

**The role of community participation  
in the  
Integrated Development Plan of Govan Mbeki  
Municipality**

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**Submitted in (partial) fulfillment of the requirements of the  
degree**

**Magister Socialis Diligentiae  
In the field of Social Development and Policy**

**In the Faculty of Humanities  
Department of Social Work and Criminology**

**At the  
University of Pretoria**

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**Date : November 2006**

## ***Declaration***

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my independent investigation and that all the sources used have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

I hereby certify that this dissertation is submitted for the degree MSD (Social Development and Policy).

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Date: November 2006

## **Acknowledgements**

The researcher wishes to express a word of gratitude to the following people:

- My study leader, Prof. A. Lombard, for her unending patience and professional guidance during the research study.
- My husband, Swee, for his support and willingness to become both a mother and father to our son, Buhle. Thank you for performing those tasks when I could not.
- My respondents, for availing themselves for the empirical study. Without your input, this study would not have been possible.
- My editor, Ms R. Scheepers, for a critical view despite the pressure you had to work under.
- Above all, God Almighty, for giving me good health and the motivation to complete this study.

## **Abstract**

The role of community participation in the Integrated Development Plan of Govan Mbeki Municipality

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In order to eradicate the legacy of the past, the South African democratic government adopted a developmental approach to local government. The White Paper on Local Government (WPLG)(1998:17) defines *developmental local government* as government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways of meeting their social, economic and material needs and of improving their quality of life. A developmental approach aims to enhance the skills and capacity of community members by promoting their participation in their own development process (Theron, 2005a:120). The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) awards an opportunity to both the municipality and the community to work together on issues of local development.

The aim of this study was to determine the role of community participation in the IDP process of Govan Mbeki Municipality.

A qualitative research approach was followed in which data was gathered through document analysis and focus group interviews. The respondents in the study comprised eight community members and six municipal representatives.

The key findings of the study indicated contrasting views between the community and the municipality's perspectives in particular with regard to the role of the community during the prioritisation of needs and the decision-making processes.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the researcher made recommendations and provided guidelines for the implementation of community participation in the IDP.

The researcher concluded that in order for community participation to have maximum impact, local government is obliged to create an enabling environment for participation which includes amongst others addressing the institutional obstacles and the capacity gaps within the community. The researcher finally recommended that these roles be implemented, evaluated and integrated in the current IDP process as undertaken by Govan Mbeki Municipality.

## ***Key words***

Community participation

Development

Developmental approach

Developmental local government

Community empowerment

Govan Mbeki Municipality

Integrated Development Plan (IDP)

Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process

Needs identification

Role of the community

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

In the period since the 1994 elections, a variety of legislation has been introduced to transform the government of the country from an unjust system that placed the interests of the white minority above all other race groups, to a fairer, democratic state. Mogale (2003:216) states that, in order to “reduce historical socio-economic backlog through acceleration of service delivery to local communicates ... it has become vital that a strong synergetic partnership between central and local government, civil society organizations and private and donor communities be galvanized to ratify associated inefficiencies”.

In order to eradicate the legacy of the past, the South African democratic government adopted a developmental approach (Section A of White Paper on Local Government, 1998). Davids (2005: 18) notes that in addressing the injustices of past development efforts, a people-centred development was adopted as a starting point. Theron (2005a:120) describes developmental local government as a shifting of interventions to the public and away from objects, delivery and production. A developmental approach aims to enhance the skills and capacity of the public by encouraging their participation in their own development process (Theron, 2005a:120).

The White Paper on Local Government (WPLG) (1998:17) defines *developmental local government* as government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community, to find sustainable ways of meeting their social, economic and material needs and of improving their quality of life. The characteristics of a developmental local government are spelled out as follows in Section B of the WPLG (1998):

- Maximising social development and economic growth – the powers and functions of local government should be exercised in a way that has maximum impact on the social development of communities.
- Integrating and coordinating – developmental local government must provide vision and leadership for all those who have a role to play in achieving local prosperity.
- Democratising development, empowering and redistributing – municipalities can render support to individual and community initiatives, directing community energies into projects and programmes which benefit the area as a whole.
- Leading and learning – developmental local government requires that municipalities become more strategic, visionary and ultimately influential in the way they operate.

Coetzee (2000: 12) is of the opinion that a developmental local government should adopt a strategic, creative and integrated approach to governance so as to address challenges related to service delivery and meeting basic needs. This involves actively seeking partnerships with all role players that contribute to the development of an area, including other organs of state, the private sector and communities. In this manner municipalities can fulfill their core responsibilities in a way that has a lasting and profoundly positive impact on the quality of life of the people they serve.

Section 153 (a) of Chapter 7 of the Constitution of South Africa (Act No.108 of 1996) states that a municipality must structure its administrative, budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community and to promote social and economic development. This is in line with the Reconstruction and Development Programme's (RDP) (1994:8) premise that development is not merely the delivery of goods to passive citizens: both the Constitution of South Africa and the RDP emphasise that in meeting basic needs, community participation is essential.

These two documents provide a policy framework for municipalities and bind them to involving communities in their planning processes. Chapter 2 of the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) fundamentally redefines a municipality as consisting, not only of the structures, functionaries and administration making up that municipality, but also of the community, residents and ratepayers. Within a democratic society, the developmental approach requires a municipality to re-channel its efforts into supporting and encouraging community initiative. Hence, the role of the municipality as well as its relationship with the citizen has been redefined. The community is now regarded as a key stakeholder in development (Stewart and Collett, 1998:53).

In order for a democratic government to exist, the community must govern by way of participating in issues of local government. The Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) requires that every municipality develop a culture of municipal governance that complements representative governance within a system of participatory government. Thus, a municipality should create conditions conducive to local community participation in the processes it has established. Cloete and Thornhill (2005:126) express the view that public participation should be institutionalised in order to ensure that all residents are provided with adequate opportunities to participate. This implies, amongst others, the following:

- Setting clear minimum requirements and procedures for participation.
- Providing mechanisms for involving different groups and ensuring the accommodation of diversity in the municipal community.
- Creating conditions to promote active participation.

The Municipal Systems Act (Act No. 32 of 2000) requires all municipalities in South Africa to adopt an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) as their principal strategic plan which outlines development priorities, objectives and operational strategy. An IDP is both a **process** and a **product** (Department of Provincial and

Local government, 2000). As a *process*, it is a method by which municipalities prepare five-year strategic plans that are reviewed annually in consultation with communities and stakeholders. As a *product*, an IDP is a superior plan for an area that provides an overall framework for development (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2000). It aims to coordinate the work of local and other spheres of government in a coherent plan to improve the quality of life of all people living in a particular area. It should take into account the existing conditions and problems as well as the resources available for development. The plan should view economic and social development for the area as a whole. It must establish a framework for land use, required infrastructure and services and protection of the environment.

It is expected of the municipality to coordinate the processes of compiling and reviewing the IDP annually and it must draw in other stakeholders in the area who can influence or benefit from development. Stakeholder involvement is integral to a democratic environment and further seeks to build on the strength of ordinary people. Burkley (1993), Davids (2005) and Houston, Humphries, Liebenberg and Dichaba (2000) emphasise the positive impact that community participation can have on development.

In this study, the researcher assessed the role of community participation in the IDP processes of the Govan Mbeki Municipality. Govan Mbeki is one of seven local municipalities falling under the Gert Sibande District, which is one of three district councils in Mpumalanga Province. The headquarters of the municipality are located in Secunda, the principal town in the municipal area. The 2001 census data revealed that this municipality had a population of 221 747, 67 % of whom are without any form of income. A map showing the geographical location of the municipality is attached in **Appendix 1**. After consultation with various stakeholder groups in the municipality, Govan Mbeki Municipality adopted an IDP in 2005 to guide its development (Vilakazi, 2005).

Section 17(1) of the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) sets out the mechanisms, processes and procedures for community participation in the affairs of a municipality. The researcher argues, however, that the extent of this participation is not outlined in the Act. The White Paper on Local Government (1998) merely states that the participatory processes must not become an obstacle to development, and narrow interests (for instance, unpopular views or those not reflecting the desires of the broader community) must not be allowed to “capture” the development process. The researcher argues that participation cannot be left to the few but should instead embrace the needs of the broader community. Thus, the IDP should be a reflection of the needs and priorities of the municipal constituency. The challenge facing municipalities is to find ways of structuring participation in such a way that it will enhance, rather than impede, the delivery process.

The researcher has found that the concept of “community participation” has gained popularity as South Africa (SA) has striven to overcome the devastating effects of the previous regime. This is evident in the numerous government documents such as the SA Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) and the Municipal Structural Act (Act 33 of 2000), which make community participation a key factor in the new SA. The Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) refers to community participation as encapsulating the spirit of involving individuals and groupings within a community in the activities of local government and governance. It is disappointing to note that none of these documents offer a description of what constitutes “a community” and the possible difficulties of implementing the Act when its parameters are vague.

There is, however, no universal agreement on the conceptualisation of participation. Emmett (2000: 503) argues that the notion of community participation is based on the assumption that there is “a community”, but that there are conceptual differences in what a community entails. Bernard

(1983:163) notes that three characteristics have been agreed upon as a minimum for defining community. These are "local", "common ties" and "social interaction". According to this author, local refers to the surroundings and environment in which people live whilst the other characteristics will differ according to the degree of social capital, personal interest and social cohesion.

In the South African municipal context, a community is defined in terms of the geographical location of municipal boundaries. The community of Govan Mbeki will therefore include all people living within the jurisdiction of this municipality. The researcher has noted that ward committees are the method most commonly applied to ensure community participation in issues of local government. Wards are defined by the White Paper on Local Government (1998) as geographical areas into which a municipality is divided for purposes of elections. This system is also used for facilitating the IDP and for community meetings.

The definition of community participation is progressive and subjected to political, economic and social forces, to mention only a few. Theron (2005a:113) concurs with this view when stating that public participation is an elusive concept which acts as an umbrella term for a new style of development planning intervention.

The researcher, who is a social worker by profession, is an Institution and Social Developer in the employ of an engineering consulting company and has gained experience in the facilitation and management of consultation with stakeholders whilst implementing service delivery projects. From experience in engaging with numerous municipalities, the researcher has observed successful implementation of community participation by, for example, using local labour in projects. Participation is not, however, limited to the use of labour. Liebenberg and Theron (1997: 125) argue that popular participation goes beyond the mere provision of labour during development projects. The researcher has also noted the lack of knowledge of development amongst communities, particularly when implementing new projects. This raises questions regarding the participation of

the community in the IDP of the municipality. Hence, although the needs and priorities of the IDP are supposedly decided upon with the community, it appears that huge gaps in knowledge about development are prevalent in many communities.

When airing experts' views on the matter, Mogotsi (2005) indicated that justice is not done in the manner in which municipalities identify the needs and priorities of communities for purposes of IDPs. The ultimate needs and priorities lists adopted in an IDP do not reflect the holistic view of the concerned community: for instance, interests and needs of people with disabilities and abused women, crime prevention, empowerment of the community, and overall social upliftment are hardly indicated. Although municipalities have adopted an approach that seeks to encourage development that is holistic, in practice the emphasis is placed more on development of physical infrastructure and less on human development.

The goals of a developmental approach, according to Midgley (1996:6), are (1) to harmonise social and economic interventions by seeking to create formal organisational arrangements by which economic and social policies can be integrated; (2) to ensure that economic development has a direct and positive impact on people's welfare, and (3) to encourage the introduction of social programmes that contribute to economic growth. As much as physical development is advanced through projects such as roads, water supply and sanitation, equal efforts should be made to develop the beneficiaries of these projects through capacity building, education and creation of economic opportunities for participation by the community. This is in line with the need signalled at the Copenhagen Social Development Summit (1995), that development should address the needs of the poor, not only by including them among the priority beneficiaries of development programmes, but also by making them full participants in the process of socio-economic development, design and delivery, and political decision-making (ICSW, 1995).

Houston *et al.* (2000:75) conclude that the demands of participatory processes in the IDP are proving to be extremely difficult for a wide range of reasons, such as lack of previous participation in municipal governance, complex technical issues involved in planning, lack of resources and lack of capacity amongst elected officials.

Amidst these challenges, the IDP, as a tool for development, calls for a planning approach that occurs in consultation with the public (Municipal Systems Act, Act No 32 of 2000: Chapter 4). This planning approach is perceived by the researcher as the creation of a platform for municipalities and communities to jointly consider the economic, physical, political as well as social conditions within which they exist and to agree on mechanisms to improve these conditions.

As a consultant to municipalities, the researcher undertook this study to highlight the crucial role that public participation can fulfill, if allowed the required time and budget. Social work is a profession that has promoted the interests of the poor in particular and is a key role player in the development process. However, issues of development cannot be dealt with by this profession alone. Since development is an inter-sectoral subject, this study will have wide-ranging implications since it will:

- Assist in revealing that the social work profession has a proactive role to play by ensuring that development planners do not overlook the strength of ordinary citizens.
- Enhance an understanding amongst those working in an integrated development team that community participation cannot simply be ignored and that mechanisms must be put in place in order to promote it.
- Assist Govan Mbeki Municipality in encouraging participation in the practice of IDP compilation. This will lead to increased community participation in issues of local government.

- Clarify perceptions and expectations of municipalities as well as communities concerning participation in IDPs. Through the study, conditions enabling participation will be enhanced and development will be encouraged.
- Empower the community respondent group by enhancing their understanding of their rights and the value of participation.
- Serve to establish the framework and the benchmark for participation in IDPs.

## **1. 2 Problem Formulation**

According to Maxwell (1998:81), problem formulation in qualitative studies should not be done in detail until the purpose and context of the design are clarified, and it should remain sensitive and adaptable to the implications of other parts of the design. This does not imply that qualitative researchers should not have a question but rather that the initial questions frame the study in important ways; however, these specific questions are a result of an interactive process rather than a starting point of the process (Maxwell, 1998:81).

The year 2005 marked the completion of the first five-year cycle of the IDP, which officially ended after the local government elections on 1 March 2006 when the new Municipal Council was appointed (Department of Provincial and Local Government 2000). These five years represent a period in which local government, together with the community, has been allowed time to plan, implement and account for service delivery.

The researcher is of the opinion that policy documents and principles that call for community participation, (for example, The White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997, The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997) have been established but that there is no plan in place to ensure that effective participation will indeed be realised. From experience, it has become evident that

municipalities do not prioritise "softer issues" such as capacity-building programmes. Theron and Barnard (1997:40) agree that the implementation of the developmental approach calls for a marriage between "hard" (such as technical and financial) and "soft" issues. Development is a participatory process that requires the involvement of various stakeholders and it cannot be approached in a fragmented manner.

When exploring community participation, Burkley (1993:56) defines public participation as an essential part of human growth, that is, the development of self-confidence, pride, initiative, responsibility and cooperation. Without this, developmental efforts to alleviate poverty will be made immensely difficult, if not impossible. Burkley (1993: 56) describes development as a process through which people learn to take charge of their own lives and solve their own problems, which is the essence of development. Development must therefore be considered not only as a process of accumulation of change, but also as a collective good, to the extent that it addresses the common needs of specific social and cultural groups (Stavenhagen, 2003:iii). In this sense, participation in development is both a means and an end in itself.

Arko-Cobah (2002:57) states that expanded public participation should lead ideally to the peaceful expression of feelings, solving of community problems, racial accommodation, positive conflict, implementation of programmes, promotion of communication, social and psychological benefits and increased political sophistication. In contrast to these proposed outcomes, the fifth year of the IDP was marked by several community and municipality related protests in various provinces. Incidents were reported in the following provinces: Mpumalanga (The Echo, 18 March 2005a; The Echo, 03 June 2005b), North West, and Western Cape (Mail & Guardian, 10 August 2005a), the Free State (Mail & Guardian, 15 August 2005b) and Gauteng (Mail & Guardian 16 August 2005c).

These protests occurred amidst the proposed mechanisms for facilitating interaction between communities and municipalities, including petitions, posing questions to councils, requests and public meetings and forums (Municipal Systems Act, Act No 32 of 2000; Municipal Structures Act, Act No 33 of 2000). It is unclear why protests persist whilst mechanisms for community participation are allegedly in place. It raises the following questions: Do these mechanisms exist only as a policy framework rather than being effectively implemented? Are the mechanisms in place due only to compliance and do local municipalities ignore their community's input in the implementation phase? Why would a community that is recognised as a stakeholder in development and that participates in the planning of its local government demonstrate against its own decisions and thus against itself?

In summary, one of the indicators for the successful implementation of the IDP depends on the participation of the community. Community participation is in line with the developmental approach in social welfare. Protests of communities against local government and service delivery are an indication that the intended mechanisms are either not being utilised to facilitate community participation or that this participation does not make any impact on decisions made by local government. It is thus unclear to what extent the IDP is informed and influenced by the community. The role of the community in the development and implementation of the IDP in relation to what is intended by the Municipal Systems Act (Act No 32 of 2000) and the Municipal Structures Act (Act No 33 of 2000) is thus also uncertain. This study investigated these uncertainties and determined the role of the community in the IDP in influencing decision-making at local government level.

### **1.3 Aim and objectives of the study**

Durrheim (1999a:37) describes the aim or goal of research as the types of conclusions the researcher wishes to reach. The aim of research is, according to

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006: 49), to explore and describe, to discover, explain and generate ideas or theories about the phenomena under investigation, and to understand and explain social patterns.

### **1.3.1 Aim of study**

The aim of this study was to determine the role of community participation in the IDP process of Govan Mbeki Municipality.

### **1.3.2 Objectives of study**

Objectives are described as what the researcher is trying to achieve by a particular course of action. Objectives are based on facts and things that can be seen or measured (*The South African Oxford School Dictionary, 2004*). Objectives are, according to the researcher, specific factors that indicate an action that is required to achieve the aim or goal which was initially set.

