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**The Role of Community Participation in the
Development of an Integrated Development Plan in the
Greater Taung Local Municipality**

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Abstract

This empirical study was conducted to assess community participation in the development of the IDP as a management planning tool for effectively improving service delivery in the Greater Taung Local Municipality. A qualitative research method and case study design were used in this study with the objective of obtaining the views and understanding of community members (ward committees) and municipal officials regarding their participation in the Integrated Development Planning of the Greater Taung Local Municipality. Non-probability sampling, such as purposive sampling, structured interviews, and focus group interviews, were utilised to get perceptions from community members (ward committees) as well as the municipal officials of the Greater Taung Local Municipality regarding community participation.

A key finding is that people at the grassroots level have little understanding of how government structures work, making it difficult for them to participate in meaningful and effective ways. Due to a lack of consultation on important municipal activities such as the IDP draft that affect the daily lives of community members, this has resulted in too many service delivery protests in the Greater Taung Local Municipality. We recommend that a management planning tool such as the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) be adopted to improve service delivery in municipalities and conclude that the IDP must be a requirement for successful municipal governance and service delivery as expected.

Keywords: *Community Participation, Integrated Development Plan, Community Development, Development.*

1. Introduction and Background

Community participation has always played an important role in the administration of local governments; this important factor was implemented in order to improve the standard of living of our citizens, particularly those from historically disadvantaged groups and those living in rural areas. The participation of the public is seen as a crucial aspect in the formation and success of local governments. People's participation in local government, according to Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker (2019:445–455), provides better outcomes and supports good governance. With the growing demand from citizens to participate in the formation of an IDP, this subject has become more relevant.

Section 25 of the Municipal Systems Act (32 of 2000) mandates that all municipalities establish an Integrated Development Plan in cooperation with residents. That is, individuals in each ward should be fully and actively involved in the IDP process. The Integrated

Development Plan aims to correct past mistakes in planning. Integrated development is a strategy for achieving developmental goals in order to improve the lives of local people (Mutwiri 2016:29). IDP is critical in providing a strategic framework for municipal management, budgeting, implementation, and delivery, as well as ensuring political accountability, facilitating interaction and improving communication, transforming local government into a vehicle for developments promoting socio-economic development, and finally, building positive relationships with communities (Mutwiri 2016:31).

2. The Integrated Development Planning Process

2.1.1 An Overview

South Africa created the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) in 1996 as a sort of strategic planning for local government. It is the fundamental plan tool that guides and advises all decision-making and municipal planning across the country (Republic of South Africa Department of Administration, 1997). Local governments in South Africa must use an Integrated Development Plan to plan for future growth in their areas. The Integrated Development Plan is a way of planning that involves the entire municipality and its residents in determining the best long-term development possibilities (Davids & Maphunye, 2005:61). The IDP was conceived by South African municipalities mainly as a tool to support coordinated implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) between the national, provincial, and local governments.

2.1.1 The Development of an IDP

Throughout the decision-making process, the notion of development includes a stage of community participation in the drafting of IDP plans. It also applies to the provision of services and their equitable distribution between the rich and the poor. By bridging the gap between urban and rural communities, development, like integration, aims to achieve rural-urban integration. It also aims to improve poor people's living conditions by providing infrastructure services. Because development is about people, it pushes this to become a people-driven process (Manyozo, 2017:56). Community-based planning is a new model that was established to make participation easier and to aid in the development of

an IDP; therefore, an IDP is developed using this model to achieve the municipal area's goals (GTLM, 2017:18).

The drafting of Municipal Integrated Development Plans has a dual purpose: it satisfies legal obligations while also contributing to the development of the municipal area. It is important to note that in order to achieve the municipality's development goals, practical and trustworthy Integrated Development Plans must be developed (Manyozo, 2017: 58).

The IDP assists municipalities in improving service delivery by identifying essential developmental goals, which are then translated into programmes and projects that address the underlying causes and symptoms of backlogs and delays in service delivery (Sinxadi & Campbell, 2015). The IDP reduces poverty through multi-sectoral programs that include a number of developmental measures such as water, sanitation, power, and housing as a policy framework. However, there have been criticisms about the IDP's failure and inability to improve service delivery (T'sheola & Mokgokong, 2012).

