basis, is problematic due to the failure of the state to build capacity for meaningful and effective participation.
- The conceptualisation of community participation in the model of developmental local government is problematic.

4. The Principles of Community Participation

Community participation means the involvement of people from the earliest stage of a project until the end. It will avoid so many issues whereby communities are only asked for their opinions of project proposals that have already been developed or their contributions only during the implementation of the projects and programmes. participatory approaches should be developed during the planning, budgeting, and implementation stages. This approach has yielded a wide range of benefits, especially in the fields of water, sanitation, and hygiene. The main factors of the participatory approach are:

- Communities should determine their own priorities when resolving problems.

- By allowing this approach communities can engage municipalities with a collective agreement by bringing in experience and knowledge of the problems faced and bringing about change and improvements.
- People also solve their own problems best in a participatory approach (Mckenzie and Mostafa, 2017:6).

The government has since 1994 put in place policies and legislative frameworks that promote participatory governance. Community participation is embedded in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Section 152 (1) (e) explicitly states that municipalities are obliged to involve communities and community organisations in matters of local government. The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (2000) section 5 also deals with the contribution of the communities and not the decision-making from the budgeting or planning stage. The community's contribution is only needed when the project is being implemented. The following principles are accompanied by community participation:

- The first principle is that community participation holds political leaders accountable and to work within their mandate.
- Secondly, community participation allows citizens to have continuous input into local politics.
- Thirdly, community participation relates to mechanisms where service consumers have inputs in the way services are delivered.
- The fourth principle views public participation as a tool where civil society has the opportunity to enter into partnerships and contracts with the local government to mobilise additional resources.
- Community participation should be viewed as a mechanism where values and systems are put in place to allow participatory democracy and challenge the sphere of local government. Citizens should participate in the governance processes. In South Africa, community participation is crucial to the success of the IDP process. It allows the government to address people's needs in an efficient manner and should be the cornerstone of democracy to allow equal opportunity and benefits to all (Mckenzie and Mostafa, 2017:9).

5. The Key Stakeholders Involved in The Integrated Development Planning Process

The Integrated Development Planning process is a complicated process, which requires the involvement of various stakeholders. Pauw, et al., (2013) argues that in nature Integrated Development Planning is an integrative and participatory process, which requires inputs from various stakeholders involved throughout the process. It is of paramount importance to note that the successful formulation and implementation of Integrated Development Planning depends on extensive stakeholder involvement and community participation. The key stakeholders involved in the Integrated Development Planning process include community representatives, Ward Councillors, and Ward Committee members). The stakeholders are briefly outlined below as follows:

5.1 Community Representatives

There are various representative structures of the community, which liaise with the municipality on the service delivery needs and issues confronting community members in the Integrated Development Plan (Ababio, 2007). The structures include ward councillors, ward committees, and traditional authorities.

5.2 Municipal Ward Councillors

In terms of section 73(2) of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, a Ward Councillor is a member of the municipal council who represents his/her ward in the municipal council. Ward councillors play a leading role in the Integrated Development Planning process (Tau, 2013:190) as they

represent their ward in the municipal council. The municipal council is the highest municipal decision-making authority vested with the responsibility to provide political linkage between the executive mayor and executive committee, and the community (Motubatse, 2016:3). They participate in the Integrated Development Planning process to ensure that their community's needs and aspirations are reflected in the Integrated Development Plan.

5.3 Municipal Ward Committee Members

Silima and Auriacombe (2013:14) define Ward Committee as a representative structure of the community and form a bridge by coordinating and facilitating effective communication between the municipal council and the community they represent. Ward committee members serve as the communication link between the municipal council through the Ward Councillor and the community. The role of Ward Committee members in the Integrated Development Planning process is to recommend inputs and community needs to the Ward Councillor. Munzhedzi and Phago (2013) lucidly states that the Ward Councillor relies on Ward Committee members to ensure that the issues and needs of community members are well represented in the Integrated Development Plan.

6. Conceptualisation of Community Participation

Community participation has become a buzzword in the field of development and local government as it allows communities to take ownership of their development processes (Molosi and Dipholo, 2016:45; Tau, 2013:192; Ababio, 2004:272). Community participation is used interchangeably with public participation. Community participation refers to the direct involvement of individuals, groups, and the community in issues that have a direct impact on them. According to Thebe (2016:716) community participation, mean a deliberate act in which individuals or members of a group participate in a goal-oriented activity for their own development benefit. Mautjana and Makombe (2014) state that community participation enables community members to identify their needs and how they should be addressed, fostering a sense of community ownership and responsibility.

Phago, (2008) argues in a democratic setup, as South African community participation in municipal affairs is a constitutional right. The participation of individuals and groups in municipal affairs is to ensure that the municipality responds to the real needs and issues of the most in the most appropriate way.