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- Contextualisation of the policy framework for IDPs in South Africa.
- Exploration of the nature and extent of community participation during the IDP process, i.e. analysis of community needs, defining local vision and objectives, project design to meet identified needs, integration with other programmes and adoption of the IDP.
- Exploration of decision-making in the process of IDP consultation.
- Proposal of guidelines for the role of the community in participation in order to optimise the success of the IDP in local development.

## **1.4 Research questions**

Owing to the qualitative nature of this research, the study did not make use of a hypothesis (Durrheim 1999a: 39). Rubin and Rubin (2005: 40) describe a

research question as the specific concern that the researcher wants to answer through the project. These authors stress the flexibility that research questions possess and believe that the questions evolve as the researcher pursues new themes that are suggested in the interview. They are thus not restrictive. When formulating research questions in applied social science, Maxwell (1998:82-3) cautions researchers to formulate these questions in particular rather than general terms when the purpose of the study is to understand and improve a situation.

The researcher based the research question in this study on Mohamed's (2000:2) statement that "...while community participation and deepening democracy are often spoken about, strong political leadership to ensure this happens has often been lacking. Building and mobilizing community co-operation and collective action to meet societal problems and enhance the development process have taken a back seat to technocratic approaches focusing on administrative reform."

The research questions that guided the study are as follows:

- *What is the role of community participation in the IDP process in the Govan Mbeki Municipality?*
- *What is the extent of and how effective is community participation in the IDP?*
- *What role does decision making play in the IDP and who are the role players influencing decision making in the IDP?*

## **1. 5 Research approach**

In theory, a distinction is made between two basic research approaches, that is, qualitative and quantitative (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; De Vos, 2002).

The concept "qualitative", according to Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 8), implies an

emphasis on the qualities of entities and on the process and meaning that are not examined or measured in quantity, amount, intensity or frequency. Qualitative researchers, according to these authors, turn the world into representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memoranda. Qualitative researchers emphasise the human factor and the intimate knowledge of the research setting and this gives them information about the social processes in a specific setting (Neuman, 2000:126). Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004:5) add that qualitative research is flexible and, because of its open-ended questions, it allows participants to give their views and hence attempts to understand people from their own frame of reference.

Contrary to the qualitative approach, Cresswell (1998:1-2) defines the quantitative approach as an enquiry into a social or human problem based on testing composed of variables, measured with numbers and analysed with statistical procedures in order to determine whether the predictive generalisation of theory holds true.

Henning *et al.* (2004:6) suggest that one major feature of the qualitative approach is that the researcher attempts to understand people and their actions within their settings, what they feel, what their settings feel like and the significance thereof. As indicated earlier, the IDPs are a fairly new concept in SA and hence the qualitative approach allowed more room for exploration into the subject than a quantitative study.

Qualitative researchers emphasise the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:8). These authors further assert that there are differences in theoretical underpinning and differing views on what counts as valid data. The researcher agrees that contrasts are observable in the data collection methods. Allan (1991:177) notes that the quantitative method follows a systematic and standardised approach

whilst data sources for qualitative research are determined by the information richness of the setting and that types of observations are modified to enrich understanding.

While quantitative researchers are deliberately not concerned about rich description of details because these interrupt the process of developing generalisations, qualitative researchers believe that the rich descriptions of the world are valuable (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 10).

Allan (1991: 181-182) notes the criticism that qualitative approaches face, that is that procedures used to collect data cannot be repeated in all their details. This author, however, contends that qualitative methods are flexible and that the researcher can develop themes among respondents as they emerge without being constrained by the need to adhere rigidly to previously set formulas.

In this study, a qualitative method of enquiry was applied because it allowed the researcher the freedom to explore the role of community participation in the IDP process without the limitations of predetermined answers. Given the limited information on the research topic, a qualitative approach provided more opportunities for exploration. The qualitative approach has, according to the researcher, enhanced the study because it did not limit the respondents' input to a set of predetermined responses.

## **1.6 Type of research**

The ultimate aim of the study, namely to explore the role of community participation in the IDP process, was to solve a problem that has arisen from practice. This type of study forms part of applied research, which is aimed at solving specific policy problems or at helping practitioners accomplish their tasks (Neuman, 2000:24). Durrheim (1999a: 40-41) elaborates that the findings derived from applied research have a practical application and can contribute to practical

issues of problem solving, decision making, policy analysis and community development. The purpose of applied research, according to Durrheim (1999a:41), is to provide information about some social action with the aim of providing decision makers with information which will facilitate decision making.

The Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) devotes both chapters four (4) and five (5) to community participation and the IDP. Despite the mechanisms in place for proactive community participation in the Govan Mbeki Municipality, reactive participation is encountered. This study intended to provide an answer to the extent to which the community participates and ultimately influences decision making in the IDP process of Govan Mbeki Municipality.

## **1.7 Research design and methodology**

In this section, the researcher focused on the research design of the study, the data collection methods and data analysis.

### **1.7.1 Research design**

Research design is “an action plan for getting from here to there, where here may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and there is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions” (Yin, 1994: 19). This author states that the aim of the research design is to guide the investigator through the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting observations.

Babbie (1998:89) identifies two major aspects of research design, namely that first the researcher should specify what needs to be investigated and secondly determine how best to do it. The researcher understands research design as a plan adopted when conducting a study. Durrheim (1999a: 31) explains that, depending on the purpose and orientation of the study, either qualitative, quantitative or a combination of methods may be applied.

In a qualitative study, research designs are more open, fluid and changeable and are not defined in technical terms (Durrheim, 1999a: 31). This implies that the plan of the researcher is not fixed and can change as the research proceeds. According to Fouché (2002: 270), design in a qualitative study does not provide the researcher with a step-by-step plan to follow but is determined by the researcher's choices and actions. In a quantitative study, the research designs are fixed and specified in advance of execution and defined by technical considerations (Fouché, 2002: 270).

The researcher used a qualitative design, which allowed for a more explorative study into the role of community participation in the IDP process. A case study method was followed, the chief purpose of which, according to Babbie (1998:282), is to describe. Yin (1994:13) states that a case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

The study was conducted using a single case study method (that is, the Govan Mbeki IDP process) which implied that the researcher focused on one setting and its processes without comparing it to other settings. According to Henning *et al.* (2004: 41), a case study method is concerned with the process and not the outcome. In this study, the researcher's focus was on the role of community participation in the IDP process.

### **1.7.2 Data collection methods**

In qualitative studies, data collection methods for case studies can rely on many sources. Yin (1994: 78) identifies documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation and physical artifacts. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:3) agree that qualitative research involves the study and use of a

variety of materials with the hope of forming a better understanding of the subject under scrutiny.

In order to explore the role of community participation in the IDP process of Govan Mbeki Municipality, the researcher used two methods of collecting data, namely documentary sources and interviewing. Data collection was divided into two phases. In phase 1 data was collected from existing municipal documents whilst interviews were used in phase 2. The following data collection methods were followed:

### **Phase 1: Documentary sources**

Documentary research is concerned with the use of written records as a source of information (Calvert 1991: 117) and the collection of such records is referred to as archives. Blanche and Durrheim (1999: 153) draw a distinction between letters, newspapers, articles, official documents and books as typical document sources. A further distinction is made between primary and secondary sources, where primary sources refer to documents produced by the people being studied during the time of the study, while secondary documents are those produced after the event (Calvert, 1991:117). Yin (1994:81) attests to the usefulness of documents in verifying correct data such as names; they serve to provide specific details to corroborate information from other sources and they are useful in making inferences. In this study, documented data provided the researcher with insight into the historical or background information concerning public participation in the IDP process in Govan Mbeki Municipality.

McNamara (1998) notes the advantages of using documented data as providing comprehensive and historical information without interrupting a programme or a client's routine in a programme; the information already exists and there are fewer biases about it. Yin (1998:246), however, warns that researchers need to use documents carefully and should not accept them as literal recordings of events that have taken place. The researcher therefore used data emanating

from interviews to corroborate documented data.

The researcher used Govan Mbeki Municipality's records of the IDP document, minutes of meetings with the community, invitations to the various community representations and attendance registers in order to assess the extent to which the community had participated in the IDP process. These documents were not accepted without ascertaining the conditions under which they had been produced and their accuracy (Yin, 1998:247). Calvert (1991: 120) concurs that every source should be assessed with the following questions in mind: Is the document what it purports to be? What is the relation of the author to the event? What is the record trying to show? How representative is the document of the written record? What does the document mean and what is the researcher's relation to the subject?

Information contained in the municipal documents was verified by oral data, which was obtained through interviews.

### **Phase 2: Interviewing**

Qualitative interviews are described as a special kind of knowledge-producing discussion that occurs between two parties (the researcher and the respondent) (Hesse-Biber, & Leavy 2006: 128). In this study, the researcher used interviews to capture the respondent's experience of the IDP process, with particular reference to effective community participation within this process.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with both municipal as well as community-based representatives. Semi-structured interviews are described by Welman and Kruger (1999:167) as interviews falling between the structured (pre-arranged) and the unstructured (spontaneous) interview which may be conducted when respondents come from divergent backgrounds. Semi-structured interviews were conducted through the use of an interview schedule, which Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006: 126) describe as a set of topical areas and

questions that the interviewer brings to the interview. The researcher's purpose for using this interview schedule was that it served to organise and highlight key areas into which the researcher needed to enquire.

The researcher conducted three focus group interviews with each respondent group (that is, the municipal and the community representatives). Saturation of data determined whether there was a need for more interviews. Babbie (1998: 248) attests to the usefulness of focus groups in explorative studies and indicates that a group dynamic helps to bring out aspects that the researcher may not obtain from interviews with individual respondents.

A focus group is a rich discussion which is dynamic and unpredictable and arranged for the purposes of research (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006:126). A focus group is, according to these authors, a dynamic process based on interaction between several people. The researcher perceives the focus group interview method as useful because it allowed the respondents an opportunity to respond in their own words and language, enhancing free speech which could stimulate the production of more data.

All interviews were held at the Govan Mbeki municipal building and were conducted in English and/or Zulu, the languages spoken most commonly in the study area and in which the researcher is fluent. Interviews were tape-recorded to ensure accurate capturing of information. This also provided the researcher with an opportunity to refer to and quote respondents' views verbatim. The researcher's role during the interviews was to facilitate discussions in order to enable production of rich data, to keep respondents focused on the topic and to ensure that the group was not dominated by particular individuals (Neuman, 2000: 274).

### **1.7.3 Data analysis**

Data analysis is the process of moving from raw data to evidence-based interpretations that are the foundation for published reports (Cresswell, 1998: 201). In qualitative studies, the goal of data analysis is to find themes that explain the study. De Vos (2002: 340) describes data analysis as a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data.

#### **1.7.3.1 Analysis of documented or archival data**

Data analysis of documents was conducted using Henning *et al.*'s (2004) method of content analysis. Content analysis is a technique of gathering and analysing the content of text, where content refers to the words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes or any message that can be communicated (Neuman, 2000: 292). Stemler (2001) states that the major benefit of content analysis stems from the fact that it is a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding. This author notes that when used properly, content analysis is a powerful data reduction technique.

According to Henning *et al.* (2004:127), data analysis takes place throughout the data collection process and proceeds through the following phases:

- Familiarisation: the researcher immerses him or herself in the raw data (or typically a pragmatic selection from the data) by listening to tapes, reading transcripts and studying notes in order to list key ideas and recurrent themes.
- Data segments: data is then divided into smaller and more meaningful units. The units are organised into a system derived from the data. This process is described as an inductive analysis (Henning *et al.*, 2004:127).
- Categories: the researcher uses comparisons to build and refine categories, define conceptual similarities and to discover patterns. Categories are flexible and may be modified during the analysis. Henning

*et al.* (2004:127) emphasise that analysis should reflect a respondent's perception.

- Description: to describe means to set out in words, to recite the characteristics of a person, object or event (Henning *et al.*, 2004: 128). According to these authors, description should include information about the context as well as the intentions and meanings that organise action.

Henning *et al.* (2004: 102) argue that qualitative content analysis may lead to superficial and naively realistic findings because it captures what is presumably the "real world" through the eyes of the researcher without interrogating data. In order to address this bias, the researcher used interviews to ascertain and supplement documented facts and record inconsistencies that may have been produced.

### **1.7.3.2 Analysis of interview data**

Data obtained through interviews was analysed using Cresswell's (1998) model that is applicable to analysing case study data. According to this author, data analysis progresses in an analytical circle through five steps. These steps are adapted from Cresswell (1998: 142) and are discussed as follows:

- Managing data: Cresswell (1998: 142) and De Vos (2002: 341) argue that a qualitative study involves an inseparable relationship between data collection and data analysis and that the process of analysis begins as data is collected. Upon collecting the data, the researcher transferred the handwritten notes to electronic data and tapes were translated and transcribed verbatim. In order to obviate bias, the researcher's supervisor examined the contents of the interview data. All data (handwritten and tape-recorded) were stored in files clearly marked with codes known only to the researcher. The researcher kept municipal data separate from community data so as to observe differences in themes that emerged from the two groups.

- Reading and memoranda: following the organisation of data, Cresswell (1998:143) states that the researcher should read the transcript in order to get a sense of the whole database. During the reading process, the researcher's role was to make notes of phrases, key concepts and ideas that emerged.
- Classifying: this requires scrutinising text and qualitative information and searching for categories, themes or dimensions of information.
- Interpretation: interpretation entails making sense of data. Cresswell (1998: 144) states that at this stage, the researcher steps back and forms larger meanings of the situation.
- Representing and visualising: representing is the final phase of data analysis. In this phase, the researcher provided a written account of the phenomenon studied. The findings were presented in text. The representation of data has also provided for the researcher's account of possible personal influence or involvement and how this may have affected data analysis.

Through this process, themes emerged from the data. Where applicable to themes, verbatim quotes were presented to preserve the meaning attached to them. The findings were documented, discussed and verified by the literature.

The researcher concluded the document analysis by comparing and presenting the findings of both data collection methods. The findings were compared to observe the similarities of and discrepancies between documented data and data obtained from the focus groups. A similar comparison was made between findings from the municipal and community respondent groups

## **1.8 Pilot Study**

A pilot study is defined by Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:155) as a small study conducted prior to a larger research study with the purpose of determining whether the methodology, sampling, instruments and analysis are adequate and appropriate to the study. A pilot test is perceived by the researcher as an

opportunity to appraise and adjust the procedures and methodological techniques on a small scale prior to undertaking the main study. The pilot test allowed the researcher to anticipate problems and to take the necessary precautions.

In this study, the purpose of the feasibility study was to establish the amount of time required to facilitate interviews, the procedures to be followed and the understanding and interpretation of the research questions.

The researcher assessed the feasibility of the study by undertaking a pilot study at Govan Mbeki Municipality, where the main study was also conducted. The purpose of conducting both the pilot and the main study at the same municipality was to familiarise the researcher with the conditions under which the main study would be conducted. The criteria for selection of the pilot test respondents were based on their direct involvement in the IDP process from phase 1, where an analysis of local needs and priorities is undertaken, to phase 5 when the IDP is adopted.

Due to the researcher's position as an employee, she had access to both the municipality and the respondents which rendered this study feasible.

### **1.8.1 Testing of Interview Schedule**

According to Van Kammen and Stouthamer-Loeber (1998: 379), it is important for the researcher to know beforehand whether the study will deliver the information he or she is seeking. According to Van Kammen and Stouthamer-Loeber (1998: 379), pre-testing will enable the researcher to understand what preparations should be made prior to undertaking the research. As part of pre-testing, the researcher identified two respondents who work at Govan Mbeki Municipality as well as two representatives from the community-based structures and requested their participation in the pilot project.

Pre-testing focused on the interview schedule and its ability to produce data which would assist the researcher in achieving the objectives of the study. Testing looked to establish the logic of questions, the degree to which the questions were interpreted correctly as well as their simplicity, especially in accommodating community representatives with low levels of education.

Neuman (2000: 241) believes that after a pilot test the researcher should interview the pilot respondents to uncover aspects of the data gathering tool that need refinement. The pilot test permitted the respondents to comment on the manner in which interviews were conducted and valuable comments with regard to interpretation of questions asked were recorded, discussed with the researcher's supervisor and used to make the necessary adjustments to the interview schedule.

### **1.8.2 Reliability and Validity**

Durrheim (1999b:88) defines reliability as the dependability of a measurement instrument, that is, the extent to which the instrument yields the same results on repeated trials. Delport (2002:169) concurs that reliability is primarily not concerned with what is being measured but rather with how well it is being measured. This author goes on to say that reliability refers to whether a measuring instrument is consistent or stable and whether it measures exactly the same way each time it is used.

According to Durrheim (1999a: 46), qualitative researchers reject reliable, objective measures as invalid and argue that social phenomena are context-dependent and that the meaning of whatever it is that the researcher is investigating depends on the particular situation an individual finds him or herself in. In as far as validity is concerned, Durrheim (1999a: 46) notes that qualitative researchers regard information as being valid according to the degree to which

the researcher can produce observations that are believable to him or herself, the subjects being studied and the eventual readers of the study.

In this study, the researcher regarded data as valid when collected information produced similar themes and sub-themes. Those themes that were unique and inconsistent have been recorded and reported as such.

## **1.9 Research Population, Sample and Sampling Methods**

In this section, the researcher discusses the population and sampling techniques that were used in the study.

### ***1.9.1 Universe and population***

Strydom and Venter (2002:198) define a universe as all potential subjects who possess the attributes in which the researcher is interested. In this case, Gert Sibande District Municipality together with all seven municipalities (that is, Albert Luthuli, Dipaleseng, Govan Mbeki, Mkhondo, Msukaligwa, Lekwa and Pixley Ka Seme) in its jurisdiction constituted a universe for the study. A population, on the other hand, limits the boundaries of the study unit to those who possess specific characteristics (Strydom & Venter, 2002:198). In this case, the population referred to Govan Mbeki Municipality, one of the municipalities that had encountered riots in the past few months.