2.1.3 Obstacles Faced by the Municipality

Basically, South African municipalities that are struggling to deliver services to their communities have a fundamental implementation challenge of the IDP as opposed to any other reasons, as some may debate (Caswell et al., 2014:319). As a result, the IDP serves as a tool for replicating the municipal council's vision for the municipality's long-term growth, with a focus on its most significant development and transformation needs, in order to ensure 'integrated and coordinated service delivery' to communities (Mathebula, Nkuna, & Sebola, 2016). It is for this reason that the IDP is regarded as a tool to assist municipalities in achieving their developmental mandates and as a planning and implementation instrument to bring together the various functions of government departments and municipalities.

Many municipalities in South Africa have been characterised by a poor supply of basic household services such as water, power, sanitation, and garbage removal (Caswell et al., 2014:321). Residents in various sections of the country have expressed their discontent and displeasure through intermittent violent service delivery protests, causing social upheaval and political issues.

The difficulty of harmonising the Integrated Development Plan with a local budget arises from a municipality's poor planning (Mavhungu & Musitha 2016:100). However, there is sometimes a conflict between an

Integrated Development Plan and budgeting, making it difficult to achieve the level of integration desired. As a result, budget plans must be linked to the IDP to guarantee that critical objectives and priorities are budgeted for and met (Molepo & Maleka 2018: 759-771).

Local governments are having difficulty implementing IDPs and delivering services. IDP planning and implementation did not result in long-term services, especially in rural areas (Maake, 2016). According to Mathebula (2018), IDPs, were not implemented appropriately, efficiently, or effectively to carry out and perform services as envisaged.

2.1.4 Community Participation as an Important Component in the Development of an IDP

People are the finest experts on what they require, so it is critical to include them in the decision-making process for programmes that affect them, as this is a fundamental aspect of human development. Community participation is a critical instrument for achieving long-term development and promoting democracy in municipal governance (Molepo & Maleka, 2018:77). Community participation helps the structure of a municipality plan properly with regard to the preferences and needs of the community (Mathebula, 2018:78). As a result, these programmes should only be developed and implemented after substantial consultation and participation with the local community.

People can decide and implement development projects aiming at improving their living standards in terms of jobs, income, empowerment, and self-reliance through participation. As a result, community participation entails providing communities with the information, communication, and analytical skills they require to engage in and make informed decisions about their developmental needs (Molale, 2019:88). Effective participation in the Greater Taung Local Municipality will ensure that the community's demands are prioritised and are responded to within an appropriate time frame, and it will also help the municipal authorities to economise when planning without compromising the quality and quantity of goods and services of the local communities (Mtapuri, 2014:347). Furthermore, prioritising community participation will lead to optimal utilisation resources, which will improve the quality of life for the residents of Greater Taung Local Municipality.

2.1.5 The Role of Ward Committees in Encouraging Community Participation

Communities are represented by the ward committees, whose role is to consult the community on an individual or communal basis to establish community socio-economic problems and reach consensus on the IDP and other development projects (Government Gazette 2015).

The ward councillor's roles include organising a community participation forum at ward level for communities to verify whether the socio-economic problems they identified to the ward committees are correct and adequate. Ward committees are crucial to the local municipality because they serve as a link between councillors and the community. The ward committee system is also said to play a key role in interpreting the phrase "the people shall govern." This is because local government is viewed as the level of government closest to the people, and ward committees are one way to ensure that residents respond to local council decisions (Theron & Mchunu 2016:48).

2.1.6 Strategic Focus Areas

To guarantee balanced and sustainable development within the municipal area, a municipality must define numerous strategic emphasis areas. In order to pursue the strategy of designing the plan, the municipality must move towards an outcome-based approach (Mazinyo et al., 2014:150), which entails:

- ❖ **Improve service delivery:**
One of the most important concerns that must be addressed is improving the quality of service delivery. A suitable plan and programmes must be established in order for the municipality to meet this issue.
- ❖ **Improve relationships:**
It is a legal requirement for the municipality to operate in a developmental manner and to foster an atmosphere in which all of the municipality's stakeholders may collaborate with the council to meet expectations.
- ❖ **Good governance and administration:**
By maintaining good governance and implementing best practises in administration, such as adhering to work processes and ethics.

