Public Participation in Local Governance: A case study of two local municipalities

NCZ NGAMLANA

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>ADM</td>
<td>Amathole District Municipality</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
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<td>APRM</td>
<td>African Peer Review Mechanism</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCM</td>
<td>Buffalo City Municipality</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDW</td>
<td>Community Development Worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoGTA</td>
<td>Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs</td>
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<td>CPF</td>
<td>Community Policing Forum</td>
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<td>CPP</td>
<td>Centre for Public Participation</td>
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<td>DCSA</td>
<td>Daimler Chrysler South Africa</td>
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<td>DoH</td>
<td>Department of Housing</td>
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<td>DPLG</td>
<td>Department of Provincial and Local Government</td>
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<td>ECCSEC</td>
<td>Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council</td>
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<td>ETU</td>
<td>Education Training Unit</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Growth Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GGLN</td>
<td>Good Governance Learning Network</td>
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<td>IDASA</td>
<td>Institute for Democracy in South Africa</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>Integrated Development Planning</td>
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<td>ISER</td>
<td>Institute for Social and Economic Research</td>
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<td>NEPAD</td>
<td>New Partnership for Africa’s Development</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Government Organization</td>
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<td>SANCO</td>
<td>South African National Civic Organization</td>
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<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Sciences</td>
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

In South Africa there is an extensive legislative framework supporting public participation in local government; however, participation which is genuinely empowering, and not token consultation or manipulation, is still lacking in most local municipalities. This study seeks to explore and explain public participation approaches adopted by local municipalities in South Africa by looking at a comparative study of two local municipalities. The study will further evaluate international effective practices in public participation and drawing on those, make recommendations on how to strengthen public participation in South Africa.

The introduction of a democratic dispensation in South Africa in April 1994 drew the idea of public participation in public affairs into the spotlight. Public participation, sometimes referred to as community participation, has been defined in various ways by different people, and for a variety of reasons. The National Policy Framework on public participation (2005) defines the concept as “an open, accountable process through which individuals and groups within selected communities can exchange views and influence decision-making”. It also views it as a democratic process of engaging people, deciding, planning, and playing an active part in the development and operation of services that affect their lives.

Public participation is a relatively new phenomenon in South Africa. The apartheid government created race-based municipalities and regulated the suppression of participation by African, Indian and Coloured communities. Under apartheid, the bulk of power resided at the centre with local government being the lowest tier within a strict hierarchical structure. Consequently, there was only minimal space for meaningful public participation in decision-making processes.

The post 1994 South African government committed itself to instituting wide-ranging participatory processes in the different spheres and institutions of governance in the country. The attempt to introduce participatory and direct democracy is evident, in
addition to institutions and processes at national and provincial levels, in the planning processes and policy formulation of government structures.

Municipal authorities, for example are legally committed to involving community organizations in the formulations of budgets, planning and developmental priorities. The Constitution of South Africa (Act no. 108 of 1996) mandates local government to provide a democratic and accountable local government and encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of local government.

Measures were introduced to entrench community participation and also to transform local government functions emphasizing development rather than regulations as under the previous dispensation. As a result, ‘developmental local government’ is defined as “local Government committed to working with citizens and the community to find sustainable ways to meet social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives” (RSA 1998, Section B).

While it is acknowledged that ward committees are perhaps the most accessible forum for community participation, research showed that this structure is not adequately facilitated to play its meaningful role (IDASA: 2004; GGLN: 2009).

This is even worse in small low-capacity municipalities where there is no budget for capacity-building of ward committees. In small municipalities, the bulk of the annual budget goes towards personnel costs, including remuneration for ward councillors, and very little goes towards service delivery and to strengthening systems to improve good governance. A study conducted by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA: 2007) on municipal spending trends revealed that small municipalities are highly dependent on National government, but are very wasteful.

Public participation empowers local citizens to hold their municipalities to account; it improves good governance by local municipalities. An empowered community results in an empowered local council, where development initiatives are more directed and targeted towards people’s real needs, not what the municipality thinks people want
or need. An empowered community starts to think pro-actively and views themselves as partners of the municipality rather than passive bystanders who only receive what the municipality hands out; they start to think about what they can do for themselves in order to lift themselves out of poverty.

The results of this research will be used in proposing intervention strategies that will be developed for rural municipalities in Amathole District by Afesis-corplan as part of the organization’s good governance and public participation program with local municipalities to be piloted in 2012.

Therefore, the key objectives of this study can be listed as follows:

a) To explore and describe public participation mechanisms employed by both Ngqushwa and Buffalo City Municipality including those employed by the following:
   - Municipal officials and ward councillors
   - Ward committee members and traditional leaders
   - Civil society organizations

b) To gain insight on the understanding of local citizens of their role and responsibility in participating in local government processes

c) Based on the insight gained, to develop recommendations for ways in which both the local municipality and its citizens can enhance the current public participation methods as well as suggest other innovative mechanisms that the municipality could consider employing to enhance meaningful public participation.

d) To compare the two municipalities to look at whether there are any significant differences that hamper effective public participation that are influenced by the difference in population size of the municipalities, socio-economic differences, literacy issues, access challenges, etc.
1.2 The Research Question

Observers of public participation processes warn that there are obstacles to public participation that need careful attention. The research question is: What are the obstacles to meaningful public participation in local municipalities in South Africa?

1.3 Motivation for selecting the two municipalities

The local municipalities compared in this study are both within the Amathole District Municipality, even though they differ in size and character. Comparing how both municipalities are faring in terms of public participation offers an opportunity to draw lessons from differing backgrounds. The study aims to draw lessons from these different municipalities and see if it is possible to have a blanket approach in regulating service delivery that cuts across all municipalities, regardless of size, demographic character, socio-economic challenges, etc. The study also aims to see if there are similar challenges or trends in behaviour in citizens from both local municipalities even though the socio-economic, literacy levels and access challenges may not be the same.

Numerous researches on the state of public participation have been conducted in both municipalities (Peer Review Report, 2002; Public Participation in BCM, 2002; Municipal Service Partnership in Hamburg, 2005; Public Participation in ADM, 2006), but none of these studies make a comparison between poorer municipalities and more affluent ones, in understanding whether socio-economic, literacy, access and other challenges, have any bearing on the implementation of policies and legislation on public participation. Also, none of these research reports offered recommendations or suggestions pertaining to creating effective public participation, taking into consideration the unique characteristics of both municipalities. Most research reports tend to focus on service delivery issues as well as broad good
governance issues, but public participation as a single indicator of good governance and as a core tenet of our democracy is rarely singled out and explored in research.

1.4 Ngqushwa Local Municipality

Ngqushwa municipality is located in the Eastern Cape, is bounded on the east by the Fish River and on the south by the Indian Ocean. The municipality is an amalgamation of two small towns, Hamburg and Peddie. It is one of the seven local municipalities that fall under the Amathole District Municipality (ADM).

Ngqushwa is a predominantly rural local municipality with 112 rural villages under its jurisdiction and a population of 84,230 made up of 21,888 households distributed in 14 wards. Women and children form the majority of Ngqushwa’s population, and the population is also characterized by a high rate of adult illiteracy with about 52% receiving less than Grade 7 education (Ngqushwa IDP 2008).