### ***1.9.2 Sample and sampling method***

A sample is defined by Seaberg, as cited by Strydom and Venter (2002:199), as a small portion of the total set of objectives, events or persons that together comprise the subject of the study. A sample represents a portion of the population which forms part of a study. Random sampling is the method of

selecting a portion or sample of a population in such a way that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected (Kerlinger, 1986: 110).

The purpose of a sample is to collect specific cases, events, or actions that can clarify and deepen understanding (Neuman, 2000). This author further states that qualitative researchers tend to use non-probability samples which means that they rarely determine the sample size in advance and have limited knowledge about the larger group or population from which the sample is taken.

In this study, the researcher had two respondent groups which were selected as follows:

- Selection of Municipal respondent group

According to Vilakazi (2005), a representative from Govan Mbeki Municipality, key people in the IDP process of the municipality were the six (6) Heads of Department: Finance, Technical and Engineering, Environmental and Tourism, Public Safety, Health and Community Service as well as Corporate Service; the Political representative; Ward Councillors; the Office of the Speaker and the Chief Community Developer.

In relation to the above list, the researcher used stratified sampling through a simple random method. Strydom and Venter (2002: 205) support the suitability of stratified sampling for heterogeneous populations and where inclusion of small subgroups is to be ensured. It should be noted that three of the five strata described above, i.e. the Political representative, Office of the Speaker and the Chief Community Developer, consisted of only one representative and hence were automatically included in the sample. Of the six heads of departments, two representatives and three Ward Councillors were targeted for selection for the study. Selection of the municipal representatives was limited to those who participated directly in all the IDP processes while selection of councillors was based on those wards, which encountered protests.

- Sampling of community respondent group

Community participation in the Govan Mbeki IDP process was realised by invitation from the municipality to the various community structures which constitute the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), business forum, stakeholder forum, youth groups, churches and the women's forum (Vilakazi, 2005). Respondents were selected using a systematic sampling method which is a sample constructed by selecting every *kth* element in the sampling frame; it is useful when cases of the population are ordered or grouped on a list (Bailey, 1994:90). The municipal attendance register was used to randomly select between six and eight respondents from the community-based structure. The criterion used for selection of community representatives was whether they had taken part in the IDP process.

When selecting the sample, the researcher considered issues of representivity in the group by way of gender, age and race, however, where dominance of any form existed, this was acknowledged by the researcher.

#### **1.10. Ethical Issues**

In order to prevent harm to the subjects and to obviate bias, the researcher abided by the ethical guidelines that seek to avoid harm to the respondents or to the organisations.

According to Strydom (2002: 62), “[e]thics are a set of moral principles that are suggested by an individual or group, are subsequently widely accepted, and offer rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students.” To ensure that the researcher remains ethical at all times, Sieber (1998: 128) suggests that an investigation into the perspectives and cultures of the participants and their community early in the process of research design is important to avoid violating their needs and interests.

In order to ensure that the researcher's actions are deemed ethical, subjects must provide informed consent to participate (Henning *et al.*, 2004: 73). According to Henning *et al.*, (2004: 73) participants' informed consent is required at two levels, namely the utilisation of the research findings and their privacy and sensitivity and how these will be protected.

The researcher obtained permission from Govan Mbeki Municipality to conduct the study (**see Appendix 2**). The request for permission indicated the need to interview respondents from the municipality as well as to access municipal documents that bear relevance to the study. Upon approval of the research proposal, the researcher provided the municipality with the procedures of the study. This included the list of documents that were required for the study.

Once respondents had been identified, permission for participation was requested from them via a letter explaining the purpose of the study, the data gathering methods, including the use of tape recorders, as well as how information obtained would be used (**see Appendix 3**). Once the respondents had granted their permission, they were requested to sign a consent form which has also highlighted their right to withdraw from the study at any time if they so wished (**see Appendix 4**).

Another key ethical consideration crucial to research is that of privacy and confidentiality and anonymity (Babbie, 1998: 440; Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999:68). Anonymity is the inability to identify a respondent from a given response (Babbie, 1998: 440). In this study, the researcher kept the respondents' identities anonymous in that only views expressed by the respondents were shared and nothing about their identity.

Confidentiality means that information may have names attached to it but that the researcher holds it in confidence or keeps it secret, away from the public. Information is not released in a way that permits the linking of specific individuals to responses (Neuman, 2000:99). To assure confidentiality, Babbie (1998: 441)

recommends that the researcher should undertake not to reveal information that might expose the identity of a respondent. Durrheim (1999b:68) advocates that respondents should be informed of the parameters of the information to be provided and that they should be told how data will be recorded, stored and processed for release.

The researcher emphasised that the information provided was confidential and that respondents' names would not be mentioned in the research report or later publications. Information collected from the study will be stored in files and on tapes which are kept confidential and then destroyed after 15 years.

Upon completion of the study, the researcher forwarded the findings and, where possible, discussed them with the municipality. The researcher has made the findings known to all participants in the study and has not limited them to the municipality only. Since this study aimed to explore the role of community participation in the IDP process, the researcher was mindful of the possibility of the findings being used to put pressure on either the municipality or the community and hence the researcher, before conducting the study, came to consensus with the parties on the method(s) of releasing the findings.

## **1.11 Definition of Key Concepts**

In this section, the researcher provides various scholarly viewpoints on the key concepts reflected in the research topic and indicates how the respective concepts have been used in the study.

### ***1.11.1 Development***

Liebenberg and Theron (1997:124) describe development as a process of empowerment, which enables participants to assume greater control over their lives as individuals and as members of society. According to these authors,

development aims to increase the personal and institutional capacities of communities in order to mobilise and manage resources towards meeting basic needs.

The Municipal Systems Act (Act of 2000) defines “development” as sustainable development, and includes integrated social, economic, environmental, spatial, infrastructural, institutional, organisational and human resources upliftment of a community aimed at (1) improving the quality of life of its members with specific reference to the poor and other disadvantaged sections of the community; and (2) ensuring that development serves present and future generations.

Davids (2005:27) argues that meaningful development is about understanding people in their holistic context, which includes the economic, political, social, cultural, psychological and environmental background.

In the context of this study, development referred to attempts by local government together with the community to address the needs of the people, helping people meet their own needs and ensuring an improvement in their conditions of living physically, economically, socially and politically.

### ***1.11.2 Community participation***

Concerning public participation, Makgoba and Ababio (2004: 273) note that the concept has a variety of meanings. On one hand it describes the relationship between local government and the community, while on the other it describes the extent to which the community influences decisions that affect their wellbeing. Community participation entails the involvement of the community in the planning process of the municipality to ensure that such participation results in a meeting of their human needs.

Fox and Meyer (1995:20) define community participation as “the involvement of citizens in a wide range of administrative policy-making activities including the

determination of levels of service, budget priorities, and the acceptability of physical construction projects in order to orient government programmes toward community needs, build public support and encourage a sense of cohesiveness within society". Thus, community participation transcends the mere involvement of citizens as the beneficiaries of development but aims to involve them actively in the decision-making process.

Theron (2005a:114) cites the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs' (1963) definition of the linkage between public participation and development as the process by which governmental authorities attempt to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress. This complex process is made up of two essential elements: the participation of the people themselves in efforts to improve their standard of living, with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative; and the provision of technical and other services in ways which encourage initiative, self-help and mutual help in order to make these more effective.

In this study, participation referred to community contributions to the IDP, involvement in decision making, identifying priorities and broadly the ability to influence decisions and to object where different opinions are held. Participation in this study went beyond the physical presence of community representatives at meetings and hence focused on the extent of the effect that local people have on the IDP process.

### ***1.11.3 Role of community participation***

Fagence (1977: 129) remarks that in order to constitute validity, participation must involve positive conscious action: mere membership of society or an interest in politics with or without political allegiances does not in itself constitute participation. In order for participation to be maximised, the role of the community needs to be clearly defined. Without a clear understanding of when and what is

expected from the community, their participation may remain elusive and hence become less meaningful and ineffective. Community participation should not be seen as a process that “rubber stamps” pre-determined agendas or merely ends up in an information providing session to the developers but should advance the interests of the community. By working together and awarding clear responsibilities to the community, their participation will not only foster democracy but will also assist in measuring and reviewing its impact against clearly stipulated targets.

Community participation should ultimately lead to the promotion of community empowerment and solidarity (Mayo & Graig, 1995: 4) and this can only take place when the community’s role transcends ad hoc participation. Gonzalez (1998: 22) makes a distinction between the two roles that the community can adopt in its participation. First, passive participation through which the beneficiaries and the communities are present during discussions although their presence carries no weight. This type of participation assumes that the community’s role is to absorb what has been discussed and thus participation does not demonstrate anything significant that could lead to the growth of the participants. The second type is active participation in which there is involvement of the community in discussions, decision making and contesting different opinions. This participation signifies a role in which the community and the developer are on equal footing and one where there is mutual recognition and understanding of each other’s role.

Within the context of development which seeks not only to improve the surroundings in which people live but also the lives of those who live within these surroundings, it becomes crucial that the role played by stakeholders during developments should be examined. For the purposes of this study, the role of the community referred to the actions, functions and responsibilities performed by the community during the IDP process.

#### **1.11.4 Integrated Development Plan (IDP)**

The White Paper on Local Government (1998) describes the IDP as one of the key tools local government has in coping with its new developmental role. As the IDP is a legislative requirement it has a legal status and it supercedes all other plans that guide development at local government level (Department of Provincial and Local Government: 2000). Section 35 of the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) describes an IDP as a guide that informs all planning, budgeting, management and decision making in a municipality. An IDP implies participative planning and, in particular, planning with a range of institutions in civil society.

In this study, an IDP referred to both the process and the product of an interaction between the community and local government. As a process, the IDP referred to the steps undertaken by the municipality in engaging with the public in setting goals that guide the priorities of the municipality. The IDP document was regarded by the researcher as a product that had been agreed on by various role players in the consultation process with the municipality.

Ineffective planning through the IDP can result in poor participation and this may result in planning that is not responsive to the needs of the people. For participation to occur, it must be planned for. In the context of development, planning and participation become two inseparable concepts. Theron and Barnard (1997: 36) are of the view that development planning consists of two components which reinforce one another, namely development and planning. The IDP provides a framework for participation to be institutionalised and without such a framework, efforts to engage the community cannot succeed.

#### **1.12 Limitations of the study**

Within the context of this research, the researcher identified two limitations of the study, namely:

1. For reasons beyond the researcher's control (see 3.2.4) the study was conducted with a limited number of municipal respondents and, in addition the, municipality's senior management, i.e. Head of Departments, were not represented. This resulted in one focus group being conducted with only two members (see 3.2.4) which could have impacted on obtaining enriched data in that specific group.
2. Community respondents represented only the black population and in particular the more 'poor blacks' of one municipality. These findings can therefore not be generalised to other blacks who may live in affluent areas nor be generalised to other race groups. Community participation is a cornerstone of the IDP and should not be interpreted as only benefiting "poor blacks".

### **1.13 Contents of the research report**

This study consists of four chapters which are outlined as follows:

Chapter 1: General orientation to the study including the problem statement, goals and objectives of the study, the research question and research methodology, the ethical aspects, key concepts and the limitations of the study.

Chapter 2: Overview of IDP and theoretical framework for community participation in development.

Chapter 3: Empirical study, research findings and interpretation of data.

Chapter 4: Conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **A PARTICIPATORY INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENTAL PLAN (IDP)**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The introduction of a democratic government in South Africa brought with it calls from political office bearers for public participation in public affairs (Masango 2002:52). These calls were, according to the author, accompanied by the promulgation of legislation, which encouraged public participation in governance and policy making. Decentralisation of governance in South Africa was intended to ensure that both government and the community grew closer to each other. Gonzalez (1998:10) argues that decentralising functions increases officials' knowledge and sensitivity to local problems and needs.

Sub-section 103(1) of the SA Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) made provision for the demarcation of the country into nine provinces namely, Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, Limpopo, North West and the Western Cape. The South African constitution (Act 108 of 1996) has also allowed for the establishment of local government through municipalities so as to ensure greater participation, interaction and response to local needs. Davids and Maphunye (2005:59) assert that local government is well positioned to play a meaningful role by ensuring that local people are at the centre of local development initiatives.

In Chapter 1:1 (page 5) it was argued that in order for development to address the needs of the community, communities have to play a role in the process. If the community is to play a role, it is important to identify what constitutes a community and what its role in this process should be. In order to answer these questions, this chapter provides a theoretical overview of issues of community participation and how these apply to the South African local government system. Within the framework of community participation, the background and context

within which local government operates in South Africa, including the legislative developments and requirements that call for a participatory process, will be discussed. An overview of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) as a strategic document and process enabling community participation will be presented as a tool that enables interaction with the community on issues of development. As a point of departure, community participation and how it relates to the IDP will be conceptualised. This chapter will conclude by highlighting some of the challenges facing the application of community participation within the context of development.

## **2.2 Conceptualizing community participation**

Community participation currently constitutes an important element of the South African government's policy on integrated development planning in local government (van Rooyen, 2003:126). As already indicated, through the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000), the IDP makes provision for municipal planning to take into consideration the views of local people.

There is, however, no universal agreement on the conceptualisation of community participation. Different authors interpret community participation differently and without laying its foundation it could remain illusive. Community participation is made up of two concepts, i.e. "community" and "participation" which are discussed respectively.

### **2.2.1. Community**

Although the concept of community is widely used, Midgley (1986a: 24) asserts that the term is applied loosely to denote a socio-spatial entity and that authorities do not seek to define it.

When defining a community, Lombard (1992: 62-67) and Fellin (1995:3-5) make a distinction between three categories of communities. They are:

- Geographic communities, which refer to all the individuals, machines and institutions that are geographically distributed within a specific boundary. These communities are subjects of an aerial view.
- Geographical-functional communities are the different parts or fragments of a geographical community in interaction. The essential characteristic of this type of community is the structure of the relationship between these communities that arises from the basis of commonality, but is still contained within a certain geographical boundary.
- Functional communities are the third type of community, which stress common life amongst the members. Functional communities are not based on geographic boundaries but are tied mainly by common interests such as spirituality or personal interest.

Although these three distinct features of communities are identified independently, they exist concurrently and alongside each other. In practice, the researcher experiences that the concept “community” is often used as a way of evoking feelings of closeness, working togetherness and warmth that exist between people of different backgrounds: however, not all communities are like this. In reality, communities are divided by elements such as race, gender, ethnicity, culture and spirituality. Even where there is agreement about a community problem, there may be differences regarding how it should be solved. This is because a community is made up of individuals who are not alike in totality.

Tshikwatamba (2004: 257) highlights some of the elements that contribute to community solidarity and defines a community as “a cluster of people living together and sharing common cultures and values”. This author emphasises the importance of culture and values as indicators of who will be accepted as a member of the community. Tshikwatamba (2004: 268) notes that aspects of common culture and values were placed at the periphery by colonialists but that in the African communities they are of primary importance. The researcher

agrees that the sharing of common cultures and values plays a crucial part in development and hence the IDP process. This is so because the IDP process calls for agreement on a common vision and where common values exist consensus on priorities might seem more straightforward than when communities are diverse.

In relation to local government, a community is a body of persons comprising (a) the residents of the municipality; (b) the ratepayers of the municipality; (c) any civic organisations and non-governmental private sector or labour organisations or bodies which are involved in local affairs within the municipality and (d) visitors and other people residing outside the municipality who, because of their presence in the municipality, make use of services or facilities provided by the municipality. These include, more specifically, the poor and other disadvantaged sections of such a body of persons (Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000). Drawing on this definition, the concept “community” describes the relationship between people who utilise common resources as well as their involvement in the affairs of the municipality. This relationship occurs within the geographic boundaries of a municipality.

It has been noted that in the South African context ward committees are the most applied method of ensuring community participation in issues of local government. The White Paper on Local Government (1998) defines wards as geographical areas into which a municipality is divided for purposes of elections. It must be noted that this system is not solely designated for elections but for IDP purposes and any other purpose that relates to community issues such as meetings.

As indicated in Chapter 1, for the purpose of this study, a community refers to a group of people living in the same area (ward) which interacts with each other on a regular basis on issues of local concern to that specific area.

### **2.2.2 Participation**

One of the cornerstones of democracy is the participatory decision making process which is required by those who are in government. As with a community, participation does not have a universally acceptable definition although there is some understanding of what it entails. The United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution 1929 (LVIII) in Midgley (1986a:25) states that participation requires the voluntary and democratic involvement of people in (a) contributing to the development effort, (b) sharing equitably in the benefits derived therefrom and (c) decision making in respect of setting goals, formulating policies and planning and implementing economic and social development programmes.

The IDP creates a platform from which local participation as well as the meeting of basic needs should take place.

Participation is described in relation to issues of power. For instance, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (in Pearse and Stiefel, 1979:8) views participation as:

the organized effort to increase control over resources and regulate institutions by groups and movements of those excluded from such control.

As can be seen from this definition, participation does not happen haphazardly; it is an organised process, which means that there should be drivers to ensure that the process does not become limited or dominated by a certain fraction of a group. It includes the process of deciding on how resources will be used. This definition is useful in the context of the IDP since the community's participation should inform the allocation of resources.

Participation is also defined as a by-product of empowerment. Blackburn and Holland (1998:3) state that

participation is a way of viewing the world and acting in it. It [participation] is about a commitment to help create the conditions, which can lead to a significant empowerment of those who at present have little control over the forces that condition their lives.

There are different levels or phases of participation. Participation is not static but progressive and hence moves from one level to another. Narayan (1995:22) captures this view when defining participation as “the extent to which beneficiaries are involved in information sharing, consultation, decision making and initiating action in the programme activities”. This means that participation can move from a simple process of sharing information with the planners to a level where the community engages in discussions and ultimately participates as decision makers. Thus, the level of the community’s participation will determine the role it plays in the process.