3. Literature Review and Theory Undepining the Study

Community participation has become a crucial concept and practise in democratic cultures. Since the beginning of democracy in South Africa, municipalities have gradually been compelled to encourage the participation of every community member in municipal affairs (Madzivhandila and Asha, 2012:369). The communities have a critical role in the Integrated Development Plan's development, preparation, implementation, and assessment. The municipal administration is obligated to employ all appropriate means, in addition to creating the necessary conditions, to stimulate community engagement through its IDP committee and councillors (Craythorne, 2006:104). Many municipalities struggle to establish minimum conditions and ensure the participation of key individuals from inside the municipal administration (Ncanywa and Getye 2016:107).

One of the key pillars of development is community participation. Municipal councils must develop a municipal authority culture that moves from severe representative government to participatory governance and must promote and generate conditions for communities, inhabitants, and other stakeholders in the municipality to take part in local matters for this purpose (Mathebula 2014:132).

Agency Theory

Agency theory is a theory that describes how people should behave in an organisation; as a result, rules and regulations can be constructed around this expected behaviour in order to direct outcomes from all concerns. According to Tshipa (2017:90), Jensen and Meckling (1976) developed the agency theory to focus on the relationship between the agent and the principal. In the context of the municipality and the community relationship, the municipality is the agent, while the principal is the constituencies.

In most instances, managers of the municipality (agents) act in their own self-interest; they do not act in the best interest of the citizens; hence, in some instances, residents are not consulted in the IDP development process. Thus, this agency theory is mostly concerned with the configuration of interests among citizens and municipalities (Tshipa, 2017:90). The IDP is one of the most important planning tools that ought to be implemented by municipalities as required by the Municipal Systems Act of 2000, to encourage and prioritise effective and quality service delivery, to residents. Against this background, it is mandatory for

municipalities to encourage communities to participate in planning and implementing the IDP. As such, figure 1 illustrates the process that municipalities should follow when consulting communities.

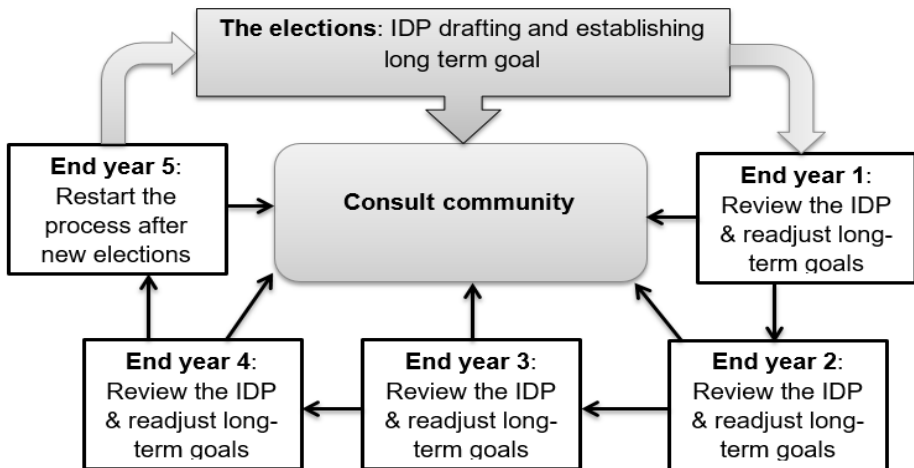


Figure 1: IDP Cycle
(Source: Zweni, 2021:43)

Based on Figure 1, communities should be at the centre of the IDP process, and the process should be reviewed annually by the municipality.

4. Research Questions;

- ❖ How does the Greater Taung Local Municipality develop an IDP for its communities?
- ❖ What are the obstacles faced by community members and the Greater Taung Local Municipality with regard to the development of an IDP?
- ❖ How essential is community participation in the development of an Integrated Development Plan to enhance service delivery in the Greater Taung Local Municipality?
- ❖ What role do ward committees and ward councillors play in encouraging community participation in the development of an IDP in Greater Taung Local Municipality?
- ❖ How can community participation be improved during the development of an IDP in the Greater Taung Local Municipality?