Economically, the municipality mainly depends on the equitable share and conditional grants that it receives from National Government and other development agencies. The municipality has the smallest budget in all of the seven local municipalities under the ADM. The municipality collects only 1% of its total annual budget from rates and taxes. Seventy nine percent (79%) of the population in Ngqushwa is unemployed and 91% earns less than R1,600 per month (Afesis-corplan, 2007).

Rapid economic development in the Ngqushwa municipal area is restrained by inadequate infrastructure. Many roads in the municipality are in poor condition and public transport is not of the desired standard. The area is blessed with a lot of water resources especially dams, from which about 18% of its population drinks.

The municipality is also facing capacity challenges within its political and administrative arms. In a period of four years, the municipality had to employ and release from duty three Municipal Managers for fraud and service delivery related
reasons. The municipality’s first IDP document was only developed in 2006 and even then according to the Province, it was not of desired standard. Upon the intervention of the ADM in 2006/2007, the municipality produced an all-encompassing credible-looking IDP document. This implies that for all the years before 2007, there was no documented strategic direction for the municipality, and development and services were delivered in an adhoc manner.

The area is faced with huge infrastructure backlogs and has not been able to achieve much since demarcation. This has been due to many challenges ranging from capacity within the municipality, lack of community involvement and participation, lack of integration and intergovernmental coordination of government programs, mismanagement of funds, etc. However, notable improvements have been seen with the new political leadership of the municipality beginning with a clear strategic direction of the municipality in the form of an IDP.

1.5 Buffalo City Municipality

Along with Ngqushwa Municipality, Buffalo City Municipality (BCM) is one of the municipalities under the Amathole District Municipality in the Eastern Cape. BCM is home to a population of about 724,281 people with an estimated annual population growth of 0.6% (Growth and Development Summit, 2007). BCM consists of 45 wards under an executive mayoral system.

An assessment of service delivery and socio-economic survey of the Eastern Cape, which was concluded in 2006, indicated that 52.8% of households in BCM have an income of less that R1 500 per month (ISER 2001). The study also revealed that 15.8% of the population in BCM is accessing social grants and this is the lowest percentage compared to all of the other municipalities amongst the ADM where the majority of the population depends on social grants. Poverty levels are reflected in the fact that 16.1% of the population reside in informal housing, according to the 2007 Growth and Development Summit Socio-Economic Profile. The Department of
Housing estimated the housing backlog to be about 75 000 houses, which represents 41.1% of the total provincial backlog (DoH 2007).

In spite of all these challenges, BCM is one of the key economic hubs of the Eastern Cape Province. In 2004, it was estimated that BCM contributed 23% to the total GDP of the province and provided 19% of the province’s formal employment opportunities (ECCSEC; 2005). The two major economic centres in BCM are East London and King William’s Town. East London is a port city with a diverse economic base and home to companies such as Daimler Chrysler South Africa (DCSA), Johnson and Johnson and Nestle, whilst King William’s Town is an important service centre and together with Bhisho, is home to the Provincial government.

In its 2007/08 IDP, BCM states that the municipality’s cash generation through rates and taxes remains strong and that investments have been stable from the 2006/07 year. The political infighting within the municipality has, however, been rife over the past few years, coupled with a high turnover of mayors and municipal managers. The political infighting has been noted by many, including a task team sent to BCM by parliament, to have a crippling effect on service delivery within the area, with some calling for the national government to intervene (Daily Dispatch, 24 Feb 2010). Unlike Ngqushwa, even though BCM is an ANC-led municipality, other political parties are represented in its Council.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many forms of planning but all encompass the same basic principles. The ability of a local government to provide services depends on the availability of revenues and other resources necessary to support them. Planning therefore helps a community identify and mobilize its available resources and use them for the most pressing community needs. Sound planning is said to help communities find workable solutions to real problems. Planning will aid in the assessment of current practices, validate or refute currently held assumptions, facilitate networking between various groups in the community, and increase everyone’s knowledge of and appreciation for local elected officials, professional staff, and citizen volunteers (Gordon, 1993:2). Both officials and concerned individuals and groups need to share in such planning if it is to be an effective method for community improvement (Varenhorst, 2002:1). It is therefore evident that planning can have tremendous value in enhancing citizens’ confidence in the future. Participatory planning is acknowledged in academic spheres as an appropriate planning methodology towards achieving sustainable development by overcoming many of the limitations of a “top-down” approach (Pienaar, 2002:1).

The big debate in the policy process is surrounding the “top-down” versus the “bottom-up” approaches to policy implementation (Brynard and De Coning, 2006:186). The top-down approach can be described as the process in which policy decisions take place at the top level of government. The bottom-up approach came as a response to the top-down approach, and was based on identifying weaknesses in it and suggesting alternatives to address those weaknesses (Brynard and De Coning, 2006:187). It is interesting to note that Brynard and De Coning (2006:187) argue that it is not a question of choosing ‘top’ or ‘bottom’ as though these were mutually exclusive alternatives. It is said that perspectives provide useful insights into the implementation process; both demonstrate significant explanatory strengths as well as weaknesses, and strengths of both perspectives should be incorporated.
According to Pienaar (2002:11), consultation and participation is at the heart of democracy, and should not be seen as a distraction. Most people agree that meaningful participation in local government processes is important. In an attempt to establish this importance the Education and Training Unit (ETU) for Democracy and Development lists a few benefits of involvement:

- Better understanding of the strategy and plans.
- Increased commitment and support for achieving them.
- Better decisions in the planning process because of a wider range of relevant input.
- More relevant decisions because they are based on experience and local knowledge.
- More efficient and better implementation through increased understanding and commitment.
- More sustainable gains because of the increased commitment, skills and understanding developed in the target community.
- Better accountability by making information and decision making power available to a wider group of people.
- Improved equity through carefully ensuring that the views, needs, concerns and interests of the less powerful and articulate people and groups are heard and can influence decisions.

In development, each group within a community plays a vital role in the planning process. Continual contact among these parties must therefore be established and maintained at all the stages of the process. Officials and planners, from the outset, need to enlist the help and cooperation of the public in gathering information and in identifying needs and setting priorities. (Varenhorst, 2002:2). Elected officials are said to carry a fundamental responsibility since they establish, to a large degree, the social, political, and administrative climate within which the planning process functions. It is therefore inevitable that their attitude will basically determine the success or failure of planning. Because it is in this larger arena that the basic objectives and policies are defined and redefined, the elected officials then have the responsibility to determine specific, concrete programmes and services for their local government by passing budgets and adopting ordinances or regulations (Varenhorst, 2002:2).
2.1 The Global Significance of Public Participation

Throughout the world and especially in Africa, public participation is seen as a means to (i) enhance development and service delivery, (ii) improve governance and (iii) deepen democracy. The World Bank defines public participation as ‘a process in which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and the resources which affect them’ (World Bank Participation Source Book, 1996:12). Notably, this definition directly links public participation to development; probably the most common context in which public participation is invoked.

In its report, the Centre for Public Participation (2007) notes that for the last ten years the World Bank and related international development organizations have moved away from the more elitist ‘external expert stance’ in development planning, and towards a ‘participatory stance’. This means that instead of just having project sponsors and designers imposing development projects on the local context, the Bank engages with various stakeholders, especially local groups, in developing and implementing projects.