Participation should not be seen merely as a technique to perpetuate institutional forces, it should be understood in the light of the social, economic and political contexts within which it occurs. Understanding these contexts is crucial especially in the milieu of the IDP because it seeks to address developmental needs in a holistic manner. The influence of, for instance, the political environment on the social aspects should also be understood when calling for participation. For instance, through political participation which Dye (1997,91) defines as “people running for and winning public office, participating in marches, attending political meetings, speeches and rallies, writing letters to public officials and newspapers, wearing a political button or placing a bumper sticker on a car, belonging to or attempting to influence friends while discussing candidates or issues, voting in elections or merely following an issue or a campaign in the media” people demonstrate their political participation which can be mobilised to address social or economic needs. Therefore, in order to understand participation, it is equally important to understand the context within which it takes place.

In view of what participation entails, it is worth noting that the concept not only implies the act of doing something but may also be demonstrated by way of not responding when it is expected. An example of this was demonstrated by the community of Khutsong which decided in February 2006 to withdraw their participation in the 2006 local government elections (Mail & Guardian, 19 February, 2006). In the context of Khutsong, participation was about the poor uniting to defend common interests and challenge the structures which kept them in poverty (Shepherd, 1998:181-182). In such a case, participation affords people the opportunity to defend what they perceive as their interest. Although this participation is a conscious decision taken to jeopardise a process which is highly dependent upon the views of the community, it does not contribute constructively to the development process. Makgoba and Ababio (2004:274-5) agree that participatory governance should complement the political leadership of a municipality and not impede its ability to govern effectively. This implies that although political participation is within the legal rights of any community, it should not be aimed at disrupting municipal processes but rather at strengthening them.

Oakley (1991:4) assert that participation cannot be merely proclaimed or wished upon, it starts with recognising the powerful, multi-dimensional and in many instances, anti-participatory forces that dominate the lives of the people because such forces will not disappear overnight. Midgley (1986b: 158) concurs when stating that “the idealism and rhetoric of the concept of authentic participation needs to be tempered with a realistic assessment of the possible”. This author further argues: “[i]f the critical problems of mass poverty and deprivation in the Third World are to be dealt with, concerted action by the state will be needed. Local people do not have the resources to solve these problems through their own efforts alone ... Participation is highly desirable but the poor cannot survive on rhetoric and idealism” (Midgley, 1986b: 158–9).

Community participation in the IDP requires constant communication between the community and the municipality so that assumptions and unrealistic expectations can be dispelled. Participation can be improved by establishing clear mechanisms that will transform the structures in which ordinary people participate. This transformation should happen on both municipal and community levels. Without investing in strengthening participation, the process might be hijacked by the community leaders and or the elites who will ensure that only their needs are met.

In this section, it has been argued that participation of the people who are affected by development in general is very important for achieving the goals of the IDP. Development occurs in communities and therefore communities within their geographical boundaries, as opposed to individual community members, should be engaged as active partners in the IDP. The next section will contextualise the issue more specifically and further explore what “community participation” entails.

### ***2.2.3 Community participation***

Fox and Meyer (1995:20) define community participation as “the involvement of citizens in a wide range of administrative policy-making activities including the determination of levels of service, budget priorities, and the acceptability of physical construction projects in order to orient government programmes toward community needs, build public support and encourage a sense of cohesiveness within society”. This conceptualisation denotes the involvement of the community in processes that determine the agenda and focus of development.

Community participation, according to Freysen (1998:249), constitutes “the involvement of the community in a wide range of administrative policy-making activities, including the determination of levels of services, budget priorities and other issues that affect the welfare of the community”. Community participation goes beyond simply accepting governance without engaging in decisions made

by that government and hence it requires the community to take an active part in the processes that aim to shape their surroundings.

Van Rooyen (2003:135) agrees that in order for community participation to succeed, a working relationship between all stakeholders in local government should be established. He further asserts that participation should move beyond “mere” demands associated with protesting politics by incorporating a more involved and participatory role. Against this background, Midgley (1986b:158-9) calls for a more realistic and appropriate concept of participation based on a closer relationship between the state and civil society.

Midgley (1986a:29) believes that a major element in the promotion of community participation is the notion of institutional building. This author states that “community participation denotes the creation of procedures for democratic decision making at the local level and the involvement of people in these procedures to the extent that they regard them as a normal way of conducting community affairs” (Midgley, 1986a:29).

Oakley (1991:9) provides a summary of community participation as a means of empowering people by facilitating the development of their skills and abilities, thus enabling them to negotiate with the development delivery system and or equipping them to make their own decisions in terms of their development, needs and reality. From this conceptualisation, it can be concluded that community participation involves the establishment of decision making bodies that are represented by and accessible to the local communities.

On the practice of involving local people in issues of governance, the researcher has experienced that a distinction is made between community participation and public participation. Although these concepts are interrelated and are sometimes used interchangeably, they are clearly distinct, as will be indicated next.

#### **2.2.4 Public participation**

Makgoba and Ababio (2004; 273) note that public participation describes the relationship between local government and the community on the one hand, while on the other, it describes the extent to which the community influences decisions that affect their well being. Makgoba and Ababio's definition point to the importance of the relationship between those who are being governed and those who govern and agreeing on the terms on which that governance will be based. Davids and Maphunye (2005: 61) emphasise the significance of public participation as the defining feature of the new local government system, without which democracy may not be achieved.

Brynard, as cited by Masango (2002:55), states that public participation provides a mechanism for democratising the planning process and, in particular, the public management process, to the extent that public participation in local government affairs is considered as a democratic right. Within the new South Africa, participation of local people is beginning to be seen as the right to become involved in decision making that affects their lives. The IDP provides an opportunity for communities to exercise this democratic right.

Unlike community participation, public participation involves the broader public that is not bound by geographic location or the sharing of values. Participation on this level is open to anyone and affects the public as a whole. For instance, participating in national policies will ultimately affect the broader masses whilst participation in local government policies will be binding specifically to those living in that particular geographic area.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher will refer to the involvement of the community in the IDP process as community participation due to the focus of the study on Govan Mbeki, which is a geographical community. It should be kept in mind that the notion of participation in the affairs of local government came into

being with the introduction of a democratic government, during the apartheid regime community participation was not legislated.

### **2.3 Background of community participation in local government**

Policy making during the apartheid era excluded the majority of ordinary people and hence public policy reflected a minority perspective (Arko–Cobah 2002:54). Apartheid policies deprived SA of a history of good public participation in the making and implementation of policies (Masango 2002:52). Masango (2002:52) further asserts, “black South African citizens who constitute the majority of South Africa’s population were not given an opportunity to participate in general elections or to contribute to the making and implementation of policies that affected them”. This resulted in the majority of black communities remaining undeveloped and deprived of resources. Atkinson (1992: 11) agrees that the establishment of local government along racial lines violated the principle of equal treatment.

Makgoba and Ababio (2004:277) point out that even after the introduction of the first black municipalities in 1980, black communities had no say in matters of governance and could not elect their own municipal representatives. In an effort to transform the apartheid government and ensure that the voices of the ordinary people were heard, black people united to confront opposition. Black South Africans who were eager to participate in public affairs perceived the system to be undemocratic and these perceptions led to anger and frustration which manifested itself in boycotts and protests against public policies (Masango, 2002: 54). The researcher is of the view that through the use of boycotts and protests, the community demonstrated rejection of a system which had been imposed from above and one in which they had no say. Thus, protests were used as mechanisms to mobilise support and confront forces that were perceived as unacceptable.

Post 1994 the effects of the apartheid government became increasingly evident in the economic, social, physical, environmental and financial disproportions between the different race groups. Section A of the WPLG (1998) describes these circumstances as follows:

- Skewed settlement patterns.
- Extreme concentrations of taxable economic resources in formerly white areas, demanding redistribution between and within local areas.
- Huge backlogs in service infrastructure in historically underdeveloped areas.
- Viable municipal institutions did not exist in dense rural settlements.
- Great spatial separations and disparities between towns and townships and urban sprawl.
- Municipal institutions which recognised the linkages between urban and rural settlements were absent.
- Entrenched modes of decision making, administration and delivery inherited from municipalities geared for the implementation of urban and rural apartheid.
- Inability to leverage private sector resources for development due to a breakdown in the relationship between capital markets and municipalities, the lack of a municipal bond market and the poor credit worthiness of many municipalities.
- Substantial variations in capacity, with some municipalities having little or no pre-existing institutional foundations to build on.
- The need to rebuild relations between municipalities and the local communities they served.

The enormity of these circumstances is such that the role of local government now needs to stretch beyond the traditional function associated with infrastructure development to addressing social and economic development. Municipalities are therefore expected to adopt programmes that will not only enhance infrastructure development, but will also strive to bring about social upliftment and contribute positively to the lives of the people. Again, communities have to be economically affected by the business of the municipality.

It is argued that one of the things that will enable a municipality to respond to the needs of its people is working closely with its communities. This implies that communities should play a role in the planning and functioning of local municipalities so that they can actively influence decisions that will affect them.

This view is echoed by the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) which calls for a government that will respond to the needs of the people and hence, the developmental approach. As outlined in chapter 1:1 (page 8) the goal of the developmental approach is to re-orientate local government to being creative and strategic in developing its local people. The Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) captures this view when stating that “local government should become more strategic, visionary and influential in the way it operates and given that it is uniquely placed to analyse the dynamics within communities and ensure that those who were historically excluded and marginalized, can become dynamic, equal participants in community transformation and democratization”.

Transformation of the local government is in line with good governance. Section 152 of the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) spells out the objective of local government as providing a democratic and accountable government to the local communities. Zybrands (2001:216) agrees that ways and means should be established for the broader public to provide input to those who govern and for the Municipal Council to account to its electorate on a regular basis. The relationship between the municipality and the community has been legislated not only for transformation purposes but also to ensure that through policies,

government will be responsive to the needs of the people. The development of legislation is crucial for participatory governance because it is an indication of political commitment which is necessary for both transformation and enforcement, as will be discussed in the next section.

## **2.4 Legislative framework for participatory governance**

Under the previous government, it was customary for a Municipal Council to govern without necessarily going back to the electorate. Under the present government, section 152 (1)(e) of the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) states that one of the objectives of local government is to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government. Section 195 (1)(e) further states that the people's needs must be responded to and that the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making. This is suggestive of a continuous interaction between policy makers and those affected by it.

As far as development and community participation are concerned, the RDP states: "Development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry. It is about active involvement and growing empowerment of the people in shaping their own environment and future. Active community participation and representatives are key ingredients for the development of strong effective and stable institutions" (ANC, 1994:5).

The Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) requires of every municipality to develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory government. A municipality is encouraged to create conditions for local communities to participate in the preparation, implementation and review mechanisms, processes and procedures provided for in the legislation.

The Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) has identified four levels at which citizen participation is required by the municipality, namely:

- As voters – to ensure maximum democratic accountability of the elected political leadership for the policies they are empowered to promote.
- As citizens who express, via different stakeholder associations, their views before, during and after the policy development process in order to ensure that policy reflects community preferences as far as possible.
- As consumers and end-users, who expect value for money, affordable service and courteous and responsive service.
- As organised partners involved in the mobilisation of resources for development via for-profit businesses, non-governmental organisations and community-based institutions.

The researcher construes from the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) that community participation is required at the political, public, economic and social levels.

Section 17(1) of the Municipal System Act (Act 32 of 2000) calls for participation in the IDP process by the community. Such participation must take place through:

- Political structures for participation in terms of the Municipal Structures Act (Act No 33 of 2000).
- The mechanisms, processes and procedures for participation in municipal governance established in terms of this Act.
- Other appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures established by the municipality.
- Councillors.
- Generally applying the provisions for participation as provided for in the Act.

The municipality must establish forums where the community can participate and provide meaningful input. The manner in which the municipality establishes its mechanisms to enable participation is a key factor in the role of community participation in the IDP process. For instance, if there are no systems and structures to accommodate illiterate groups, views and expectations from these groups may not be captured and this may cause bias. Schwartz and Deruyttere (1996:12) agree that when community consultation is not handled properly, resources may be captured by the elites. Mechanisms for participation should therefore be inclusive and accommodate all members of the community, including both the poorest and their leaders.

The adoption of a developmental approach at local government level is a model that moves away from merely rendering services to the people, to engaging directly and purposefully with the people in planning how resources should be allocated. Section B of the WPLG (1998) outlines the developmental role of local government:

[I]n future, developmental local government should play a central role in representing our communities, protecting our human rights and meeting our basic needs. It must focus its efforts and resources on improving the quality of life of our communities especially those members and groups within communities that are most often marginalized or excluded, such as women, disabled people and very poor people.

The Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) identifies the IDP as one of the developmental tools of a local government which will enable the municipality to deal effectively and strategically with challenges within its area.

## **2.5 An Overview of the IDP**

Within the context of local government, an IDP is adopted as a principal strategic planning instrument, and should guide the use of resources within a municipality.

Given the limited financial resources available in SA, it is important to ensure that such resources are used in a strategic and sustainable manner. Section 35 of the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) emphasises that the IDP should provide a guide and inform all planning, budgeting, management and decision making within a municipality. Planning, according to Conyers and Hills (1990:62), is “a continuous process which involves making decisions about alternative ways of using available resources to achieve particular goals at some time in the future”. Thus, the IDP should act to inform how resources will be allocated in addressing the needs of the people.

In terms of the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) an IDP is a binding document to which every municipality must give effect, conducting its affairs in a manner which is consistent to this document’s content. The Act further outlines that once a new municipal Council has been established, it should adopt its strategic plan (IDP) which will be effective for a period of five years. The performance of the IDP must be annually reviewed by the municipal Council in conjunction with the community, in terms of Section 34 and 41 of the Municipal System Act (Act 32 of 2000) and, if need be, the Council should introduce changes in accordance with the IDP process (Section 34). The IDP therefore needs to be reviewed in terms of its achievements and failures and new plans for the future should be determined based on this status. Theron (2005b: 135) describes an IDP as a plan that supersedes all other plans that guide development at local government level.

Contrary to Theron’s views, the researcher argues that once the IDP has been adopted, it becomes a policy document, which outlines how a developmental approach should unfold. This policy document highlights the role players and outlines procedures to be followed in order to make it a legal policy document. Like any other policy, the researcher further argues that the IDP should be evaluated against its objectives. If the IDP is not accepted as a policy, mechanisms to establish its effectiveness cannot be established.

The Municipal Systems Bill (Bill 27 of 2000) states that the process of preparing, adopting and reviewing an IDP should be underpinned by the following principles, which imply that it should:

- Be set out in writing and formally adopted by the Municipal Council.
- Only be adopted after the local community has been properly consulted.
- Be in accordance with a predetermined programme specifying time frames for the various steps in the process.
- Be structured to allow for the community to be consulted on its development needs and priorities and to participate in the drafting of the IDP.
- Allow for identification of and consultation with other role players in the drafting of the IDP.
- Provide for the identification of all plans and planning requirements binding on the municipality in terms of national and provincial legislation.

Section B (3.1) of the WPLG (1998) notes that in order to develop the IDP, a municipality together with the community must assess its current social, economic and environmental reality and this will illuminate the gaps and priorities in its area. In order to do so, it should:

- Determine community needs through close consultation.
- Develop a vision for development in the area.
- Prioritise needs and development of frameworks, goals and strategies to meet these needs.
- Implement and monitor projects and programmes to measure their impact.

There are three key elements to the IDP: that is, it is holistic, multi-sectoral and it entails a consultative process. These elements will be discussed next.

### **2.5.1 IDP as a holistic approach**

In defining the integrated approach to development planning, Theron (2005b: 138) demonstrate the evolution of thinking that has led to development becoming increasingly interdisciplinary, drawing on expertise from various fields and merging skills from the “hard” and “soft” sciences. These authors describe the IDP approach as a long overdue marriage of experts from the physical and behavioural sciences. They further assert that an absence of such a marriage is the cause of planning failures. The IDP perspective is based on the notion of a holistic approach to planning. Kotze (1997:11) describes the integrated nature of development problems and the holistic approach to development as part of a shift in development thinking. Kotze and Kotze (1997: 63) argue that “the way of thinking about the development problems and their solutions is part of the problem” and these authors call for a shift to new ways of understanding, engaging with and intervening in communities.

Kotze (1997:11) identifies four fields that have reshaped development thinking post the failures of development initiations since the Second World War as (a) the integrated nature of the development process, (b) the holistic approach towards development thinking (c) and the importance of context for understanding development issues and (d) the relationship between development and the environment. These elements reflect the integrated and holistic approach which is crucial to the successful implementation of the IDP. Backlog in service delivery in the majority of the so-called black settlements is of such a nature that a range of services (such as water supply, roads, hospitals and sanitation) needs to be addressed simultaneously. Atkinson (1992:33) calls for programmes that will ensure that development is holistic. Thus the holisms of the IDP should transcend the merger between technical and non-technical services but also include programmes that address a range of services together (Atkinson, 1992:33). This holism is essential when developing the IDP.

The requirement of developing an IDP is perceived by Houston *et al.* (2000:75) as a fundamental departure from the previous apartheid regime. These authors argue that the attitude to development is the basis upon which the IDP is centred and this is confirmed by the transformation of local government from being service delivery orientated to being proactive in developing its local people. The researcher agrees that the thinking behind the IDP preparation and procedure is in line with the fundamentals suggested by Kotze (1997).

Although the process of preparing an IDP is a legal requirement in terms of the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000), the requirement of legislation is not the only reason why municipalities should prepare the plans. The IDP is necessary if the municipality is to fulfill its Constitutional responsibilities. These responsibilities broadly include ensuring the improvement of quality of life for its citizens through, for instance, provision of basic services, creation of jobs, promoting democracy and accountability and eradication of poverty. The IDP therefore allows the municipality to manage the process of fulfilling its developmental responsibilities.

As a document that takes into account the holistic needs and priorities of the community, the IDP should be a reflection of these needs and priorities. It should be a summary of the typical conditions of the community, such that where unemployment is endemic IDP programmes should be aimed primarily at economic stimulation. The same should apply to social, environmental and other spheres which may be of concern to the community. In order to respond to the multifaceted problems facing communities, the involvement of all related sectors is crucial. A multi-sectoral approach is a second key element of the IDP.