5. Study Objectives

- ❖ To identify the key barriers faced by the Greater Taung Local Municipality regarding community participation in the development of an IDP.
- ❖ To examine the value of community participation when developing an IDP in the Greater Taung Local Municipality.
- ❖ To evaluate the part taken by ward councillors and ward committees in encouraging community participation during the development of the IDP at the Greater Taung Local Municipality.
- ❖ To find strategies for how community participation can be improved when developing the IDP in the Greater Taung Local Municipality.

6. Rationale of the Study

In some instances, South African municipalities do not consult the residents when it comes to the IDP process as required by the Municipal systems Act 32 of 2000 (Zweni, 2022). As such, it is important to explore the causes of the lack of community participation in the development of an IDP as an integral part of successful service delivery in the Greater Taung Local Municipality.

7. Methodology

The aim of this study was to investigate community participation in the development of an Integrated Development Plan in the Greater Taung Municipality. The Greater Taung Local Municipality is a category B municipality located within Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District in the North-West Province. The Greater Taung Local Municipality is one of the five municipalities that make up the district. The municipal area is mainly rural and contains 106 widely scattered villages.

This study adopted the realism research philosophy, which is characterised by a need to understand insights about the subject and seeks to investigate a problem and find an explanation. Furthermore, realist research is concerned with underlying structures and systems, and its data is always qualitative in nature, so it appears to be more appropriate for the study (Saunders et al. 2012:128).

The research design chosen for this study is a qualitative case study. The qualitative design develops holistic understandings of rich, contextual, and non-numeric data. A qualitative study provides an

opportunity for participants to interact during the research process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:105). The qualitative research design was specifically employed in this study to investigate the participants' perceptions of the level of community participation in the development of an integrated development plan within the Greater Taung Local Municipality.

Structured interviews, document study, and focus group discussions were used to collect primary data for this study, which was then analysed using a theme analysis method. The purpose was to comb through the data in order to find common statements on specific topics. These were categorised into themes and summarised as findings. The content analysis was guided by patterns found in the documents' texts, which were then categorised and presented as distinct themes. Atlas Ti was used to direct the researcher through the use of various types of codes that enhance the creation of categories and themes.

The total number of Greater Taung Local Municipality wards is twenty-four. The sample for this study included eight ward committees out of twenty-four existing wards. A non-probability, purposive sampling method was utilised for this study's primary data collection. Purposive sampling was used because it assisted the researcher in selecting only participants with the appropriate information and knowledge about the investigated topic (Babbie, 2018: 57). Each ward committee consisted of ten community members. Focus group discussions were used in eight ward committees; all ward committees were present and fully participated during the scheduled discussions. In total, ward committees were eighty participants (from eight ward committees), while structured interviews were conducted for five municipal officials who are directly involved in the IDP process. Therefore, the total number of participants was eighty five.

8. Results and Discussion

The qualitative data gathered in this study were analysed through thematic analysis, that is, in terms of themes that emerged from the interviews. The data was categorised using two different methods: structured interviews and focus group discussions. The findings from the structured interviews entailed nine themes, and the focus group discussions included six themes. The respondents highlighted the issues that influence community participation in the development of IDP in the Greater Taung Local Municipality.

8.1 How an IDP is developed in the Greater Taung Local Municipality

Municipal officials indicated that the new model of enabling community members and local stakeholders to define their needs, goals, and priorities is done through what is called community-based planning. The IDP is developed through the use of community-based planning also known as CBP. Community members have also indicated that CBP is a participatory tool that is used by the community to take part in the development of an IDP. In fact, CBP includes a participatory approach, which is seen as one of the most important keys to achieving broader policy objectives. The literature and evidence from protests in South Africa show that the true needs of policy beneficiaries can only be properly identified by analysing local conditions. However, this can only be achieved if various community stakeholders are recognised and involved in the issues that affect them.

8.2 Key Barriers Faced by Greater Taung Local Municipality Regarding Community Participation

The study found that there is frail transparency and community consultation in decision-making, and community members experience service delivery upheavals due to poor implementation. In addition, the main difficulties with community participation are largely due to a lack of trust in their local leaders.

❖ Decision Making

Community respondents in Ward 6 stated that they are excluded from decisions and resolutions made by the municipality and that there is a lack of trust. Community members of Ward 7 complained about unattended reports and that the municipality doesn't seem to try to check the reports and provide a solution.

❖ The role played by the tribal members in addressing the challenges faced by the community members.