Mafunisa and Xaba (2008:455) assert that community participation contributes to building an informed and responsible citizenry with a sense of ownership of government developments and projects. In this article community participation, is defined as a process whereby community members raise their opinions about decisions that affect them and take collective responsibility for the development of their community.

7. Community Participation Mechanisms that Contribute towards the Successful Implementation of the IDP

Municipalities are encouraged to establish applicable mechanisms, processes, and structures through which communities within their jurisdiction can be able to participate in its affairs. Mashamaite and Madzivhandila (2014) assert that the municipal council as the political authority of the municipality must develop a culture of municipal governance that drifts away from representative government to participatory governance by crafting conditions whereby local communities and other stakeholders are afforded an opportunity to participate in municipal affairs. The mechanisms to facilitate community participation are outlined below as follows:

7.1 Regular Public Meetings

Public meetings are the most used mechanism through which community members participate in municipal affairs. The basic principle of participatory democracy is to allow community members to participate in public meetings (Mashamaite and Hlongwane, 2015:150) on municipal affairs that affect them either directly or indirectly. Public meetings are also known as ‘imbizo’ derived from the South African Zulu language meaning ‘a gathering or convene’ (Hartslief, 2009:327). It is where community members’ views and feelings about services and projects that will affect their community will be listened to (Nzimakwe, 2012, Brynard and Musitha, 2011). Public meetings in most cases are used as a way of consulting communities to receive information on issues and needs and to provide them with the opportunity to express their views on decisions that will affect them. As a means of encouraging and enhancing community participation, public meetings are used at the local level to involve communities in the decision-making process. Municipalities use public meetings during the preparation and formulation of the Integrated Development Plan, where communities identify their needs and issues affecting their communities.

7.2 Regular Public Hearings

Public hearings are structures or forums where stakeholders make formal statements concerning issues at hand (Munzhedzi, 2016). They are traditionally a method of seeking public views on matters where citizens will come and debate or share their views. In support of this assertion, Munzhedzi (2016) states that during public hearings there will be oral statements sometimes accompanied by written reports where community members express their views concerning issues affecting their community. Public hearings are used to ensure that local citizens identify their needs and issues that affect their community so that the municipality can come up with strategies on how to solve the identified issue. Nelson and Wright (1997) advised that public hearings as a traditional method of community participation should be held in a neutral space instead of city halls so that everyone will be able to attend. It is important to note that public hearings were initiated to ensure that people at the grassroots form part of decision-making on issues that affect them. Chirenje et al., (2013) support the above-mentioned assertion by stating that public hearings in South Africa are used as the best method to consult residents before any decision is taken.

7.3 The Role of Ward Committee

According to Silima and Auriacombe (2013:48), Ward Committee in South Africa is also referred to as “development forums or residents associations”. Ward Committees are also recognized as structures through which community participation is enhanced in the local sphere of government. Tshabalala and Lombard (2009:398) recognize ward committees as the sole mechanism established to enable community participation in the affairs of the municipality. They play a meaningful role in spreading information, assessing community needs, and identifying problems that demand municipal attention. Ward Committees at the local government were introduced to operate as a representative structure of community members. According to Silima and Auriacombe (2013:48), the primary role of Ward Committees is to facilitate community participation in planning and decision-making affecting local citizens and to present their needs and interests to local government structures. They represent their ward in the decision-making process and make recommendations to the municipal council through the Ward Councillor. In support, of the above assertion Mashamaite and Hlongwane (2015) ascribe that Ward Committees play an advisory role to the Ward Councillor about the needs and interests of members of the community and monitor the service delivery of the wards they represent. In simple terms ward committees as a mechanism to enhance community participation, they serve as an advisory and independent body, and a representative structure, which provides the municipal council through the Ward Councillor the needs and interests of the ward they represent.

7.4 The Effects of Integrated Development Planning on Community Participation

Tshishonga (2016:377) argues that the system of Integrated Development Planning in South Africa is perceived as one of the mechanisms used to promote and encourage community participation, local democracy, and sustainable service delivery. Through the Integrated Development Planning community, members can take part in determining their own needs and priorities within their municipality. For the Integrated Development planning to be credible and effective community members should be at the center of the planning process. According to Tau (2013:155), the Integrated Development Planning process offers residents including organized groups an opportunity to shape the development of the towns and cities they live in. The nature and character of Integrated Development Planning require the municipalities to fully consult the communities they serve this will enable them to better understand the development and service delivery needs of those communities (Manyaka and Madzivhandila, 2013:177). Policies and projects that are implemented by the municipalities have an impact on community members as a result they are advised to participate in the decision-making processes. Through the Integrated Development Planning community members feel that they contribute somehow to the development of their community (Tshishonga, 2016:379).