### ***2.5. 2 IDP as a multi-sectoral approach***

Although the responsibility of facilitating the adoption of the IDP is allocated to the municipalities (Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000), there are various stakeholders involved in the IDP process.

The municipality is tasked with the function of coordinating the process with the relevant stakeholders. Thus, the municipality should play a leading role in the compilation and eventual implementation of the IDP. Since the IDP addresses issues of a local nature, ward councillors have a responsibility in assessing local needs and priorities in consultation with the community. Communities are required to participate in all processes so as to ensure that they lend support and receive feedback on the processes that will realise their needs. Given the limitation of resources and hence the inability to address all needs simultaneously, the community should participate further by indicating and agreeing on priorities within their communities.

The responsibility of meeting the developmental needs within a community does not lie solely on local government's shoulders. Section C of the WPLG (1998) states that other spheres of government should also take part in the process either by independently conducting their own programmes or by regulating the operation of municipalities according to their own sectoral objectives. The White Paper lists the following departments that could play a direct role in the process:

- Department of Health
- Department of Transport
- Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
- Department of Arts and Culture
- Department of Safety and Security
- Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs
- Department of Land Affairs
- Department of Public Works
- Department of Housing
- Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
- Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

Concerning the participation of departments in the IDP process, Dube (2006) mentions that although not all departments have a direct involvement in the IDP,

where community needs demand the competency of any department, the municipality forwards such information to the relevant structures. This implies that the IDP becomes a planning document for all government departments whether they make a direct or indirect contribution.

By working together with other departments, the IDP reflects a multi-sectoral approach and portrays that local government is a point of integration and coordination with the programmes of other spheres of government. According to Conyers and Hills (1990:17), planning cannot be considered outside the social, administrative and especially political environment within which it takes place. Thus, the IDP should reflect a realisation of the interrelatedness of the holism of human nature. Makgoba and Ababio (2004: 272) assert that local government is in the strategic position of being the closest sphere of government to the people and this makes it an ideal tool for developmental government. This is also crucial for consultation purposes, which is a third key element of the IDP.

### ***2.5.3 IDP as a consultative process***

The researcher has noted that in the new South Africa, stakeholder consultation has become a common theme particularly where issues of development are concerned. The development of an IDP process also calls for the involvement of other stakeholders. The Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2002) commits Chapter 4 of the Act to community participation and further states that a municipality must develop a culture of governance that complements a system of participatory governance. This means that the municipality must create a platform for participation. This Act further tasks the municipality with establishing mechanisms, processes and procedures for:

- (i) the local community to be consulted on its development needs and priorities;
- (ii) the local community to participate in the drafting of an integrated development plan; and

(iii) organs of state, including traditional authorities and other role players to be identified and consulted on the drafting of the integrated development plan.

Masango (2002:54) interprets community consultation as a critical ingredient of good governance. This author argues that through constant communication between governors and the governed, the needs and aspirations of the people will be taken into consideration. By so doing, local government will be fulfilling its responsibility of representing, protecting and meeting the basic needs of its communities. As far as the IDP process is concerned, the researcher translates this responsibility as 1) representing the interests of all groups in the community, 2) protecting vulnerable groups such as women and children and 3) bringing about improvement in the quality of life of the people. No municipality will be effective in performing these functions if it is not constantly informed by the community. Thus, it affirms the fact that the community is one of the key role players in the consultation process of the IDP.

The Department of Provincial and Local Government prescribes that the process of developing an IDP consists of five phases. It is important to note that these phases are to be carried out in consultation with the community. This is evident in the common theme that runs throughout all five phases of the IDP, namely community participation. The next section provides a discussion of these phases and how they translate and or impact on community participation.

## **2.6 The process of compiling the IDP**

As argued in Chapter one (11.4: page 32), the IDP is a process that is made up of various phases that are undertaken in the municipality and which eventually result in a document. Thus the IDP is both a process and a document. As a process, the IDP should follow five critical phases which are discussed below.

### **2.6.1 Phase 1: Analysis of the local needs and priorities**

Section B of the WPLG (1998) states that municipalities must be responsive to the needs of both citizens and businesses as consumers and end-users of municipal services. In order for a municipality to respond adequately to its community's needs, such needs and priorities should be identified with the local people. This calls for an interactive process between the stakeholders to determine the needs and whether the Council is able, within its resources, to meet such expectations.

Needs assessment is defined by Witkin and Altschuld (1995: 4) as “a systematic set of procedures undertaken for the purpose of setting priorities and making decisions about program or organizational improvement and allocation of resources”. The purpose of a needs assessment is to make decisions regarding priorities for programme or system improvement.

Needs assessment is a primary building block for ensuring that the needs of the people will be met. This is so because the needs assessment process awards an opportunity to the community to inform the IDP of which needs should be responded to by the municipality. It is important that the broader community becomes active in the IDP and not just members of the formal structures, such as the South African National Civic Organization SANCO, Women's group, Youth and others as discussed in chapter 1: 9.2 (page 26). The researcher argues that structure membership could in itself pose a limitation to participation as not all community members will belong to a structure owing to issues such as interest, faith and gender.

It should be noted that the data-gathering process in itself is not only a needs assessment but also an important component of a decision making process (Witkin & Altschuld 1995: 17). These authors assert that when conducting needs assessments, the following key factors are crucial (Witkin & Altschuld 1995:17):

- Keep in mind the value and necessity of broad-based participation by stakeholders.
- Choose appropriate means of gathering information about critical issues and other data.
- Recognise core values in the group whose needs are being assessed.
- A needs assessment is a participatory process, not something that is “done to” people.
- Needs assessment cannot ignore political factors.

When identifying problems, the municipality should consider people’s perceptions of their problems and needs and these should be supported by facts and figures. During this phase it is therefore important for the municipality to understand not only the symptoms, but also the causes of the problems in order to make informed decisions on appropriate solutions. Stakeholder and community participation is critical in this phase because it is the starting point at which development initiatives will be put into action. The municipality should not make assumptions about problems in its area. Local people affected by the problems should be involved in determining their source and their extent (DPLG Guide 2000). Over and above providing an understanding of needs, Houston *et al.* (2000: 81) state that another benefit of community participation in the IDP process is that civil society provides an understanding of the impact of programmes and promotes the development of priorities.

The benefits of community participation in the affairs of local government have been noted by authors such as Houston *et al.* (2000: 81) who attest to the creation of community solidarity brought about by participation as the community becomes involved in matters relevant to their welfare. As a result, community participation may contribute to social capital and bonding which could be used by members in support of each other. Putnam (1992:167) defines social capital as “features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions”. The closer

the social ties in a community, the more people will act together to defend what is perceived as a common goal. This engagement reflects the kind of participation which mirrors people's desire to facilitate social improvement and development in their livelihoods.

It is the responsibility of the municipality to ensure that a needs assessment does not merely become a "wish-list-generating process". In order to guard against this, it is essential that skilled persons facilitate and engage with the members of a community. Given the technical nature of some development processes, it is useful if facilitators simplify those issues for the benefit of ordinary members of the community. From experience, the researcher has observed that a fundamental need for something like water may require lengthy processes such as identifying a reliable water source, constructing a reservoir, installing pipes and other administrative responsibilities. If communities are not informed about these typical processes, they may be misled into believing that they will have water much sooner than is possible.

The process of community consultation provides public officials with an opportunity to validate information and thus leads to increased accountability. Improved understanding of local values, priorities and expectations can result in project designs and delivery mechanisms that are more compatible with those specific conditions. Without participation in the process of setting priorities and goals, societies are becoming increasingly unwilling to accept strategies imposed by elitist, bureaucratic or authoritarian powers (Hoff 1998: 12).

The researcher argues that a needs identification process has the potential to overlook the strength and ability of the community if it focuses only on the weaknesses and gaps that exist. Emmert (2000: 512) agrees that while the needs-based approach presents an image of deficiency in the community, it also presents part of the truth about some communities, although not the whole truth. In the case of the IDP, the needs assessment phase presents a limitation to the

IDP because it does not recognise the strength and capacity of the community to overcome their circumstances. It presents a perception that communities are helpless and cannot impact positively on their surroundings. The IDP should therefore seek to build on the strength of the people and advance the courses that local people have already embarked upon. In so doing, the IDP will be in agreement with the developmental approach which Gray (1996:9) describes as a model which discourages dependency and promotes the active involvement of people in their development.

Needs assessment is a fundamental phase in the process that should not be rushed or conducted exclusive of other members. Once a needs assessment has been completed, both the municipality and the community members should agree on the priorities for that community. This constitutes phase 2 of the IDP process.

### ***2.6.2 Phase 2: Strategies to define local vision and objectives***

Once the municipality has an understanding of the problems affecting its local inhabitants and its causes, it must formulate the solutions to address them. By so doing the municipality defines its local vision and objectives (DPLG 2000). The vision provides a bigger picture of the goals while objectives provide a step-by-step guide to what should be done in order to attain the vision. Objectives should spell out what is to be achieved in the medium and long term in order to address the issues identified in the gap analysis phase.

It is important that the local community should support this vision and that it should be the community's vision and not one imposed upon them by the municipality or the change agent. A vision must be agreed upon with the community concerned and should not be based on predetermined agendas. One of the challenges relating to agreeing a common vision centres on the lack of homogeneity within communities. Given the diverse needs of local people, this

raises questions such as: how are community visions and priorities agreed, who facilitates the process and what are the criteria for prioritising needs?

Once information has been obtained from the community, the municipality should establish strategies to reach its objectives. In this phase, public participation takes place through public debate on the appropriate ways and means of solving problems.

It can be concluded that through a continuous communication process, both the municipality and the community should be able to agree on a common vision and objectives.

### ***2.6.3 Phase 3: Project design for meeting identified needs***

Phase 3 concerns the design and specification of projects for implementation. The municipality must ensure that the identified projects have a direct linkage to the priority issues and the objectives that were identified in the previous phases. The target group (intended beneficiaries), the location of the project, when it will commence and end, who will be responsible for managing it, how much will it cost and where the money will come from must all be established. Furthermore, targets and indicators must be formulated to measure performance and the impact of the project.

Hoff (1998:11) highlights the importance of community participation in decision making by indicating that it helps to foster trust in one another, which is important for a willingness to subscribe to communal versus individual solutions to problems and needs. Hoff argues that community participation in project design is equivalent to participation in decision making.

It is the researcher's perception that those who participate in the needs identification process should be the ones to make decisions on projects because they know how strongly the community feels about a particular problem or issue.

Community involvement in the planning phase of the project is important because it contributes to the community's confidence that the plan will become a reality. Participation also helps to ensure that the community stays informed and promotes community understanding of acceptable delays.

#### ***2.6.4 Phase 4: Integration with other programmes***

Once the projects have been identified, the municipality must make sure that these are in line with its objectives and strategies, its resource framework and that they comply with legal requirements. This phase of the IDP process presents an opportunity to the municipality to harmonise its projects in terms of content, location and timing in order to arrive at a consolidated and integrated development plan.

The integration of programmes is in line with the multi-sectoral element of the IDP as discussed in section 2.5.2 above since it helps to promote the linkage between the various activities that constitute the entire community.

#### ***2.6.5 Phase 5: Adoption of an IDP***

Once the IDP plans have been compiled, they should be submitted to the Municipal Council for consideration and approval. The Council must ascertain that the problems and needs that affect the area will be dealt with adequately through the identified strategies and projects. The Council must also ensure that the IDP complies with legal requirements before it is approved. Section 25 (4) of the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) outlines that within 14 days of the adoption of the IDP, a municipality must give notice to the public of the plan for comments. Once the IDP is amended according to the input from the public, the Council will consider it for approval. Once approved, the IDP becomes a guiding plan on which all development initiatives should be based.

In conclusion, community participation in the compilation of an IDP is a process and not an event. The above phases indicate a need for a progressive interaction

between stakeholders. Without community participation, the IDP could become merely a document of compliance and as such fail to respond to the expectations of the public. Within the context of development, participation should lead to empowerment and liberate the community, allowing them to make decisions for themselves on how resources should be allocated.

The IDP does not reflect the ideal with regard to community participation and, as a result, obstacles to this effect are encountered.

## **2.7 Obstacles to community participation**

In practice, the realisation of a participatory process in the IDP is proving a daunting task. While legislation has advanced and laid a solid foundation for community participation, the implementation process is one that has its challenges. These challenges to community participation in the IDP will be examined below.

### ***2.7.1 Lack of homogeneity within communities***

Authors such as Houston *et al.* (2000) and Van Rooyen (2003) agree that communities are extremely diverse in character and hence seldom unified. This places limitations on participation. Communities differ with regard to the development and strength of social capital. Wassermann (2001:172) supports this view and further points out that it is an assumption to believe that communities consist of harmonious interest groups who willingly participate in the development of their community. This point has been demonstrated by a community-based crime prevention programme study by Tonry and Farrington (1995), who revealed that even when the poor have common interests, they might not be able to cooperate because of internal obstacles such as lack of trust.

The lack of strong ties within communities can have a negative impact on the IDP itself and in particular on agreement on a common vision (compare 2.6.2, page 24).

### **2.7.2 Communities have diverse interests in the IDP**

Wassermann (2001:174) argues that not all community inhabitants are committed to the development of their community as is generally claimed in the literature. Diversity amongst communities creates different interests which might give rise to difficulty in agreeing on a common vision or plan, in this regard the IDP. These diverse interests have the potential of becoming a stumbling block for development. According to Houston *et al.* (2000:83), this diversity within communities raises a number of concerns:

- Are the participating organisations representatives of all the relevant communities/ stakeholders in the municipal area?
- How representative of their own communities/stakeholders are the participating organisations?
- Are the participating organisations capable of articulating the interests of their communities/ constituencies?
- Are the leaders of the participating organisations accountable to their members?
- What is the capacity of participating organisations and how does this affect their contribution to the IDP?
- Is the IDP dominated by particular organisations?

The above questions reflect concerns regarding the status of the IDP, specifically whether it is a truly representative process or whether it is dominated by certain individuals. These concerns leave the municipalities with the responsibility of structuring participation in ways that will encourage massive participation and not just that of the few who stand to gain personally from the process. Thus one of

the objectives of this study was to explore the extent and effectiveness of community participation during the IDP process of Govan Mbeki Municipality.

### ***2.7.3 Lack of accountability by the community***

In the light of encouraging communities to participate in decision making processes, Pauw (in Houston *et al.*, 2000:83) states that this could create an “unfair” situation in that the community members cannot be held liable for the wrong decisions that they take. This author contrasts this situation to that of officials who can have steps taken against them. Contrary to this view, the researcher is of the opinion that it remains the responsibility of municipalities to guide and provide enough information to communities to ensure that their decision making is informed. The researcher argues that although the community is encouraged to take part in decision making, it does not imply that the community should dictate to the municipality, instead, this should be a joint process. The researcher is of the opinion that by perpetuating notions that the community cannot be liable for its decisions is negative and will not contribute to the democracy of this country.

### ***2.7.4 Community participation provides for “alternative power base”***

Rubenstein (1995) in Houston *et al.* (2000:84) notes that community participation in local government processes provides the conditions for the emergence of other power bases in elected structures of local government. This situation has potential for giving rise to conflict between the two parties. Pillay (1996:326) describes this as the “two democratic traditions”, namely parliamentary democracy and grassroots democracy. The key difference between these two democracies, according to this author, is summarised as those who are on the right wing (that is those who are in government and have political and stable control that is intimidated by the masses from below) and those who are on the

left wing (who uphold mass participation in determining directions of development without being subjected to the control of the elites (Pillay, 1996: 326).

Given the sharp differences between these two wings, Oakley, (1994: 26-9) concludes that the situation requires the following for participation to take place:

- An attitude change: understanding, humility flexibility and patience.
- Facilitatory factors crucial for participation such as political support, decentralisation, good leadership.
- Clearly defined roles for government and NGOs in the process of enhancing participation.
- Clearly defined approach for participation.
- Local people should be involved in identifying problems as well as their solutions.

Failure to address these essentials has the potential to lead to mistrust between the two wings and possibly to inhibit community participation. In view of the above obstacles, it can be concluded that community participation requires cooperation from both the community and the municipality. The discussion of obstacles for community participation reveals that in order for community input in the IDP to be effective, participation should not be an end (that is, contributing to the IDP) but should play a more significant role of influencing decisions that will ensure local development and hence be also a means to an end.

## **2.8 Summary**

In order to enable government to respond to the diverse needs of the South African population, decentralisation of functions is necessary. Through decentralisation, a local government system has been created, allowing closer contact between government and the community. Citizen participation in issues of local government has become a priority and a necessity because it is one of the essentials encapsulated by democracy. Hence, community participation

forms an important element of the South African government's policy. There is, however, no universal agreement on what community participation entails. A community is defined in terms of geographical, functional and geographical-functional elements. In the South African context, a community is defined by a ward system, which is a geographic area into which a municipality is divided for, amongst others, election purposes.

Participation refers broadly to the involvement of people in processes that affect them. Community participation is therefore a means of empowering people by developing their skills and abilities to negotiate their needs within the forces that often seem to seek to obstruct and discourage them. Community participation does not take place in a vacuum: it is subjected to the political, social and economic influences within which it occurs. Consequently, in order to have meaningful participation, procedures for democratic decision making should be created at the local level. These will enable the community to engage and contribute towards decisions that affect them. In this sense, community participation becomes an empowering process for those who take part in it.

Against the background of a historically racially divided country, local government has adopted a developmental approach. In this way it aims to re-orientate municipalities from using a silo approach of upgrading only physical infrastructure, to one that addresses community needs in an integrated manner: hence the Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

Stated simply, the IDP is both a process that is made up of five phases that move from an analysis of local needs and establishment of priorities, defining the local vision, designing projects to meet the needs, integration of projects with other programmes and lastly, the adoption of the IDP. The IDP is also an outcome of that consultation which becomes documented and endorsed as a planning document. The IDP has three key components: firstly, meeting of community needs in a holistic manner by taking into account the profile of the community.