Community members stated that the municipality fails to involve the tribal office in the developments, does not empower them to take part or lead the community, and does not even have an influence in decision-making. Another challenge is illiteracy, and they further suggest that tribal members should be trained and workshopped about

IDP. Wards 7 and 23 stated that the traditional authorities are not actively involved in the issues faced by the communities in their wards.

From the answers provided by the communities, it shows that the municipality needs to strengthen its relationship with all the local traditional authorities and work very closely with tribal offices to improve the relationship and involve them in decision-making for them to have a sense of ownership.

❖ **Implementation process**

Community members indicated that even though an IDP sets out to improve the situation in the sense that the municipality delivers what the community wants from the priority list, the promises are not delivered.

Community members stated that they have not gotten feedback on some of the projects that were implemented years ago, that they are still incomplete, and that nobody knows what really happened to those projects or the budget. They have also indicated that they are struggling to find out or know why contractors don't complete projects assigned to them.

8.3 Importance of Community Participation

Based on the responses provided by community members, it can be concluded that the majority of community members in Taung have a clear grasp of participation in the development of an IDP. Community participation, according to the majority of respondents, is the method through which community members participate in the development programme decision-making process or initiatives that the community wishes to see implemented. They have also indicated that CBP is a participatory tool that is used by the community to take part in the developments of an IDP. The results show that members of the community recognise the value of their participation in the IDP and how it has helped them recognise their rights to take part in problem-solving and decision-making processes that influence their daily lives in their communities.

8.4 Role Played by Ward Committees to Encourage Community Participation

According to the responses from the communities, ward committees encourage participation in their meetings, and some community members have indicated that they embark on door-to-door campaigns, while others have indicated that they use campaigns to encourage community participation.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate community participation in the development of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) in the Greater Taung Local Municipality. The findings from the literature review recommend that the development of the IDP is the key to successful service delivery and that development starts with the people; therefore, they need to be involved in every step of the planning process.

The results from participants indicate that the IDP has assisted the municipality in addressing the service delivery backlog, but the municipality still needs to improve their participatory tool and ensure that all community members get to participate. The results further indicate that the municipality had confronted several challenges in the development of IDP, such as a shortage of resources, incomplete projects, inadequate community participation, and focusing on central areas while other villages were neglected.

The relationship between communities and the local municipality needs to be strengthened by enhancing participation in decision-making and budget allocation and also strengthening its relationship with all traditional leaders. As a result, the study suggested that the Greater Taung Local Municipality should invest their resources in establishing ward committees, as ward committees are the most significant stakeholders in strengthening the relationship between municipalities and community members, as they are the representatives of communities and a vehicle of communication between the municipalities and members of the communities that they serve. With the given results, other studies can further investigate how poor IDP development affects service delivery in South Africa.

9.2 Recommendations

How Community Participation can be Improved in the Greater Taung Local Municipality

The Greater Taung Local Municipality must invest in in-depth participatory planning methods for all stakeholders affected by and involved with the development of an IDP. Traditional leaders must also take part in encouraging community participation and be actively involved so they can put the best interests of communities first. Education about participation and IDP must be an ongoing process so that even young people can know about it.

It is evident that the Greater Taung Local Municipality needs to work closely with community members and traditional authorities to find better solutions that will cater to everyone, even community members who are far from the municipal area. This study outlined the understanding, different experiences and views of the respondents about the subject of the study, and the researcher was able to identify the gaps, factors that are hindering community participation in the development of an IDP.

Suggested focus areas in which the Greater Taung Local Municipality can work to tackle challenges faced by both municipalities and communities.

❖ Improve relationships

Working together with communities and other important stakeholders, such as traditional authorities, can help improve development and decision-making as it will allow communities and other participants to use their intellectual capacity and their insights and experiences to find better solutions.

❖ Good governance and administration

In the Greater Taung Local Municipality, proper planning and implementation of an IDP must be ensured. The municipality has to update its reporting and feedback methods as well as its consultation processes, especially with regard to stakeholders, which include communities, the public, the private sector, civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations.

❖ Economic development

Increasing the municipality's existing economic sectors, as well as looking into alternative business and investment opportunities that

will help the municipality's core economic sectors grow even more, will help to provide employment opportunities.

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