8. The Role of Community Participation in the Implementation of the Integrated Development Planning

The role played by community participation in the Integrated Development Planning process contributes towards several benefits for the municipalities and the members of the community. The benefits enhance and accelerate service delivery. Community participation in the Integrated Development planning process is necessary because it deepens democracy, and it makes the government to be more responsive and more effective. Furthermore, community members feel a sense of ownership when they are at the center of formulating their own development initiatives. The benefits of community participation are outlined below as follows:

8.1 Community Participation Improves Service Delivery

Participation of community members in the Integrated Development Plan ensures the enhancement and acceleration of service delivery. Service delivery remains to be one of the global issues in the 21st century in most developing countries, and South Africa is no exception from this dilemma (Mathebula, 2017:97). According to Mathebula, Nkuna, and Sebola (2016:70) as a response to these challenges the IDP was adopted as a management tool to enhance and speed up service delivery in municipalities. The IDP was originally conceived as a strategic plan for municipalities in collaboration with their citizens to improve and speed up the level of service delivery in municipalities. Services that are to be provided by the municipalities are incorporated within the municipality's Integrated Development Plan for a particular period. Ndevu (2011) argues that without the involvement of community members in the Integrated Development Planning the municipality will never achieve maximum results of service delivery.

8.2 Community Participation Enhances Accountability

Direct involvement of community members in issues that affects them improves accountability and guarantees them a high degree of responsiveness to their needs and issues by municipal officials. Ababio (2004:273) emphasises that continuous feedback from the community is very important in improving service delivery. Participation of community members in Integrated Development Planning improves the decision-making processes whereby municipal officials respond to the community's needs and contribute to the enhancement of management of resources within the local government (Mashamaite and Hlongwane, 2015:161). Community participation assists in eliminating the level of corruption in South African municipalities, as community members will be working with the municipality in the adoption of IDP they know the budget of their municipality. If the municipality does not deliver on the

needs and demands of the community, members of the community have the chance to hold the municipality accountable. According to Thebe (2016:717), a transparent, responsive, and accountable implementation and management of the IDP yield a good relationship with the community with no service delivery protests. In other words, community participation in the IDP is a cornerstone of democracy which should be seen as a transparent and accountable process where members of the community exchange views and influence decision-making. Community participation in the Integrated Development plan is necessary because it deepens the process of democracy and it makes the government to be more responsive and more effective (Ndevu, 2011:1255)

8.3 Community Participation Empowers Communities

According to Molosi and Dipholo, (2016: 45) where there is participation by members of the public, there is a likelihood of a high degree of successful implementation of development projects as community members feel ownership and commitment towards the projects. Empowerment is referred to as the process through which individuals, communities, and organisations gain confidence, self-esteem, and power to confront their issues and take actions to address them (Leboea, 2003:38). The involvement of community members in matters that affect them is a means of empowering them by creating a platform for them to better their skills and abilities to negotiate their needs and demands. Therefore, IDP is a platform that offers members of the community and the municipality to deliberate and interact on issues of local government which is the provision of service (Tshabalala and Lombard, 2009:397).

Conclusion

The community is the primary stakeholder of the municipality and without the community involved the municipality will be dysfunctional. The article outlined factors that impede community participation, the objectives and the principles of community participation, and accountability and further conceptualised community participation, followed by a detailed process of Integrated Development Planning. The role players involved in the Integrated Development Plan implementation process were briefly discussed. The article also outlined the role of community participation to support the objectives enshrined in the Constitution and outlined within the local government legislative framework.

Recommendations

The aim of this article was to examine the role of community participation in the success of Integrated Development Planning. It is evident that with the exposition given in this study, the municipalities must use three forms of engagement that will generally be necessary for a municipality to adequately manage its relationships with different types of stakeholders to enhance community participation. These are consultation; negotiation; and communication. The three forms of engagement may be applied alongside each other or separately, depending upon the needs of the municipality and its relationship with its stakeholders. It is recommended that municipalities must of course strive to ensure that the community consultation process is a genuine one. While it is possible to run a legally compliant consultation process that seeks to do no more than promote the political standing of the Mayor and the Councillors, or the status and interests of the officials, such a process would run counter to the spirit of the legislative framework.

It is also recommended that the municipality must assemble a steering committee and allocate an adequate budget. It is useful for a small team to be established which will be responsible for managing the overall process. The team should consist of officials from the IDP office, the budget office, the communications section, and the office of the Municipal Manager. The steering committee must define the key issues to be consulted upon. Since the team is close to the top management of the municipality it will be relatively easy for it to define the important issues for consultation; list the stakeholders and set

out their issues of concern and design the consultative process. This process may include a general communication campaign, general consultative meetings, targeted consultative meetings, and other appropriate engagements.

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