The reason for this shift is fundamentally quite simple: experience shows that the ‘external expert stance’ does not generate social change, whereas the participatory stance does. According to the Bank this is because of the ‘social learning’ that stakeholders generate and internalise during the participatory planning and implementation process. In addition, local stakeholders generally have greater commitment to development than external experts, and tend to develop new and appropriate local institutions through the participatory process. Importantly, the Bank distinguishes between ‘popular’ participation by the poor and marginalised who, after all, are the intended beneficiaries of development, and ‘stakeholder’ participation which includes others who could affect the outcomes of development projects, such as government officials and NGOs with an interest in the outcome.

Critics of the World Bank model of public participation argue that it offers no threat to ‘technocratic authoritarianism’. Pithouse (2006) argues that ‘this model has
certainly not worked well for many of the organizations and people who took it up in good faith. Defenders of the status quo will point to small shifts consequent to lobbying and advocacy in various forms but there have been no fundamental shifts in policy due to engagement in official public participation processes’.

Notably, the significance of public participation in the dominant development model has become consolidated over the last ten years, as experience has proven it works better than the ’external expert stance’ approach. Hence, whether one is talking about budgeting in Porto Alerge, Brazil or the Kerala state of India, or health delivery in rural Bangladesh or urban Britain, public participation is seen as a central component necessary to meet the end of human development.

In the context of Africa, public participation is seen in a similar ‘capacity building’ role in the developmental model captured in the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). Now flagship policy of the African Union, NEPAD affirms ‘broad-based participation in development by all stakeholders’. In addition, in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), one of the key questions to assess whether ‘Constitutional Democracy’ is being realised is: ’what is being done to create an enabling environment for meaningful popular participation in all forms and levels of government?’ Further, the self-assessment process for every member country through the APRM is required to have ‘the active participation of all stakeholders’ so as to ‘facilitate the evaluation of countries on the basis of the realities expressed by all stakeholders’. Hence, in NEPAD’s normative model, public participation is specifically seen as a part of good governance, and part of the way to assess the state of governance in a country.

In conclusion, public participation is a national, continental and international practice linked to development, but also to state-building and democracy. Notably, in South Africa, the 2005 Draft National Policy Framework for Public Participation states that public participation ‘could be promoted in order to make development plans and services more relevant to local community needs and conditions, in order to hand
over responsibility for services and promote community action, and to empower communities to have control over their own lives and livelihoods’.

These points are mirrored in the White Paper on Local Government’s affirmation that citizens must participate in local government as ‘consumers and service users, partners in resource mobilization, and voters and participants in policy processes’. We now explore the legislative framework in South Africa in more detail.

### 2.2 Public Participation in Post-Apartheid South Africa: The legislative Framework

In the South African context, government legislation and policies around public participation have been developed since 1994 in order to promote participatory governance. Chapter 2 of the Constitution of South Africa (1996) outlines the Bill of Rights including the rights to equality, human dignity and freedom, as well as rights to housing, health care, food, water, social security, education, a clean environment and access to information.

In terms of the roles of national, provincial and local spheres of government the Constitution states that:

- Municipalities (are) to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in local government. Section 151 (1) (e)
- Local government is to encourage the involvement of community organizations in the matters of local government. Section 152
- In terms of the basic values and principles governing public administration, people’s needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making. Section 195 (e)

The Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 defines “the legal nature of a municipality as including the local community within the municipal area, working in partnership with the municipality’s political and administrative structures....to provide for community participation”.

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Almost all of the Acts and guidelines that are directed towards regulating service delivery in local government put community participation at the centre of such delivery. These can be listed as follows:

- The Constitution of South Africa 1996
- Batho Pele 1997
- Municipal Systems Act 2000
- Municipal Finance Management Act 2003
- Municipal Property Rates Act 2004
- Guidelines for Operation of Ward Committees 2005
- National Policy Framework for Public Participation 2007

According to the DPLG’s research report on public participation (2005), public participation is promoted for four main reasons; firstly, public participation is encouraged because it is a legal requirement to consult. Secondly, it should be promoted in order to make development plans and services more relevant to local needs and conditions. Thirdly, participation may be encouraged in order to hand over responsibility for services and promote community action. Lastly, public participation should be encouraged to empower local communities to have control over their own livelihoods.

The basic assumptions underlying public participation therefore include:

- Public participation is designed to promote the values of good governance and human rights;
- Public participation acknowledges a fundamental right of all people to participate in the governance system
- Public participation is designed to narrow the social distance between the electorate and elected institutions
- Public participation requires recognizing the intrinsic value of all of our people, investing in their ability to contribute to governance processes
- People can participate as individuals, interest groups or communities more generally

In the White Paper on Local Government 1998, the objects of community participation are 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 in order to mobilize additional resources

Public participation is relevant to every sector of development. The assumption is that public participation is positive in that it can contribute to making programmes more sustainable. Public participation in local government processes, especially in the IDP, is imperative to the promotion of institutional democracy.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this research took into consideration the nature of the study and the fact that the study analyzed practical experiences of respondents participating in municipal processes. The study is mainly an experience-based study, and to an extent, it is a perception-based study as well. The research population includes the following groups:

- Members of the public
- Ward committee members
- Ward councillors and municipal officials
- NGOs and traditional leaders

In selecting the research population, care was taken to ensure that all these groups were covered in the study and also to ensure that all stakeholder groupings within a ward community were covered. Ward committees are meant to have all the stakeholder groupings represented in the composition of their structure, such as youth, women, disabled groups, community based organizations, business, etc. Also, in conducting interviews with community members, research assistants were conscious to involve all these groups in the study.

3.1 Sampling

As mentioned before, the study was conducted in Buffalo City Municipality and Ngqushwa. The intention was to conduct interviews in 5 wards in BCM and 3 wards in Ngqushwa and this was influenced by the sampling strategy that was used in this research. The sampling strategy employed in the research was stratified random sampling and a ten percent sample was selected. BCM has 45 wards, giving a ten percent sample of 5 wards. Ngqushwa has 14 wards, giving a ten percent sample of 2 wards to be included in the study. However, for the purpose of this study two wards in Ngqushwa proved too small a sample upon which to base conclusions and recommendations, and thus a decision was made to include 3 wards in Ngqushwa.
According to the Demarcation Board of South Africa, each ward consists of about 5000 households. A sample of 50 households per ward was selected for the study; a larger and more representative sample was not feasible given resource limitations.

Purposive sampling was used in the wards where there were few obstacles in terms of access and/or political obstruction. In Ngqushwa purposive sampling was employed where a decision was made to include in the study the wards whose ward councillors were also holding portfolios within the municipality, to ensure that whatever benefits were there in the study for the municipality, were speedily transferred to the municipality. In BCM only the wards whose councillors had no reservations regarding the study were included in the study.

In Buffalo City Municipality, the ward councillors whose wards are within Mdantsane were approached individually to obtain permission for the survey, and only the wards whose ward councillors gave the ‘go-ahead’ for the study were included in the survey. These were wards 10, 17, 18, 19 and 23. In each of these wards, members of the public, ward committee members and the ward councillor were interviewed. Combining all of the five wards in BCM, in total 233 members of the public, 46 ward committee members and five ward councillors were interviewed. Two municipal officials and 2 NGO leaders were interviewed as key informants.