Secondly, the IDP requires a multi-sectoral approach which recognises that there are several role players involved in community development, some of whom are located outside the municipality. The Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) regards the community as a key role player in the IDP process. Lastly, the IDP is a consultative process. This chapter has focused attention on this element of the IDP, with specific reference to community participation.

The IDP provides an opportunity for both the community and the municipality to deliberate and interact on issues of local development. At the level of the IDP, interaction is centred mainly on local development, which affects aspects of social, economic and physical conditions within which a given community exists.

Community participation has the benefit of ensuring that development addresses the needs of the people. In spite of the benefits brought about by community participation in the IDP, this consultative process is proving a challenge. Communities are not homogeneous and this makes reaching agreements on aspects of needs, vision and ways of addressing them difficult. Communities are made up of individuals who have different interests, some of whom may hijack the process for their benefit. This raises questions about whose interests are represented by those leading the IDP process. Opponents of community participation perceive communities as unable to be held accountable for wrong decisions they make. The process of establishing a participative community is perceived as the creation of an alternative power base. These challenges should be understood in the discussion of the IDP process of Govan Mbeki Municipality.

The existence of challenges of this nature does not nullify the positive impact that is created by community participation but is instead an indication that the implementation of a participatory process must be given more attention. Failure to do so might render community participation nothing more than a symbolic process.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **EMPIRICAL STUDY AND RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

As indicated in Chapter 1, the goal of this research study was to determine the role of community participation in the IDP process of Govan Mbeki Municipality.

This chapter provides a brief overview of the research methodology which was utilised to contextualise the empirical research of the study. This will be followed by the presentation and discussion of the findings. Where applicable, the findings will be interpreted and integrated with the literature. To contextualise the research findings, the chapter will firstly provide an overview of the research methodology adopted for the study.

#### **3.2 Research Methodology**

##### ***3.2.1 Research approach***

The researcher used a qualitative approach which Fouché (2002: 270) describes as a design that does not provide the researcher with a step-by-step plan to follow but is rather determined by the researcher's choices and actions. A qualitative approach is more open, fluid and changeable and not defined in technical terms (Durrheim, 1999a: 31).

In this study, the respondents were given the space to discuss their experiences of community participation in the IDP process and their responses are presented in prescriptive words.

### **3.2.2 Type of research**

This type of study forms part of applied research because it aims to address a practice-related problem arising from the role of community participation in the IDP process in the Govan Mbeki Municipality. As discussed in Chapter 1, in order to assess this effectively, the researcher asked questions relating to the procedures of participating in the IDP, the role of community participation in the IDP and the effectiveness thereof, and the role of decision making in the IDP.

### **3.2.3 Research design**

Since the researcher employed a qualitative design, a case study method was adopted as the research strategy. Case studies investigate a phenomenon within its real life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1994:13). In this study, the researcher was primarily concerned about the IDP process. A single case study method using the IDP process in the Govan Mbeki community was applied and this implied that the researcher focused on this municipality without comparing it to other settings.

### **3.2.4 Population and sample**

A universe is defined as all potential subjects who possess the attributes in which the researcher is interested whilst a population limits the boundaries of the study unit to those who possess specific characteristics (Strydom & Venter, 2002:198). In this study, the researcher made use of two sets of populations which were:

- Municipal representatives working in Govan Mbeki Municipality.
- Community representatives who were involved in the IDP process.

From these two groups, a small portion of the total set of objectives, events or persons who together comprise the subject of the study was selected as a

sample for the study (Strydom & Venter, 2002:199). Selection of respondents had to meet the following criteria as determined by the researcher:

The selection of the **Municipal respondent group** was based on the following criteria. Respondents should be

- In the employment of the municipality.
- Experienced in the field of IDP processes and community participation.
- Representative of race and gender.
- Representative of the different strata, namely Head of Departments (HoDs), Ward Councillors, a Political representative, the Office of the Speaker and the Chief Community Developer.

Since representation by respondents from various fields was aimed at, the researcher used stratified sampling to select the respondents.

Against this criterion, the following was achieved:

- All municipal respondents interviewed were in the employment of the municipality.
- Racial diversity could not be attained since all respondents were black and those of other race groups were unavailable for participation.
- Of the five (5) strata which were categorised, four (4) were represented whilst representation at HoD level was not attained. Thus, the municipal respondent group consisted of six (6) instead of eight (8) people.

It must be pointed out that the researcher made numerous attempts to interview the HoDs without any success and hence interviews proceeded with other members who were available. The HoD for Technical and Engineering services (who was at that time also Acting as an IDP Manager) as well as the Manager for Public Safety were targeted for the study because of their experience in working with the IDP. The unavailability of the IDP Manager, as he had resigned from the

municipality, contributed to the researcher's perceived lack of interest by the other HoDs in the issue under investigation.

The researcher interviewed six municipal respondents who were informed about the goal and purpose of the study before the interviews. All six respondents gave their consent to participate in the study as reflected in the consent form attached (see attached in **Appendix 4**). Initially, the researcher intended to interview the municipal respondents in one focus group but this turned out not to be feasible because of conflicting schedules. As a result, interviews were conducted in two focus groups. One group consisted of two representatives whilst the other group had four representatives. Although the ideal is to have at least six members in a focus group (Greeff, 2000:311), in practice this research study could not meet this goal.

Selection of **community respondents** had to meet the following criteria:

- Members should have taken part in the IDP and the community participation process of Govan Mbeki Municipality.
- Group diversity by way of gender, age and race was essential.

In this study, the researcher interviewed eight community respondents. After being informed about the goal and purpose of the study, all eight respondents gave their written informed consent to participate in the study (see **Appendix 4**). They were given copies of the consent form which they completed. The researcher conducted one focus group interview with the community representatives and, given the rich data that she was able to collect, there was no need for additional sessions with this group.

Of the thirty-one wards under Govan Mbeki Municipality, six had a respective community respondent representative whilst the others had two respondents representing them in the study. This was so because one respondent withdrew from the study due to other commitments and could not be replaced immediately. Since the respondents had to make use of public transport to get to the municipal

building where the interviews were conducted, the researcher had to compensate them with an amount of R20.00 for each single trip that they completed. This was discussed and agreed upon with the community respondents during the informed consent process.

### **3.2.5 Pilot Study**

In order to establish any unforeseen problems that might arise during the main study, the researcher conducted a pilot test. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:155) define a pilot test as a small study conducted prior to a larger research study with the purpose of determining whether the methodology, sampling, instruments and analysis are adequate and appropriate to the study. This pilot study served to prepare the researcher to anticipate problems and to take the necessary precautions when conducting the main study.

The pilot study assisted the researcher particularly in the sampling of community representatives. The pilot revealed that a community structure (that is, a ward committee) through which community participation normally occurs in the IDP had been newly appointed and hence had the potential to limit the quality of data. This informed the researcher's decision to recruit members who had served a second-term on the ward committee when conducting the main study.

The outcome of the pilot study influenced the sampling choice of the community respondent group in that the researcher had to use purposeful as opposed to systematic sampling as had initially been planned. This was so because the pilot test revealed a limited understanding amongst the newly appointed ward committee members and hence a mixed group of newly appointed and older serving members in the ward committee was selected. According to Strydom and Delport (2000:334), purposive sampling is chosen when some feature or process is of interest for a particular study.

During the pilot test process, it was also found that obtaining the HoDs' participation in the main study would be difficult because they were described as extremely busy by the then acting Municipal Manager. This was discussed with the Municipal Manager who ultimately indicated that appointments should be made with the respective HoDs. Thus, the researcher did not adjust the sampling of the HoDs because the understanding was that they would participate in the study.

### **3.2.6 Methods of data collection**

The researcher made use of two methods of collecting data: firstly, documented sources and secondly, interviews. Data collection was divided into two phases.

#### ***Phase 1: Documented data***

During this phase, the researcher perused documented sources of information which related to the IDP process of Govan Mbeki Municipality. Such records included the copies of the minutes of meetings with the community, invitations to various community representations, attendance registers and the 2005/6 copy of the municipal IDP. These documents were requested and made available by the municipality.

Other documents concerning the analysis and prioritisation of community needs as well as the records of decision making and the influence of the community on decisions were not available as some files could not be traced by the municipality.

#### ***Phase 2: Interviews***

Qualitative interviews served to authenticate documented data by hearing the views of the people. The researcher interviewed the municipal and the community representatives separately as it was anticipated that different information might be elicited. The researcher used interviews to capture each

respondent's experience of the IDP process with particular reference to effective community participation within this process.

Interview schedules (see **Appendix 5 and 6**) were used to interview the respective community and the municipal respondent groups.

### **3.2.7 Data analysis**

Data analysis is the process of moving from raw data to evidence-based interpretations that are the foundation of published reports (Cresswell, 1998: 201).

#### **3.2.7.1 Analysis of documented or archival data**

Analysis of archival data revealed that the documents perused were incomplete as they could not provide information on how decisions had been taken, the level of community consultation or the list of prioritisation of community needs. The record of the municipal IDP of 2005/6 was provided. Emanating from the May 2005/6 IDP document of Govan Mbeki, insufficient consultation and feedback to community structures was acknowledged as one of the weaknesses in the municipality and hence its inability to perform its legislative requirements, although the extent and meaning of this weakness could only be confirmed during the interviews.

#### **3.2.7.2 Analysis of interview data**

The researcher analysed the data through the following five stages, as outlined by Cresswell's model (1998).

- Collecting and managing data: through an interview discussion, the researcher elicited data in various areas of the study and used a tape recorder to capture discussions in respondents' own words. The researcher

took handwritten notes which served to remind her of the various aspects she needed to pursue. The interviews were conducted in English and Zulu, understood by both the researcher and the respondents. After the interviews, the researcher used the tapes to create transcripts which, together with the handwritten notes and the biographical information of the respondents, were stored. Data derived from the transcripts was then developed into an electronic format using the Microsoft Word computer program.

- Reading and memoranda: the researcher read the transcript in order to get a sense of the themes that had emerged. During this reading process, the researcher's role was to make notes of significant phrases, key concepts and ideas.
- Classifying: as the text was been scrutinised, the researcher highlighted the themes and phrases that carried the same meaning. Using colour coding, different themes were identified.
- Interpretation: the researcher considered the various pieces of information to create a holistic picture of the meaning of the described situation.
- Representing and visualising: in this chapter, the researcher presents the findings of the study. The findings are presented in text which includes the words of the respondents. The biographical details of both respondent groups are presented in graphic format.

### **3.3 Findings of the study**

In this section, the findings of the study are presented and, where applicable, supported by extracts from the respondents' own words and the literature. Firstly, the biographical information of both respondent groups is presented in graphic format.

### 3.3.1 Biographical Data

The biographical data of the two respondent groups, i.e. community respondents and municipality respondents, is presented below.

### 3.3.2 Biographical information: Community respondents

This information was collected at the beginning of the interview using a questionnaire (see **Appendix 7**). As already indicated, the community respondent group was selected from the various ward committees in Govan Mbeki Municipality according to the selection criteria discussed in section 3.2.4 of this chapter.

#### 3.3.2.1 Gender of the community respondent group

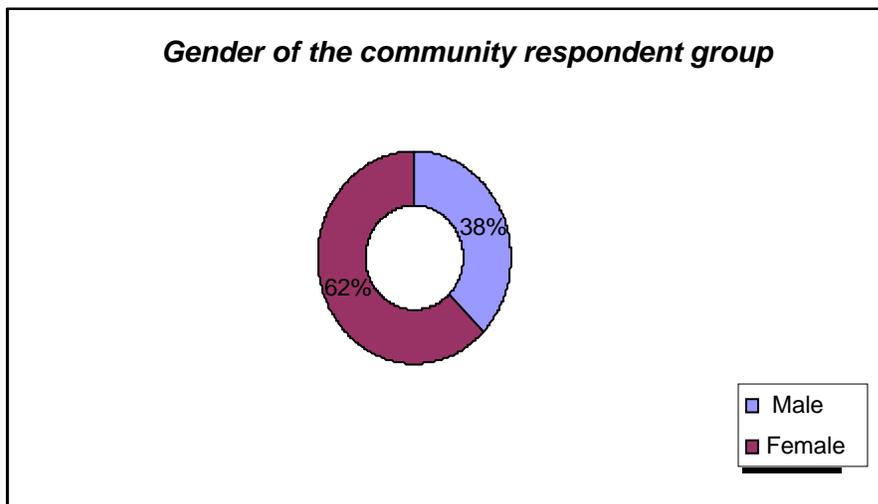


Figure 3.1: Gender of community respondent group

A total of eight (8) community respondents were interviewed for the purposes of this study. Of this number, 62% were females while males represented 38%. Although the researcher strove for 50 % gender representation, this balance could not be attained.

### 3.3.2.2 Age distribution of the community respondents

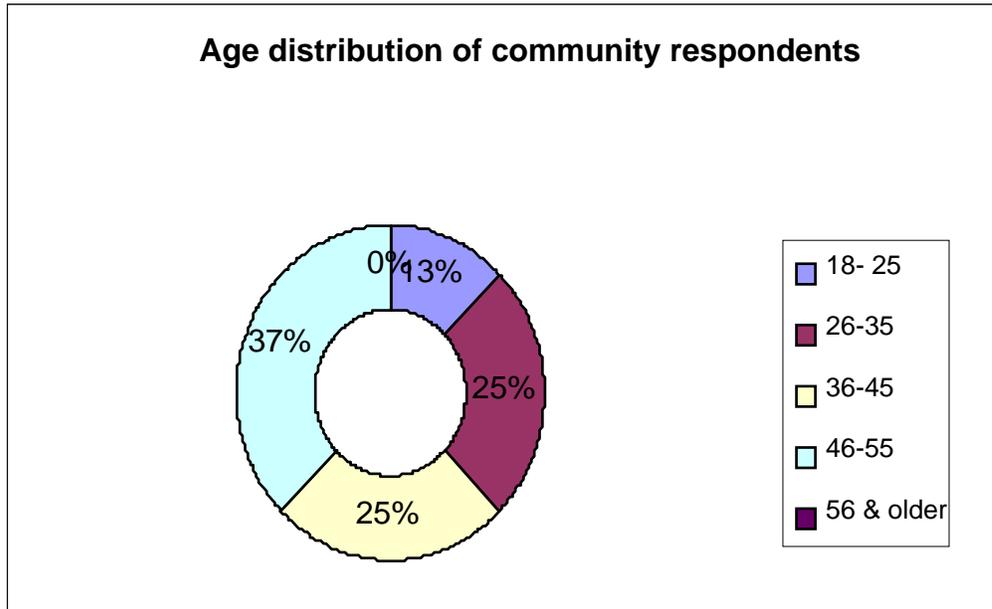


Figure.3.2: Age distribution of community respondents

The age distribution of the community respondents varied between 18 and 55 years. Of the respondent group, 13% were in the age category of 18 to 25 years while the 26 to 35 as well as the 36 to 45 age groups had a 25% representation respectively. The majority of the respondents' ages fell within the 46 to 55 years category with a 37% representation in the sample. None of the respondents were 55 years or older.

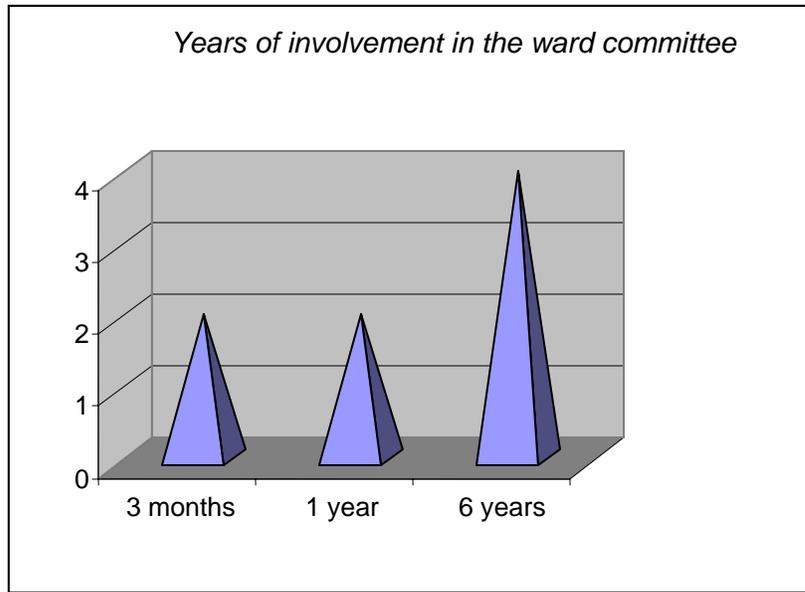


Figure 3.3: Years of involvement in the IDP

Of the eight community respondents, 50% thereof had knowledge of the IDP dated back to the year 2000, whilst the remainder could be classified as newly appointed with approximately three months' experience. As a group, community respondents had 25 years of experience in community involvement in the IDP.

### 3.3.3 Biographical information: municipal respondent group

Information about municipal respondents was collected at the beginning of the interview by using a questionnaire (see **Appendix 8**). The municipal respondent group was made up of individuals who were at the time of the study in the employ of Govan Mbeki Municipality. As has already been explained, the researcher intended to obtain eight (8) respondents to participate in the study but only six (6) were available.

#### 3.3.3.1 Gender of municipal respondent group

The gender of the municipal respondent group is reflected below in Figure. 3.4.