In Ngqushwa during the initial discussions with the municipality a decision was made to include in the study the councillors who also served as portfolio heads within the municipality and this was the Speaker, Finance and Social Services portfolio heads. In Ngqushwa the intention was to interview 30 ward committee members, 150 members of the public and 3 ward councillors but due to various challenges these numbers were not met. In the end, 60 members of the public, 12 ward committee members, and 3 ward councillors were interviewed. Two municipal officials, 2 traditional leaders and 2 NGO leaders were interviewed as key informants.

The table below summarises the actual numbers of respondents interviewed in each of the two municipalities:
<table>
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<th>Respondent Category</th>
<th>Buffalo City Municipality</th>
<th>Ngqushwa Municipality</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members of the public</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward committee members</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward councillors</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Officials</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Leaders</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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There are many villages within a ward in Ngqushwa and the researchers tried to cover as many of the villages as possible within one particular ward, to get a fair indication of what the issues were from across the entire ward. Interviews for members of the public were conducted during the day on weekends. Every tenth household from the entry point in the ward (i.e. the first house as you enter the ward or the village) was selected. In each household, the head of the household was asked to respond to the questionnaire and in their absence another adult from the same household - in many instances this was the spouse - was asked to respond.

### 3.2 Research Tools

The main tool used to collect data in this research was structured interviews. A questionnaire consisting of both open and close-ended questions was used. Three sets of questionnaires were developed, one for members of the public, one for ward committee members, and one for ward councillors and municipal officials. These questionnaires are attached as Appendices A, B and C of this report.

Research assistants ensured that during the course of the interviews they probed deeper to understand issues that were raised more clearly and to allow respondents to fully express their opinions. Where necessary, research assistants assisted respondents by translating the questions in the language(s) that respondents were most comfortable in. Each of the interviews lasted for about 30 – 45 minutes and
were conducted over 4 months with the assistance of six research assistants who are skilled in data collection, conducting field work and research.

3.3 Data Analysis

The initial intention was to analyze data in the study using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), but due to licensing and financial resource challenges this proved difficult. In the end, data was analyzed using Excel and Microsoft Access. In Excel, data is coded (i.e. 1 or 2 and/or 1 – 5) depending on each question and results analyzed. This is easy for questions that require only one response, i.e. male or female (code 1 or 2); questions that require more than one response were analyzed using Access. Microsoft Access, in the same way as Excel, assigns codes to responses but does this even for questions that require multiple responses and then generates results. Also, Access is able to recall and link responses and questions which in turn allows one to move back and forth through the pages without losing data.
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section highlights the major findings of the study. Demographic information about the respondents is presented first, followed by the summary of responses given by respondents on questions relating to public participation and consultation. The information is presented such that it reflects responses from respondents in both municipalities.

4.1 Demographic Information

4.1.1 Age group of respondents

The largest group of respondents in both municipalities were between the ages of 21 and 40 years, followed by those between the ages of 41 and 60 years. For the purpose of this study this was good as it would later emerge that this (21 – 60) is the age group that usually attends community meetings and other gatherings organized by the municipality. As the study was conducted during the day on weekends, it was not possible to make a comparison on patterns of availability of people during the week and to see if most people within the sampled communities work during the week or not.

It was also interesting to note that in both municipalities young people (ages 21 – 36 according to the definition of youth by the National Youth Agency) were in the majority in responding to the questionnaires, and as research assistants were requesting household heads to fill in the questionnaires, this would imply that this age group is in the majority within the wards selected in this study. This is expected in Mdantsane as many young people would be expected to reside closer to job opportunities, but one would not expect this in Ngqushwa as one would assume that young people would leave the area in search for job opportunities elsewhere.
Note: All these figures are representative of two categories of respondents, namely, members of the public and ward committee members.

4.1.2 Gender of respondents

There were more females who responded to the survey than there were males in both municipalities. This is not surprising as one would assume that at the time when the surveys were conducted most men were at work or tending to the livestock or to other matters within the community. This in turn is more of a reflection of the people who are available within the community during the day to attend community meetings or gatherings called by the municipality during the day. Surprisingly however, in ward 10 and ward 23 in BCM there were more male
respondents than there were females (see figure 4 below). It is not clear why the situation was different in these two wards compared to all the others sampled for this study. Something else that was interesting about these two wards was that there were more development projects and government-driven development initiatives reported to be going on within the wards compared to the other three wards, but it is not clear how that is linked to the fact that there were more male respondents in this survey from these wards compared to all the others.

4.2 Transparency

When respondents were asked questions around how transparent the municipality was and whether they were aware if Mayoral Executive Committee or Executive Committee meetings and Council meetings were open to the public, the following responses were recorded. In BCM, the majority of respondents were aware that the
meetings mentioned above are open to the public; while in Ngqushwa the opposite was the case; the majority of respondents claimed that these meetings are not open to the public and some claimed not to know whether they are open to the public or not.

When asked if the municipality gave progress reports to the community, the majority of respondents in BCM agreed that the municipality gave regular feedback to the community on municipal projects and programmes; while in Ngqushwa, the majority of respondents claimed that the municipality does not give regular feedback to the community and only a few said that regular feedback was given by the municipality. What respondents noticed in the case of Ngqushwa is that in villages where the ward councillor comes from, a glowing picture of the municipality’s performance was painted while the majority of villages within that same ward would paint a dim picture of the municipality.

![Figure 7: Transparency of Executive Meetings in BCM](image7)

![Figure 8: Transparency of Executive Meetings in Ngqushwa](image8)

### 4.3 Public Participation and Consultation

When asked how community meetings are announced most respondents in both municipalities said that they are announced through loud hailing within the community. It was mentioned in Ngqushwa that the municipality also utilizes other gatherings within the community where people come together to announce meetings such as funerals, tribal or traditional meetings. A number of respondents
in BCM mentioned other media platforms for announcing meetings such as radio and newspapers, and these platforms were not mentioned in Ngqushwa.

The majority of respondents in both municipalities claimed to have attended public meetings in the past two years, and reference was made to ward committee meetings, council meetings and meetings organized by government departments. Most of the respondents in BCM claimed to be satisfied with attendance at these meetings as the meetings are announced well on time and are held in convenient venues within the community and in most cases they are held in community halls or the local school. In Ngqushwa the opposite emerged, most of the respondents were not happy with the attendance at these meetings as they felt that they were held in venues that were not convenient, at times they were not informed on time about the meetings and many times they went to meetings without even knowing what they were about.

When asked what forums exist within the municipality for community participation, most respondents in both municipalities responded that they did not know. A significant number of respondents in BCM mentioned South African National Civic Organization (SANCO) and the Community Policing Forum (CPF).

The majority of members of the public in BCM claimed that they rarely gave recommendations to council regarding their development priorities; while ward committee members claimed that they regularly gave feedback to the community on decision taken in council and on progress on development issues and that they took to council via the ward councillor issues raised by the community. It emerged that there were problems in some wards between the ward committee and the ward councillor and that these tensions impacted on the flow of communication between Council and the ward community.

In Ngqushwa, most of the members of the public did not know if and how members of the public and community based organizations give recommendations to council. A few people claimed that they had attended a meeting where they were asked to
name the development priorities for their ward and they listed these but nothing had since happened and they were not sure where to go to enquire on progress. When asked if these meetings were IDP consultative meetings, they were not sure. When probing further into the institutionalization of public participation, most respondents in BCM said that there was someone within the municipality who is responsible for public participation and they even knew the name, while in Ngqushwa the majority of respondents stated that there was no one responsible for public participation within the municipality. The majority of respondents in both municipalities claimed that the municipality does not provide any resources in order to promote public participation. A significant number of respondents - and this was mostly ward committee members - claimed to receive a stipend in support of their travel expenses to attend community meetings. Respondents did not see the provision of a community hall as support offered by the municipality in promoting community participation.

Most respondents in both municipalities stated that the municipality needs to create platforms where they - as the community - can effectively make their views heard by the municipality. In this regard, respondents mentioned how ineffective the public participation process is around the development of the IDP. Most respondents in Ngqushwa mentioned that the municipality needed to effectively support the community to be able to attend meetings as they are usually held in villages which not everyone can reach. Suggested solutions were that the municipality needed to rotate the meetings between villages, and to supply community members with transport to attend the meetings.

A large number of respondents in BCM stated that there has been conflict between the ward community and the municipality in the recent past. The cause of the conflict was mostly service delivery related issues, while some mentioned lack of electricity and the constant black-outs as one reason, others mentioned roads, lack of jobs or irregularities in employment in community projects and problems with the
ward councillor. In Ngqushwa the majority of respondents were not aware of what the conflict with the municipality had been about.

When asked if they were aware of how the community participates in development projects, the majority of respondents in both municipalities claimed that they were not aware of how the community participates in development projects. A few respondents in BCM stated that they receive employment when there are municipal-led development projects in their area. Only a small number of respondents in Ngqushwa claimed to have received employment when there were development projects implemented by the municipality in their area. The majority of respondents in Ngqushwa were not aware of any development projects that had been implemented by the municipality in their area; some mentioned the Public Works Program and were aware that it is not a program of the municipality.

When asked how community members are recruited for employment in development projects within the community, various responses emerged. A majority of respondents in BCM claimed that a list is drafted by the ward committee members working with the community and the community development workers (CDW) of suitable candidates for employment in a particular project, and this list is given to the ward councillor. Most respondents in almost all of the wards expressed dissatisfaction with how the ward committee members and the ward councillor were
handling the recruitment process whenever there were employment opportunities in municipal projects within the community.

In Ngqushwa, the same was mentioned in terms of the process, whereby a list is drawn up by the ward committee members at a community meeting and the traditional leadership where feasible, and is given to the ward councillor, even though most respondents claimed that they have to go to the municipal offices in town to register for employment whenever there are development projects within the community. Respondents in Ngqushwa did not appear to have any strong feelings around how the ward councillor and the ward committee members were handling the recruitment process; in fact, it appeared as if municipal officials are more involved in the recruitment process in Ngqushwa than in BCM.

With the intense involvement of ward councillors in the recruitment process in BCM it is highly possible that the recruitment process could be ‘hijacked’ by politicians and political motives. It is possible that people who are seen to be in support of the ward councillor and his/her party would be favoured for employment, and hence those who are not deemed loyal to the party nor the councillor would not be prioritised for job opportunities. There is a policy in BCM that states that ward councillors should not be involved in the recruitment processes, but the recruitment process itself still has not been changed to speak to this policy, and ward councillors remain involved.

In Ngqushwa however, municipal officials and traditional leaders are more involved in the recruitment process, which limits the involvement of the ward councillors and the chance of political hijacking and political motives in the recruitment process. And this would explain why there is less dissatisfaction about the conduct of the ward councillors in the recruitment process in Ngqushwa than there is in BCM.

Respondents in both municipalities said that public participation was important in local governance and that they needed elected representatives to listen to their views.
CHAPTER 5: Discussion and Recommendations

In this section, the findings of the research that had been presented above are discussed and analysed. The section lifts key issues that stand out from the findings and seeks to analyze these. In the end recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

5.1 Transparency

Transparency is one of the indicators used by the African Union in measuring good governance in African Countries. With regard to the degree of transparency with which the municipalities conduct their governance affairs, it would appear as though BCM is doing much better compared to Ngqushwa in ensuring that its citizens are well informed of council meetings and that they know that these meetings are open to the public. However, it did not appear as though members of the public, even ward committee members, attend these meetings regularly. Ward councillors alluded to the fact that these meetings are held in the evenings and that even though they are held in a convenient venue, the time at which they are held might be inconveniencing members of the public.

In Ngqushwa the situation was rather different, in that most community members including ward committee members were not aware that these meetings are open to the public; in fact they claimed to not even be aware of when these meetings are held. Legislation requires municipalities to publicize these meetings well in advance (at least 21 days public notice). While BCM uses different media platforms to publicize the meetings, Ngqushwa mostly uses notice boards and posters; these notices it would appear hardly reach the majority of citizens within the municipality. It is therefore not surprising that community members did not attend council meetings.
5.2 Public Participation and Consultation

BCM appears to use different media platforms to announce public meetings, even though loud-hailing through the community seemed the most preferred method by community members. While Ngqushwa uses loud hailing, notice boards and posters, it is also practical in understanding its unique challenges and therefore uses other forms such as community meetings, funerals and other gatherings to announce meetings.

Municipal officials in BCM alluded to the fact that advertising and announcing public meetings effectively required resources. BCM utilizes all resources available that would assist in achieving the goal of ensuring that its citizens are made aware of community gatherings on time, and these include rates accounts, free community newspapers such as the Go Express, flyers, posters, community radios and newsletters.

Ngqushwa municipal officials mentioned a similar challenge with resources and to a large extent capacity as well. Ngqushwa does not appear to have at its disposal as many platforms to announce the meetings as BCM does; there are no free newspapers, and the vast majority of its citizens do not pay rates and taxes and therefore receive no accounts from the municipality. Municipal officials mentioned that to deliver flyers throughout the villages would be an expensive exercise because of the vastness of the area and that they rely on posting flyers and posters in public places like the clinics and local shops.

The majority of respondents in both municipalities claim to have attended public meetings in the past two years. In BCM, respondents were mostly referring to meetings called by the ward councillor as well as the IDP consultative meetings. In Ngqushwa members of the public mentioned meetings called by the district municipality and various government departments more than they mentioned those organized by the local municipality. It was surprising to notice that members of the public were not aware of who between the district municipality and the local
municipality was responsible for the IDP, as both municipalities (district and local municipality) hold public gatherings around the IDP in the same villages.

The majority of respondents in BCM participates in the IDP process and are well aware of what the IDP process is about and what its intention is. In Ngqushwa the situation is different; the local municipality holds IDP consultative meetings separate to those that are held by the district municipality in the same wards or same villages. This confuses local residents as in the end they do not know which process is led by who and who is responsible for which functions between the local and the district municipality. In terms of participation, not many residents in Ngqushwa claimed to participate in the IDP meetings due to the fact that they are held in other villages which at times are far from where they live.