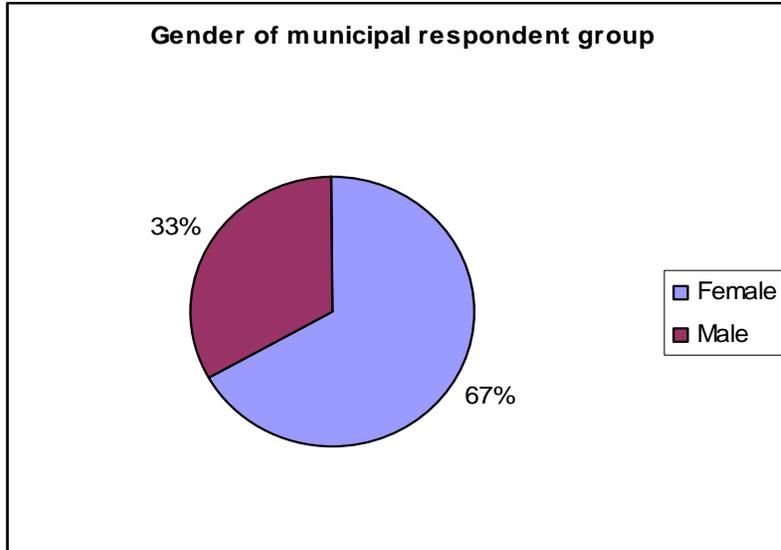


Figure 3.4: Gender of the municipal respondent group

This figure illustrates that 67 % of the municipal respondent group which took part in the semi-structured interviews were female and only 33 % were male. It must be noted that the unavailability of two representatives from HoD level who were male would have enabled a 50% gender representation which the researcher had aimed for. This finding is, however, not in line with the overall demographic reflections of the municipality because currently the majority of those employed in Govan Mbeki Municipality are male.

### 3.3.3.2 Age distribution of the municipal respondents

The age distribution of municipal respondents was spread over five categories as reflected in Figure 3.5 below:

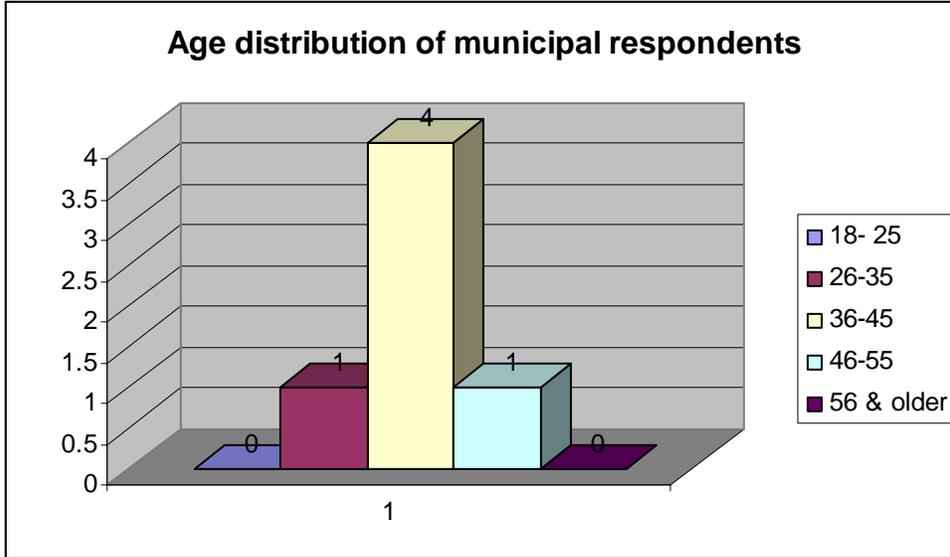
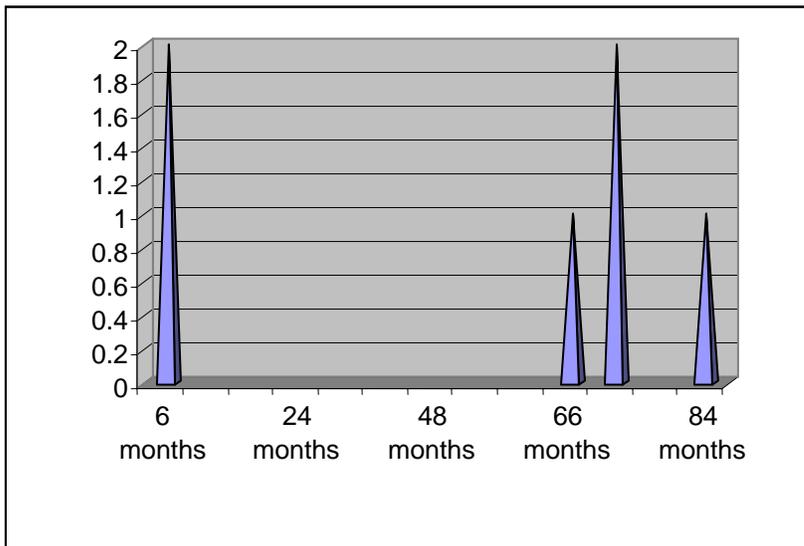


Figure 3.5: Age distribution of the municipal respondent group

Figure 3.5 illustrates the five age categories that were used by the researcher to gather information from respondents. Of these respondents, only three (3), i.e. 67%, fell within the 36 to 45 years category while 17% representation was obtained from the 26 to 35 and the 46 to 55 years categories respectively. There were no respondents in either the 18 to 25 years or the 55 years and older categories.

### 3.3.3.3 Years of experience

The categories reflected in Figure 3.6 were represented:



*Figure 3.6: Years of employment in the municipality*

Figure 3.6 reflects that the majority of municipal respondents had been in the employ of the municipality for more than 66 months (5 years) whilst two (2) respondents had less than a year's experience. Short periods of employment were noted amongst the councillors and this could be motivated by the fact that they are voted in by the public whilst other officials were in full-time employment.

### **3.4 Themes identified from the municipal and community respondents**

The research findings revealed that similar patterns of themes emerged for both the community and the municipal respondent groups. The findings from both groups are therefore presented in an integrated manner. Where applicable, the findings will be supported by verbatim quotations of the respective respondent groups' views which were obtained during the focus group interviews.

During the data analysis process, the following themes and sub-themes were identified and will be discussed:

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
1 - Needs identification	1. Needs prioritization
2 - Mechanisms for participation	1. Ward committees 2. Meetings
3 – Decision making	
4 – Empowerment	

#### **3.4.1 Theme 1: Needs identification**

Both the municipal and community respondent groups acknowledged the role of community participation in needs identification and the listing of priorities during the initial phase of the IDP process.

The **community respondents** perceived their role as one of identifying needs which they wanted to be addressed in their wards. Respondents reflected on this participation as follows:

*“Participation of community is when we have a list of things that needs to be done in the community.”*

*“They ask as to what the community wants ... you know... the needs and or perhaps what were the issues that were previously raised and maybe could not be addressed. In such a case, then they will look at what was supposed to be done and was not done and then the others will follow.”*

*“...the community will mention the things they want in their wards.”*

With regard to community needs, the **community respondents** agreed on their role as one of identifying and generating a list of needs in their wards, however, what ought to be done about these was perceived as the concern of the municipality. The needs identification process therefore gave the community an opportunity to air their opinions about those development issues which they felt were lacking.

The **municipal respondents** perceived the needs identification process as an informative course which provided a basis for appropriate decision making and implementation. The municipal respondents indicated the significance of this role by highlighting its influence in the planning of the municipality in the following words:

*“Sometimes as you are sitting in the office you may think that people in the township need water whilst you do not know that most of the household have water supply but what they need is perhaps cleanliness in the township.”*

*“Yes, basically as I have mentioned it is all about consultation and deriving mandate because there is nothing you can do without getting a mandate from the community.”*

*“...the purpose of engaging the community is for them to contribute to your IDP because there is nothing that as councillors we may think on their behalf that, that is what they want and start to do it.”*

*“...you need to consult of those people because as a municipality you cannot like before with what used to happen, a municipality out of nowhere you would see that development took place without any consultation for instance you would see that a road is being built whereby that are no people who will use it. A community facility is built and without consultation where else if you consult like a community will tell you exactly what they need... .”*

*“...the other thing is to establish understanding because as she said, the needs of the people who are in townships and in town are not the same. You find that in town roads is not a necessity whilst in townships they are a priority so, it is important for that because through community participation the municipality is able to ascertain what the needs of the people are without just thinking of them.”*

**Both the respondent groups** agreed that the needs identification process contributed significantly to informing planning. This, however, did not necessarily imply implementation by the municipality mainly because of financial constraints. Thus, although needs were identified, the availability of the budget determined the priorities in the community and what would be consequently reflected in the

IDP document. One municipal respondent explained the connection between finances and meeting of needs as follows:

*“...we are working under a very tight financial budget. Whatever decision or input that the community might be making they [community] must be well aware that it might have financial implications.”*

This finding indicates that both the municipal and community respondents were in agreement that the community participates in the IDP process by providing information about the needs they want addressed. This finding is in alignment with Gaunt's (1998: 291) remark that within local governments, only an informational or review process of citizen (community) participation is accepted as adequate.

#### 3.4.1.1 Sub-theme 1 - Needs prioritisation

Regarding the involvement of the community in the prioritisation of the identified needs, the **community respondents** were of the opinion that the process was performed at the sole discretion of the municipality and hence not all-inclusive nor participatory in nature. They expressed this sentiment as follows:

*“...because when community needs are prioritised, they [the municipality] do not call us as ward committee members so that we explain the feeling [opinions] of the community regarding what can be done now or later [priorities]. That happens because they do not call us to prioritise the needs.”*

The **municipal respondents** had conflicting views regarding whose role it was to prioritise the needs of the community. Some municipal respondents outlined that in the Govan Mbeki Municipal area, the communities themselves performed the

responsibility of prioritising their own needs. These respondents remarked the following about the importance of having broad participation in the prioritisation of needs:

*“it is very important that the ward committees becomes involved in the process because they are the ones who knows what is in their wards, what are the needs and which to prioritise.”*

One respondent expressed that needs prioritisation was a municipal function because the municipality had the ultimate say in how the resources would be allocated to address community needs. This municipal respondent expressed that it was a legislative requirement for a municipality to align its implementation with that of other spheres of government so that national objectives could be attained. Hence, the municipality needed to drive this process. This view was motivated as follows:

*“... we would sit down as councillors to set priorities. I mean we have the big five, we call them the big five, your water, sewer, electricity etcetera [implying roads and refuse removal] and based on that we would then say for instance in section so and so there are people without water and in another section they do not have roads so then between roads and water, the priority would be water and so we must move towards saying lets consider community A whereby there is no water. After some consultation we would then sit as councillors to prioritise.”*

These findings indicate that there are conflicting views within the municipality with regard to the involvement of the community in the prioritisation of needs. This can mainly be ascribed to budget constraints.

### 3.4.2 Theme 2: Mechanisms for participation

To understand community participation in the IDP, the researcher enquired about the mechanisms put in place to allow for this.

Theme	Sub-theme
Process of participation	1. Ward committees
	2. Meetings

#### 3.4.2.1 Sub-theme 1 – Ward committees

Both the **municipal and community respondents** agreed unanimously that the ward committees are the sole mechanism established to enable community participation in the affairs of the municipality. The establishment of these committees is described as a participatory process which is decided upon by the community through the electoral system. One community respondent stated that:

*“When electing the ward committee, we call a mass meeting of that ward and it is upon the masses to elect the members of the ward committee.”*

One community respondent described the ability to represent the interests of the community as a key factor when selecting the committee:

*“The ward committee is elected by the community ... they elect whomever they feel that will represent them... anyone whom they feel will be able to convey their problems to them [municipality].”*

A community respondent described the close relationship between the community and the ward committee: *“When you talk about the ward committee*

*members you are talking about the whole community because the ward committee stands for the community as a whole.”*

The **community respondents** perceived the ward committee system as an opportunity for communicating concerns that needed municipal attention. Nevertheless, they expressed misgivings about the diminishing role of ward committees in the community. This they attributed to the absence of a flow of information from both the municipality and the councillors in particular in response to queries from the community. The community respondents motivated this in the following phrases:

*“... the committee does take the complaints from the community and informs the councillor [of that ward] who in turn forwards them to the municipality. Thereafter, when they come back from the municipality, they no longer go to the councillor and then to the ward committee who in turn will report to the community in that order.”*

*“... the problem arises when the community has raised issues with us, we submit them to the councillor who in turn takes them to the municipality. If the municipality does not respond... then we find it difficult there because we are expected to go back and give feedback. But then there is where it becomes difficult we ourselves do not get feedback.”*

*“They [the municipality] want us to encourage the community to pay for services but then on what the community needs, when we convey that... they do not come back to us.”*

*“The only thing is the very thing that we said that information coming back from above does not come through ....”*

The lack of flow of information from the municipality to the ward committees has created frustrations amongst ward committee members as they are losing the community's confidence. One community respondent commented as follows:

*“... it [the lack of information flow to the community] makes it difficult for the committee [ward committee] to work with the community because people report complaints to you and when they ask feedback, they do not get it because the councillor does not give you.”*

Consequently, the community respondents questioned the ward committee's role. Their remark is in line with Ife's (1995: 112) comment in his discussion of tokenism as one of the problems associated with participation. One respondent made the following statement in this regard:

*“...the role of the ward committee, the way it was explained and looking at the way things are happening, yes you can say we are ward committees just by name. We are not given a chance to play the role we are supposed to play in the community. It was supposed to be us who takes the problems of the community and when there are meetings, they [municipality] should call us and explain that we want to solve these and how can we do so collectively? So at the moment, we are ward committees by name, our role is not visible and possible [to perform], I do not want to lie about it ... .”*

The **community respondents** agreed that the role of ward committees was negatively affected by the municipal inability to keep the committee informed on issues they had reported to them. Kellerman (1997:53) concurs that in order to participate meaningfully the community must be informed and should be able to transmit its views, wishes and interests to all bodies charged with managing the development project. Thus, free flow of information is essential in order to secure informed planning and decision making. The importance of a flow of information

is noted by Gaunt (1998:279) who says that at the heart of citizen [community] participation lies a structure of information exchange.

Unlike with the community respondent group, the **municipal respondents** expressed opposing views in as far as the flow of information was concerned. They were of the opinion that legislation made provision for the ward councillor, as the link with the community, to provide the community with feedback on issues raised. Hence, the information flow was directed to the ward councillor and not the ward committee. Municipal respondents expressed that:

*“The ward committee does not report back to the community because as you know in terms of the law, the chairperson of the ward is the ward councillor. He is the one who is reporting to the community but together with them and they have no right to call a community meeting as a ward committee. They will form part of that meeting when it is called by the councillor because he is mandated to give feedback to the community.”*

*“...again the ward councillors are the chairpersons of the ward committees. Whilst P.R. [Proportional Representatives] councillors are ex-official in all ward committees but again ward councillors are the first people who are getting information in the municipality and it is their responsibility to take that and report it back to the community ... but again if the information that comes from the community, they are there because a ward committee cannot call a meeting but a ward and P.R. councillors can call meetings and understand the issues from the ground so that those issues are noted and the councillor should make follow-up on the outcome of the issues that are discussed.”*

Thus, the municipality did not necessarily perceive the current flow of information as limited or excluding ward committees because they felt they were complying with the statutory requirements.

This finding revealed that there are conflicting perspectives on the current flow of information from the municipality, the councillors and the ward committees. Whilst the community respondents expressed concerns about lack of information, especially regarding the outcome of community issues which they had reported to the municipality, the municipality perceived the current flow of information as informed by government legislation.

#### *3.4.2.2 Sub-theme 2 – Meetings*

Both the **community and the municipal respondents** explained that community meetings were used for communication purposes. Both respondent groups noted that attendance of meetings varied and this was attributed to various factors. One municipal respondent pointed out that attendance of meetings was influenced by issues at hand about which the community had expressed its discontent:

*“... sometimes you have a good attendance especially when there are pressing issues....”*

The **municipal respondents** made further distinctions about attendance of meetings between those who could and those who could not afford payment of services. Where low levels of service delivery were evident, the municipal respondents observed a high attendance of meetings, as opposed to attendance in affluent areas. They expressed that:

*“Those who still attend are those who are desperate for some issues and they do attend.”*

*“... most of the people who attend meetings very well are those who have many challenges in their wards... .”*

*“... most of the people who do not attend meetings are those whose needs are met, who can afford to pay for services and so what... why should they attend?”*

The **community respondents** cited lack of confidence in the municipality as a reason for poor attendance at community meetings. Community respondents perceived the failure of development initiatives to transform community needs into tangible benefits as a discouraging factor which impacted on people’s attitudes to meetings. This view was captured in a community respondent’s voice:

*“... people do not come to meetings saying what is the use? I always go there and my needs are not being met.”*

This remark reflects Makgoba and Ababio’s (2004: 278) finding that sometimes municipalities fail to respond to community needs and expectations owing to a lack of finances and this could be seen as a failure of the municipality to address their problems, resulting in the community disassociating itself from its municipality.

The findings revealed that the two respondent groups were in agreement that community participation at meetings was influenced although they gave different reasons for poor attendance. Municipal respondents perceived inconsistencies in meeting attendance to be influenced by the level of service delivery in the communities, with more affluent communities seeing little need in attending.

Community respondents, on the other hand, attributed poor attendance to the lack of development in the communities despite attendance of meetings.

### **3.4.3 Theme 3 - Decision making**

The development of the IDP requires significant decision making with municipal stakeholders, amongst others the community. There were however differing perceptions on when and by whom decisions should be made.