Figure 11: Attendance of IDP Meetings in BCM

Figure 12: Attendance of IDP in Ngqushwa

Figure 13: Aggregate chart of Attendance of IDP Meetings in both municipalities
In Ngqushwa, respondents also alluded to the fact that their wards are big and therefore not many people within the villages attend IDP meetings; and most of the respondents from Ngqushwa said that they were not happy with the attendance of the public at these meetings. When asked if and how feedback is given to the entire village community of what transpired at the meetings by those who had attended, it appeared as though this is rarely done and community members saw it as the responsibility of the ward councillor and the ward committees.

The traditional authorities stated that they were sidelined in the entire process; they are rarely informed of the public meetings or given any feedback by the ward committee members. They alluded to the fact that they, together with the municipality, have not yet mastered what their relationship should be like in the new dispensation.

In both municipalities women were said to be in the majority in attending public meetings. For convenience, the public meetings are held during the day (it would not be practical to hold the meetings in the evenings particularly in Ngqushwa where people would still have to walk long distances to get back to their villages after the meeting, and public transport is not always available nor affordable). It would appear therefore as though the men are not in the majority within the community during the day.

The majority of members of the community in both municipalities were not aware of any forums for public participation within their communities. Though some mentioned SANCO, when asked what SANCO does and how it represents them in municipal processes, they were not aware of how it represents them. What was most surprising in this was that members of the public did not view the ward committee structure as a forum for public participation. This could mean that either people do not understand what the ward committee is and what it is there for, or that the ward committee was not representing the community and interacting with the community as regularly as it should. This was the case in both local municipalities.
Members of the public in both municipalities claimed to rarely give recommendations to council on development priorities for their wards and their communities. This was not surprising as there appeared to be poor forums for public participation in both municipalities, and the ward committee as a representative structure did not appear to be faring well in this regard. This appears to be even worse in Ngqushwa where most of the respondents claimed to not even know how they are to give their recommendations to council regarding development in the area. There were also fears in Ngqushwa that should the community participate in municipal processes, the municipality would start charging them for rates and taxes which they said they could not afford.

In BCM, a vast majority of respondents were aware that there is a public participation office within the municipality and some people even knew the names of the people who work in this office. In Ngqushwa, however, the opposite emerged; the majority of community members were not aware of whether there is any public participation office within the municipality and the people responsible for public participation.

In trying to understand how public participation is coordinated in Ngqushwa it emerged that the Speaker of the Municipality, who is also a ward councillor and also serves in the regional executive committee of the ANC, is also responsible for public participation in the municipality and is coordinating it with support from his poorly staffed office. This was a far cry from the fully operational, adequately staffed Public Participation Unit in BCM that works with and supports other departments in all public participation related matters for continued inclusion of BCM citizens in municipal processes.

Ngqushwa officials mentioned the limited resources they have to fully support and facilitate public participation, and how the limited resources they have are to be directed towards service delivery. It would appear as though in this municipality public participation is not prioritised, and other critical issues as defined by the municipality take priority.
It was reported that there had been various protests in both municipalities in the recent past. Respondents alluded to the fact that these protests were service delivery and job related, and the anger was directed more to the ward councillor than to the municipal officials. Ward councillors however, especially in BCM, believed that most of these protests were politically motivated.

In terms of community participation in development processes, it would appear as though BCM has clearer recruitment processes that are well understood by members of the public throughout all wards. There is some level of transparency in the process as lists are drafted and submitted to the municipality through the ward committee and the ward councillor. Although the community members were not happy with the people who end up being employed in these projects and in turn, question the process and the employment criteria, they do not have any fundamental problems with the overall recruitment process itself.

In Ngqushwa the process seemed rather haphazard; some community members believed that they had to go to the municipality to register for employment when the notices are up; some said that community meetings are called and people are asked to register; while others said that the ward committee members register people for employment. On the whole it did not appear as though community members were clear on what the recruitment process is for development projects implemented by the municipality, it was therefore not surprising that community members claimed that the process was flawed, officials were engaged in nepotism and required favours in exchange for employment. This could be expected when the recruitment processes are not clear and there is lack of transparency.

The NGOs that were interviewed in this study alluded to the fact that there is a great need for citizen education on how local government works. They claimed that they have tried to work with the municipality to enhance citizen education but this was limited because of resources and at times because of poor planning and bureaucracy from the side of the municipality. One NGO had been involved in ward committee training in both municipalities and claims that the ward committee structure is highly
politicized; and because ward committees have not been properly trained to understand their role and how they ought to represent the people, they easily get sidetracked into political squabbles. During the elections in 2009, ward committee members were going up and down campaigning for political parties and had branded themselves as agents of political parties, and in turn sidelined those who were in opposition with their political parties. As a representative structure for ward communities, the ward committee as a structure is seen as an ineffective one by the NGOs.

The NGOs also highlighted the leadership challenges in the era of democracy and this new dispensation. They highlighted the fact that the current leadership was not interested in building an active citizenry because that is the citizenry that would start challenging and holding officials to account. They alluded to the fact that the status quo works for municipal officials and elected representatives because an ignorant citizenry will not question budget allocations, irregularities, poor reporting or any other irregularities that officials get involved in.

As the NGOs, they stated that they have funding challenges that limit their activities and involvement in citizen education, and that their best option is to partner with government in order to achieve their goals, but this is not always easy. They stated that government rarely partners with NGOs, but would rather seek the assistance of consultants to do what they as NGOs could assist with at a far lower rate with even better results.
5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research that have been outlined above and the analysis thereof, the following recommendations are made. The recommendations are made in order to strengthen citizen participation in local governance and are based on the two municipalities in which the study was conducted, but they could be applied to many other local municipalities in the country that carry the same characteristics as the two case study municipalities used in this research.

In view of the above findings it is recommended that:

i. Government takes into consideration the many challenges faced by small rural municipalities in their effort to enhance citizen participation in local government and that in developing the legislative framework around public participation, it seeks to speak to the unique challenges that these municipalities are faced with, rather than developing blanket legislative requirements that small municipalities can hardly ever meet.

It is clear from the findings of this study and the differences between BCM and Ngqushwa that Ngqushwa is at a disadvantage. It is a small municipality with a non-existent revenue base and a citizenry that depends on it as one of the main sources of employment (the other being the local hospital). The priorities of Ngqushwa municipality when it allocates resources will not be to enhance public participation, but would speak instead to salaries, capital projects and service delivery, and this is a reality. The legislative framework requires these small municipalities to meet the same requirements in terms of public participation as well-resourced municipalities such as Buffalo City Municipality. The small municipalities could try, but would struggle to achieve what BCM can with all its resources. The legislative framework therefore, should speak to the realities in our country and the realities faced by small municipalities; it must not just be good on paper but make it highly difficult to for rural municipalities to meet.
ii. The municipalities need to educate the public on how local government works. This is more crucial and urgent for Ngqushwa municipality than it is for Buffalo City Municipality

For citizens to effectively participate in local governance, they need to be educated first on how local government works. It would appear as though respondents in this study, particularly from Ngqushwa, a poorly resourced rural municipality, do not receive much education and exposure to how local government works. They did not understand how the ward committee is supposed to represent them in local governance, and it did not appear as though ward committees themselves were entirely sure of what their role in local governance and in enhancing citizen participation in local governance is. More than anything else, local municipalities need to educate their citizens so that they claim their rightful place in the development of their areas by defining for themselves what development means to them. In this way, they would see themselves as partners with the municipality and not just mere consumers of services.

iii. Creation of creative and practical forums for public participation

It is obvious that in rural municipalities where the wards have many rural villages and are vast in area, the ward committees will be challenged in terms of reaching the entire ward. In such cases the municipality needs to be creative in assisting communities to establish forums that would be practical in terms of allowing the majority of citizens to participate in local governance, and these should be established over and above the ward committee structure. These forums could be village based, or a combination of a number of villages, or whatever is practical for the municipality. The most important thing is to ensure that citizens participate in local governance and are supported and encouraged to do so, until an active citizenry that could rightfully take its place in local governance within the municipality is built.
iv. **Strengthening of the ward committees**

In both municipalities respondents did not appear to understand the role of ward committees as a platform for public participation. The ward committees also expressed challenges in terms of their ability to plan with communities to be able to list priority development needs for the wards. They expressed a need for training and capacity building programs in terms of how they could effectively achieve this working with communities. In Ngqushwa, it did not appear as though ward committees were aware of what their roles were other than being a resource for the community and linking them to services of government departments such as Social Development Programs, Health Services, etc. Therefore there is a great need to strengthen and capacitate the ward committee structure.

v. **Coordination of programs and integration**

In Ngqushwa, respondents alluded to the fact that the district municipality and the local municipality hold IDP consultative meetings in the same villages at different times which could be confusing for community members especially the ones in Ngqushwa who do not even clearly understand how local government works. These citizens hardly know how the ward committee is supposed to work for them; it is highly unlikely that they would know which functions belong to the district municipality and which belong to the local municipality, nor will they know how to effectively interrogate the district budget and the local budget. They also mentioned that government departments also hold meetings related to their own programs and services in the same villages. The municipality needs to find a way to coordinate and integrate these meetings where possible so that there is little confusion created on the ground, and also to manage the expectations that are created by these various institutions when they go to the communities. The municipality has the overall planning responsibility for the municipal area and therefore should be able to direct all investment coming into the area such that it benefits the ward rather than causing confusion. Many times small municipalities...
are in such great need for funding resources that they allow various institutions to come and go within the municipal area without proper monitoring and coordination of the various efforts.

vi. **Partnership with NGOS**

All the NGOs interviewed in the study are organizations whose core business is on issues of local governance, good governance and civic education. All of the NGOs stated that they extend a hand to local municipalities and seek to foster partnerships, but that municipalities tend to give them a ‘cold shoulder’. NGOs are a resource available in communities as they are familiar with the communities and the dynamics within the communities; they have the skills and expertise in their area of specialization and could assist the municipality where the municipality is falling short. In a small municipality such as Ngqushwa, capacity is always a challenge as skilled people tend to look for greener pastures, and these municipalities could benefit from partnerships with strong NGOs, particularly to in an effort to enhance citizen participation in local governance.
CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

Public participation is a relatively new phenomenon in South Africa. The apartheid government created race-based municipalities and regulated the suppression of participation by African, Indian and Coloured communities. Under apartheid, the bulk of power resided at the centre with local government being the lowest tier within a strictly hierarchical structure. Consequently, there was only minimal space for meaningful public participation in decision-making processes.

The South African Government committed itself to instituting wide-ranging participatory processes in the different spheres and institutions of governance in the country. The attempt to introduce participatory and direct democracy is evident, in addition to institutions and processes at national and provincial levels, in the planning processes and policy formulation of local government structures.

Municipal authorities, for example are legally committed to involving community organizations in the formulations of budgets, planning and developmental priorities. The Constitution of South Africa (Act no. 108 of 1996) mandates local government to provide a democratic and accountable local government and encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of local government.

Comparing Ngqushwa and Buffalo City Municipality, the study analyzes obstacles that hinder meaningful public participation in local municipalities in South Africa. Both local municipalities are within the Amathole District Municipality and they differ in size and character. Comparing how both municipalities are faring in terms of public participation offered an opportunity to draw lessons from different municipal backgrounds.

The study revealed a number of things: firstly, that BCM is doing much better than Ngqushwa in ensuring that its citizens are well informed of council meetings and that they know that these meetings are open to the public. While BCM uses different media platforms to publicize the meetings, Ngqushwa mostly uses notice boards and
posters, and these notices hardly reach the majority of citizens within the municipality. It is therefore not surprising that community members do not attend Executive Committee meetings.

Respondents in both municipalities said that they attend public meetings but in Ngqushwa members of the public mentioned meetings called by the district municipality and various government departments more than they mentioned those organized by the local municipality.

The traditional authorities stated that they were sidelined in the entire process; they are rarely informed of the public meetings or given any feedback by the ward committee members. They alluded to the fact that they together with the municipality have not yet mastered what their relationship should be like in the new dispensation.

The majority of members of the community in both municipalities were not aware of any forums of public participation within their communities. Though some mentioned SANCO, when asked what SANCO does and how it represents them in municipal processes, they were not aware of how it represents them. What was most surprising in this was that members of the public did not view the ward committee structure as a forum for public participation.

Members of the public in both municipalities claimed to rarely give recommendations to council on development priorities for their wards and their communities. This was not surprising as there appeared to be poor forums for public participation in both municipalities, and the ward committee as a representative structure did not appear to be faring well in this regard. This appears to be worse in Ngqushwa where most of the respondents claimed to not even know how they are to give their recommendations to council regarding development in the area. There were also fears in Ngqushwa that should the community participate in municipal processes, the municipality would start charging them for rates and taxes which they said they could not afford.
Ngqushwa officials mentioned the limited resources they have to fully support and facilitate public participation and how these resources are to be directed towards service delivery. In terms of institutionalization of public participation within Ngqushwa, this function is given to municipal officials who are already carrying too much load because of capacity challenges within the municipality and other competing and who also have other competing political functions. The BCM, on the other hand, has established a fully functional public participation unit.

In terms of community participation in development processes, it would appear as though BCM has clearer recruitment processes that are well understood by members of the public throughout all wards, and there is some level of transparency in the process. The opposite was reported in Ngqushwa.

It is clear from the findings of this study and in the differences between BCM and Ngqushwa that Ngqushwa is at a disadvantage. It is a small municipality with a non-existent revenue base and a citizenry that depends on it as one of the main sources of employment. The priorities of Ngqushwa municipality when it allocates resources are not to enhance public participation, but to address salaries, capital projects and service delivery.

For citizens to effectively participate in local governance, they need to be educated first on how local government works. Their role in development and in the new system of government has to be communicated to them in a manner that would empower communities to be active in local governance. South Africa as a country comes from a history of apartheid, where decisions were made for the people by those in power and people were merely told what to do. This culture has remained with people over the years.

Citizens who live in rural communities are more disadvantaged than those in urban areas as they, for a long time, had to submit to the authority of the traditional leaders as well. Participation therefore, is new to them, and if local municipalities do not have strong programs, resources, partners and even strategies to educate,
empower and motivate citizens to participate in local governance, then citizens continue to not have a voice in their own development.

It is clear from the findings of this study that BCM is in a far better position in terms of resources available at its disposal than Ngqushwa. BCM has the human capacity, a fully established public participation unit, and resources such as a big revenue base, free newspapers and community radios. Ngqushwa is quite limited, it can hardly afford the staff complement it has and therefore instead of having a public participation unit as BCM does, it assigns this function to the speaker who has other competing functions on his hands. Ngqushwa appears to be trying its best to use innovative ways to reach people, but as they say, it would appear as though ‘the odds are stacked against it’.

Therefore, in order for small rural municipalities to be able to effectively and realistically meet the legislative requirements for public participation, government needs to takes into consideration the many challenges faced by these municipalities and in developing the legislative framework around public participation, it should seek to speak to the unique challenges that these municipalities are faced with, rather than developing blanket legislative requirements that small municipalities can hardly meet with their limited resources.
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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE – Members of the public

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I. Introduction

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TRANSPARENCY

1. Are Mayoral Executive Committee meetings or Executive committee meetings open to the public?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Yes</th>
<th>b. No</th>
<th>c. Other, please specify</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. Does the municipality give progress reports to the community on municipal projects and programmes? How?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Yes</th>
<th>b. No</th>
<th>c. Don’t know</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

3. How are members of the public informed about ward meetings? Via: (More than one answer is permitted for this question.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Municipal accounts</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. Public notice boards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Municipal newsletters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

48
4. Have you in the past two years attended any of the public meetings (ward meetings, council meetings, etc)?

| a. Yes | b. No | c. Don’t know |

5. Were you satisfied with the level of attendance by ward community members at the meeting(s) you attended?

| a. Yes | b. No | c. Other, please specify |

6. Who participates in these meetings?

   a. Age

   | i. 20 or less | ii. 21-40 | iii. 41-60 | iv. 61+ |

   a. Gender

   | i. Male | ii. Female |

7. What forums for community participation are you aware of in your municipality?

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

8. Do members of the public and CBOs, through the ward committee, gives recommendations to council regarding their development priorities? If so, how?

| a) Don’t know | b) Never | c) Rarely | d) Regularly |

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________
9. Is there someone within the municipality who is responsible for coordinating community participation? Please give the name of the person and designation

| a. Yes | b. No | c. Don’t know |

10. Which of the following resources does the municipality provide in order to promote community participation? More than one answer is permitted for this question.

| a. Travel resources |
| b. A venue |
| c. Catering resources |
| d. Administrative resources |
| e. Other, please specify |
| f. None |

11. In your views, how important is public participation in local governance?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

12. What measures do you think the municipality needs to put in place in order to achieve effective citizen participation in local government?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

13. Has your ward had any conflicts with the local municipality, e.g. have there been any sit-ins rates boycotts etc?

| a. Yes | b. No | c. Don’t know |

14. What was the conflict about?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
15. How does the community participate in development projects?

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

16. How are people from the community employed in community development projects?

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

17. Have you in the past 2 years attended IDP Meetings?

Yes | No

17(b) If Yes, How often?

Regularly | Once | Never

Thank you for participating
APPENDIX B: Questionnaire (1) – Ward Committee Members

Please use a tick √ where appropriate

I Introduction
Tel number of respondent
Ward
Date

III Biographical details
b. Age
i. 20 or less  ii. 21-40  iii. 41-60  iv. 61+

c. Gender
i. Male  ii. Female

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

1. How are you informed about council meetings? More than one answer is permitted for this question.
   a. Municipal accounts
   b. Public notice boards
   c. Municipal newsletters
   d. Local newspapers
   e. Ward committee meetings
   f. Radio announcements
   g. Members of the public are not informed
   h. Loud hailing
   i. Other, please specify
   j. Don’t know

2. In your municipality what forums exist for community participation? More than one answer is permitted for this question.
   a. Ward committees
   b. Development forums
   c. Steering committees
3. How often do you attend any of the forums for community participation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once</th>
<th>Twice</th>
<th>Thrice</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d. No forums exist

e. Don’t know

4. In your opinion how effective are the following forums for community participation in your municipality?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>IDP forum</th>
<th>Ward committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Non-existent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Very ineffective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Ineffective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Effective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Very effective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. (Rank answers on a scale of 1-5, 1 for least important factor and 5 for most important) what do you think contributes to the effectiveness of forums for community participation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Human Resources capacity</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. Access to technical and financial resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Credibility of forums for community participation within civil society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. An understanding of the role of forums for community participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Existence of terms of reference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Leadership of the forum/ councillor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Do you, as the ward committee give recommendations to council regarding your development priorities? How?

____________________________________________________________________________________

7. Is there someone within the municipality who is responsible for coordinating community participation? If Yes please write the name of the person responsible for public participation

____________________________________________________________________________________

53
8. Which of the following resources does the municipality provide in order to promote community participation? More than one answer is permitted for this question.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Travel resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. A venue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Catering resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Administrative resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Are you satisfied with your ward committee structure? Please give a detailed answer

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

10. In your views, what do you think are the problems hampering effective citizen participation in your local municipality?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

11. Have members of the community and/or CBOs had any conflicts with the local municipality, e.g. have there been any sit-ins, rates boycotts etc in the last one year?

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Yes</td>
<td>b. No</td>
<td>c. Don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If answer above is Yes

12. What was the conflict about?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

13. How are ward committees elected?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

14. In your view, do ward committees understand their duties? Please explain

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Thank You for participating
APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE (2) – COUNCILLORS and Officials

Please use a tick √ alongside the chosen option

I. Introduction
Questionnaire no:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel number of respondent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i. Male</th>
<th>ii. Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>c. Length of time in current position in months</th>
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</table>

2. Does the municipality give progress reports to the community on municipal projects and programmes? (e.g. reports at ward committee meetings, etc) How are these feedbacks given?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

3. How are members of the public informed about council meetings? Via: (More than one answer is permitted for this question.)

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<td>c. Municipal newsletters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Are you satisfied with the level of attendance at council meetings by members of the public?

a. Yes  

b. No  

c. Other, please specify

5. In your municipality what forums exist for community participation? More than one answer is permitted for this question.

a. Ward committees  

b. IDP forum  

c. Development forums  

d. Steering committees  

e. No forums exist  

f. Other, please specify

6. In your opinion how effective are the following forums for community participation in your municipality?

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7. What contributes to the effectiveness of forums for community participation? (Rank answers on a scale of 1-5, 1 for least important factor and 5 for most important)

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</table>
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c. Credibility of forums for community participation within civil society

d. An understanding of the role of forums for community participation

e. Existence of terms of reference

f. Leadership of the forum/ councillor

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11. In your views, how important is public participation in local governance?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

12. What measures do you think the municipality needs to put in place in order to achieve effective citizen participation in local government?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

13. Have CBOs and the general members of the public had any conflicts with the local municipality, e.g. have there been any sit-ins rates boycotts etc?

a. Yes  
b. No  
c. Don’t know

14. What was the conflict about?

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

15. In your view and experience, what methods does the municipality use to enhance public participation?

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

16. Who participates mostly in public meeting between the following groups?

d. Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i. 20 or less</th>
<th>ii. 21-40</th>
<th>iii. 41-60</th>
<th>iv. 61+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

b. Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i. Male</th>
<th>ii. Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

17. Are you aware of how the LED strategy for the municipality is developed? If so, please explain

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for participating