The **community respondents** expressed concerns regarding their participation in decision making as they perceived the process as a top-down approach by the municipality. Their concerns were expressed particularly in relation to the community's ability to influence decisions. They were of the opinion that municipal decisions were taken without community consultation and that the IDP process was conducted in a hasty manner resulting in little chance to influence decisions:

*“Call a meeting and tell them [community] that the budget is for this and that ... there is no information that comes from the community to inform the municipality on the IDP.”*

*“...the municipality fails to plan its time properly and when the IDP is being made, they are already behind and in a rush. Thus, there are other things that they jump like to consult the ward committees....”*

*“I am of the opinion that the municipality must stop taking decisions on behalf of the community, they must consult and then after decide. As ward committee members, we suggest that the municipality must not take decisions on behalf of so many people... .”*

*“They don’t go to the community to say we have x amount and please inform us on how to spend it and what is important to you? They come to announce... .”*

*“... we go to meetings and they [municipality] tell us that we have this and that amount in the budget and we want to do this and that, they do not ask us that seeing that you know the needs of the community and you live in the community... .”*

These remarks reveal that the community respondents perceived decision making as a rushed process, controlled by the municipality and merely handed down to them for acceptance or implementation. Staples (2004:199) agrees with the community respondents’ sentiments, that an inefficient process usually produces a less than satisfactory decision and a "rush to judgment (which) almost guarantees a product that will not be widely embraced".

The community respondents’ remarks indicate that they feel left out and perceive their participation in decision making as of little importance. Ascroft and Hristodoulakis (1999:322) agree with this view and note that in times of budget constraint, participatory decision making may not be perceived as a high priority.

The community respondents were of the opinion that community participation has been reduced to a symbolic process because decision making occurs outside the community. They felt that community participation was encouraged merely to comply with the legislative requirements, as is expressed in the following remark by one respondent:

*“I think both the municipality and councillors or I will say authorities, they know that from the national government they have to use ward committees.”*

Contrary to this view, the **municipal respondents** perceived the councillor speaking on behalf of the community as similar to speaking with the community because the councillor would be informed by the community. Hence, they equated decision making in the presence of the councillor as decision making with the community. One municipal respondent expressed this sentiment in the following words:

*“Actually the community is present and represented by the councillor because immediately you take decisions the councillor should report back. As I was saying people do participate but via the councillors and ward committees and it [their participation] does affect the decisions that we take.”*

Another municipal representative also explained that they were appointed to lead the community and as part of doing so, at times they had to take decisions on behalf of the people.

*“Yes I can say that it does affect [community participation does affect decision making] but as the leader of the community, you should lead from the front... [because] at the end of the day they have elected you so that you can lead. These are some decisions that you have to take on their behalf and of which those decisions may not go well and those could be one of them.”*

The municipality respondents perceived representational participation through the ward councillor as the same as participation by the community. They felt there were certain decisions that were within the powers of the municipality, and hence, it had the right to take them. This view is, however, rejected by Gaunt (1998:293) who says that communication is minimised if the only means of information exchange is through a representative on the governing body.

This finding revealed conflicting views between the two respondent groups. The community respondents viewed decision making in the IDP as performed solely by the municipality, outside the community's participation and influence. The municipality, on the other hand, viewed the current method of decision making as a result of a consultative process with the community through the representation of the ward councillor.

#### **3.4.4. Theme 4: Empowerment of ward committees**

The **community and municipal respondents** agreed that empowerment of ward committee members was lacking. The **community respondents** expressed the feeling that ward committee members were not empowered to participate fully in the IDP process due to a lack of comprehensive training which would prepare them for their responsibilities. They viewed training as a necessity and a crucial aspect of capacity building which would allow informed participation in the IDP. The need for additional, task-related workshops and other training sessions was described as fundamental to their empowerment although they expressed that at present such training was rare.

The **community respondents** claimed that they had never been trained on the IDP and its processes. This lack of knowledge and training was reflected in the following common sentiments:

*“...we have not been taught about the IDP its functions and this and that about it.”*

*“Yes the ward committees were always there but we were never trained ... we are starting to attend training of this sort.”*

Those community respondents who had served in the previous ward committee system confirmed attendance of some training courses, although they regarded

these as inadequate in increasing their capacity to carry out their functions, particularly in the IDP. In the words of a long-serving respondent, she indicated:

*“...we have not been taught about the IDP, its functions and this and that about it. That is why I say it is my first time to have a workshop on the IDP with the ward committees. I started working in the community in 1994, when the government of Mr Mandela took over. We knew that, if you volunteered and worked in the community, you work by telling them [community] to pay for services etcetera. It was not about the IDP, it was not workshopped around the IDP and the purpose thereof and that is why I say ... it is for the first time. It was not clear as to what is the work [purpose] of the IDP, budget or even where the municipality and the budget coincide.”*

This remark reveals that the community respondents were not satisfied with the content of the workshops, they had attended. This was particularly the case when enabling community participation in the IDP which they viewed it as limited and possibly only equipping them to monitor municipal services at community level. This finding is supported by Ife's (1995: 214) view that training is most effective when the people themselves have identified a need for it.

With regard to the level of empowerment of the ward committees, it was also remarkable to note that the community respondents had a narrow understanding of the purpose of the IDP document, its processes and their role in implementing it. They confirmed this as follows:

*“Myself when coming to the IDP, I do not know what it is and what purpose does it serve.”*

*“... the problem that we have is that, we do not know what an IDP exactly entails.”*

These remarks reveal that the community respondents had to participate in an IDP process about which they had no understanding. Nor were they aware of what community participation aimed to achieve.

The community respondents nevertheless pointed out that subsequent to the 2006 local government elections, the municipality had embarked on empowerment sessions for the ward committees and that it was anticipated that these would contribute to building capacity and confidence when participating in the IDP. Attesting to the benefits of empowerment, Rubin and Rubin (2001:77) note that empowerment is a psychological feeling that individuals have when they believe they can accomplish chosen goals. It also increases political organisational strength, enabling people to carry out their will collectively.

The municipal respondents agreed that empowerment of ward committees has been neglected as one respondent admitted in the following words:

*“...in the past, in the last term they did not get much attention [regarding training and empowerment], they were just elected and did not know their scope and sometimes you would find them talking about issues that they are not supposed to be concerned about.”*

Both respondent groups agreed that the levels of empowerment of the ward committees were low because this had been previously neglected. The groups also agreed that this matter was receiving attention from the municipality and hence holds promise for the future.

### **3.5 Summary**

This chapter presented the research findings of the empirical study along four key themes, i.e. needs identification and prioritisation; mechanisms for participation; decision making and empowerment of ward committees. Where applicable, the empirical findings were verified by findings of the literature study. The findings indicated both similarities and contradictions in the views of the community and municipality respondent groups. This in itself poses challenges for the successful implementation of the IDP.

Chapter 4 will discuss the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher will indicate how the research goal and objectives of the study were achieved and will discuss the conclusions and recommendations of the study. The conclusions are based on the key findings derived from the empirical study, as presented in Chapter 3, as well as the findings of the literature study as discussed in Chapter 2.

The guiding questions in this study were: *What is the extent and effectiveness of community participation in the IDP process in the Govan Mbeki Municipality? What is the role of community participation? How effective is community participation in the IDP and what role does decision making play in the IDP?* These questions guided the researcher in achieving the research goal and objectives in this study.

#### 4.2 Research Goal and Objectives

The aim of this study was to determine the role of community participation in the IDP process of Govan Mbeki Municipality. This aim was achieved through the realisation of the following objectives:

- *Contextualisation of the policy framework for IDPs in South Africa.*

This objective was achieved through the literature review contained in chapter 2 (compare 2.4). The Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) provides the policy framework for IDPs in South Africa.

- *Exploration of the extent and effectiveness of community participation during the IDP process, i.e. analysis of community needs, defining local vision and objectives, project design for meeting identified needs, integration with other programmes and adoption of the IDP.*

This objective was achieved by means of the literature review in chapter 2 (compare 2.6.1 until 2.6.5). The findings of the empirical study indicated that the community plays a role in identifying its needs during the needs identification process of the IDP (compare the findings in chapter 3, 3.4).

- *Exploration of decision making in the process of IDP consultation.*

This objective was achieved by both the literature review in chapter 2 (compare 2.2.2) and by means of the empirical study where the researcher investigated the decision making process of the IDP (compare 3.4.3). The two respondent groups had different views concerning the participation of the community in decision making.

- *Proposal of guidelines for the role of the community in participating to optimize the success of the IDP in local development.*

In this chapter, informed by the key findings of the study, the researcher will make recommendations and propose guidelines for enhancing community participation in the IDP.

### **4.3 Conclusions**

The conclusions of the study presented in this section are based on the key findings of the study. In the following discussion, each key finding will be followed by a conclusion.

- The findings revealed that the role of community participation in the IDP process is mainly in identifying those needs of the community that require municipal attention (see 3.4.1).
  - It can be concluded that although community participation in the IDP process is critical in forcing development planners to respond to the needs of the community, it cannot be limited to needs identification only. Emmet (2000: 508) asserts that the lowest form of participation is centred on and limited to the identification of needs and gaps and that this has the potential of creating attitudes that view the community in a negative and prejudiced manner.
  
- The literature findings revealed that although the IDP process extends through five phases (see 2.6.1 - 2.6.2), the empirical findings (see 3.4.1) indicate that the role of the community is limited to phase 1 and that the community perceives this limitation as the result of exclusive management by the municipality (see 3.4.1 and 3.4.3).
  - It could be concluded that the role of the community in the IDP process other than in phase 1 is limited and hence not clear. A lack of understanding of community participation in all the phases of the IDP impacts on the successful implementation of the IDP since the community takes no ownership of the "development" imposed on them by the municipality. In addition, the lack of community participation creates a perception amongst community members that they are utterly dependent on the municipality. This discourages communities from engaging in finding solutions to their current problems.
  
- Community meetings are a dominant mechanism used to engage the community in the IDP process; however, the lack of tangible results in communities despite attendance discourages this (see 3.4.2.2).

- It can be concluded that the success of community meetings should not be measured by mere attendance but by its ability to transform needs and wants into tangible solutions. The community becomes committed to participation in the IDP process if their participation yields results and, in this case, participation should translate into a meeting of the community's needs.
- The findings indicated that there was a lack of community participation in the decision-making process of the IDP. The community respondents perceived the current decision-making process as controlled by the municipality, lacking in consultation with the community (see 3.4.3).
  - It could be concluded that the current decision-making process does not allow the community an opportunity to directly inform the IDP processes. Instead, the municipality accepts representational participation through the ward councillor as adequate. Community respondents expressed a desire for their participation and involvement in decision making to be direct through their representation and to be consulted on issues that affected them. The current decision-making process is not acceptable to the community.
- The community respondents who were themselves members of the ward committee felt undermined by the current flow of information from the municipality to the community on the issues that concerned them.
  - It was concluded that the role of ward committee members in the IDP process is unsatisfactory. Members seem to be unaware of or restricted in their role on issues that are of primary concern to the community.

- The findings indicated that the ward committees had limited knowledge and understanding of the IDP process despite the fact that they were expected to facilitate and take part in it.
  
- It could be concluded that the municipality does not create an enabling environment for meaningful community participation because those who participate are not informed. Since community participation in the IDP is ill-informed, this poses limitations on any impact that it might make. The community respondents had a limited understanding of the IDP and their roles and responsibilities, particularly with regard to where their participation began and ended. Failure to ensure that the community is capacitated and empowered to participate and challenge decisions that they are not in support of will result in the current mechanisms and structures being ineffective.

Based on the above conclusions, the researcher concluded that, in order for community participation to have maximum impact, an enabling environment for participation should be created and this includes addressing the institutional obstacles as well as the capacity gaps within the community.

#### **4.4 Recommendations**

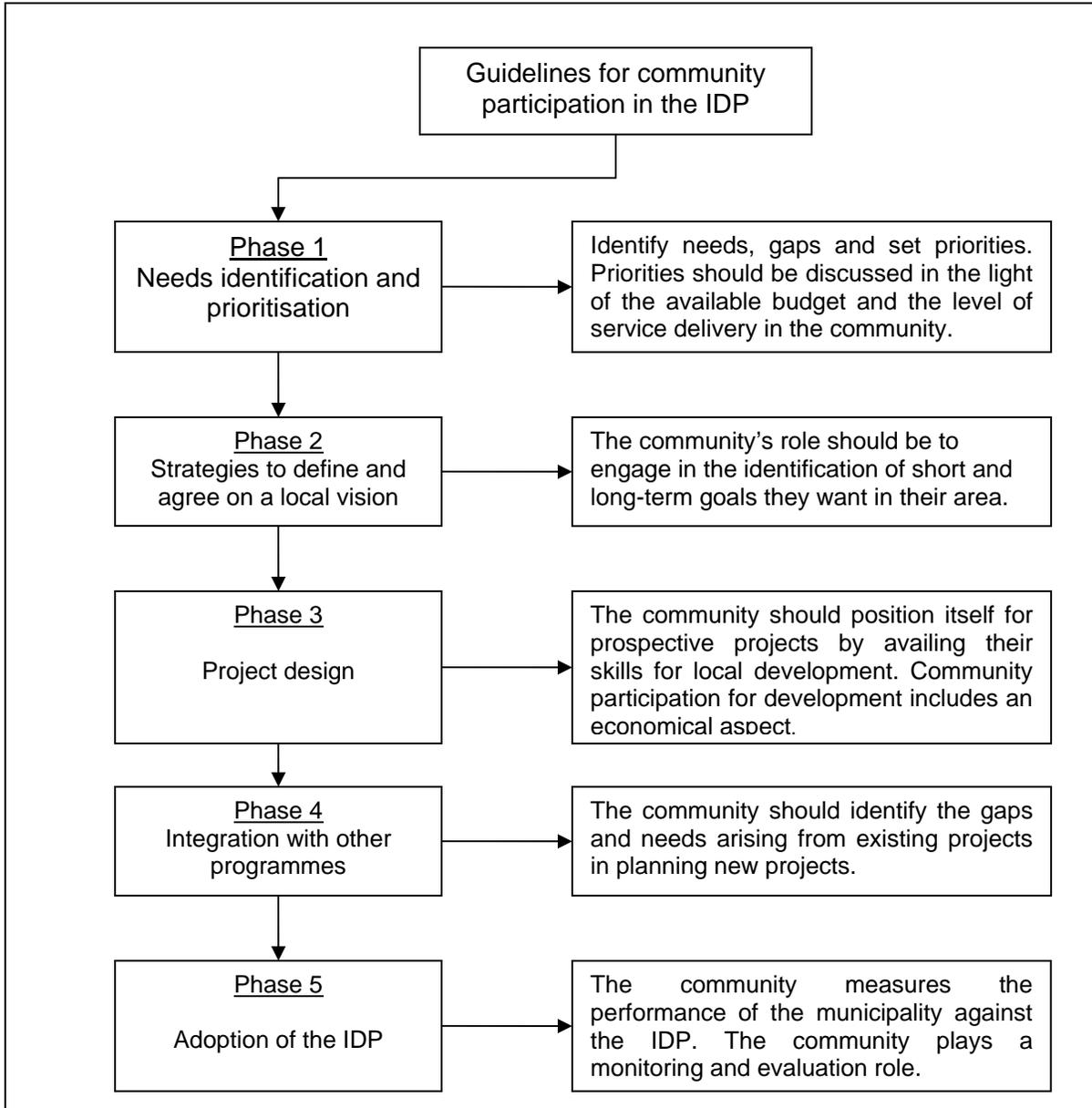
Local government is obliged to create an enabling environment that allows space for communities to interact with the municipality on an equal footing. In view of the above conclusions, the researcher makes the following recommendations which aim to enhance community participation in the IDP:

- *IDP meetings*: IDP meetings should be structured by the municipality in such a way that they give a hearing to other community related issues that draw interest from the middle and working classes of the community. They should not appear to be meetings of the “poor”. Although the current status of the infrastructure development in the so-called black residential

areas is such that these issues should be given a priority, a broader view which might entail the development of human capital, local economy, and social capital should be addressed. In so doing, the holistic and integrated development that is aimed for in the IDP could be achieved.

- *Prioritisation of needs:* direct community participation during the needs prioritisation process is essential and should encompass the views of the community. It is recommended that this process be handled in the community during the needs identification stage. It is crucial that the community should inform this process so that they will begin to identify with development in the area as and when it unfolds. Obviously, this has the risk of creating expectations that the highlighted issues will be tackled, and the responsibility lies with the municipality to discuss the financial implications of such priorities openly. The municipality should therefore streamline the needs identification and the needs prioritisation processes so that the community can participate directly, as they have shown interest in doing so.
  
- *Decision making:* in view of the lack of opportunity for local participation, it becomes crucial that the municipality creates a platform for the community itself to be present when decisions of a particular ward are discussed and ultimately taken. This will also assist in clarifying the constraints that a municipality may have to grapple with when delivering services to the people.
  
- *Empowerment:* in order for community participation to have an impact on the IDP process, it is essential that community participants are well informed. It is therefore recommended that capacity-building workshops be purpose centred and responsive to any gaps in capacity that community participants may reveal. It is further recommended that external service providers such as academic institutions conduct this

- training. This will help to ensure that the power imbalance between the municipal official and the community respondents is eliminated. As part of empowerment, it is strongly recommended that both the community and the municipality assess the impact of the training offered as well as the learning gaps. It is further suggested that the municipality should award a budget and adequate time to the process of empowering ward committee structures and that this process should take place at regular intervals and not post-elections only. This will help to ensure that empowerment becomes progressive and opportunities to address capacity gaps are created.
- *Role of the community:* given the essential role played by the ward committees in reporting community problems to the municipality, it is recommended that the ward councillors who represent the municipality at community level should, prior to providing feedback to the community, provide municipal feedback to the ward committee on issues at hand as well as possible ways of dealing with them. This will avoid the impression that the ward committee is a problem raising entity which does not have any influence on the outcome or solutions of the municipality. A joint problem-solving mechanism should be adopted.
  - *Guidelines for implementation:* the researcher proposes the following broad guidelines (see Figure 4.1) for community participation in the respective phases of the IDP process.



**Figure 4.1:** Proposed guidelines for community participation in the IDP

It is recommended that the above recommendations and the proposed guidelines for implementation on improving community participation in the IDP be implemented, evaluated and integrated in the current IDP process of Govan Mbeki Municipality.

- Finally, the researcher recommends *an evaluative research* project on the implementation of the proposed guidelines to determine the impact that full participation of all racial groups in all the phases would have on the role of community participation in the IDP process.

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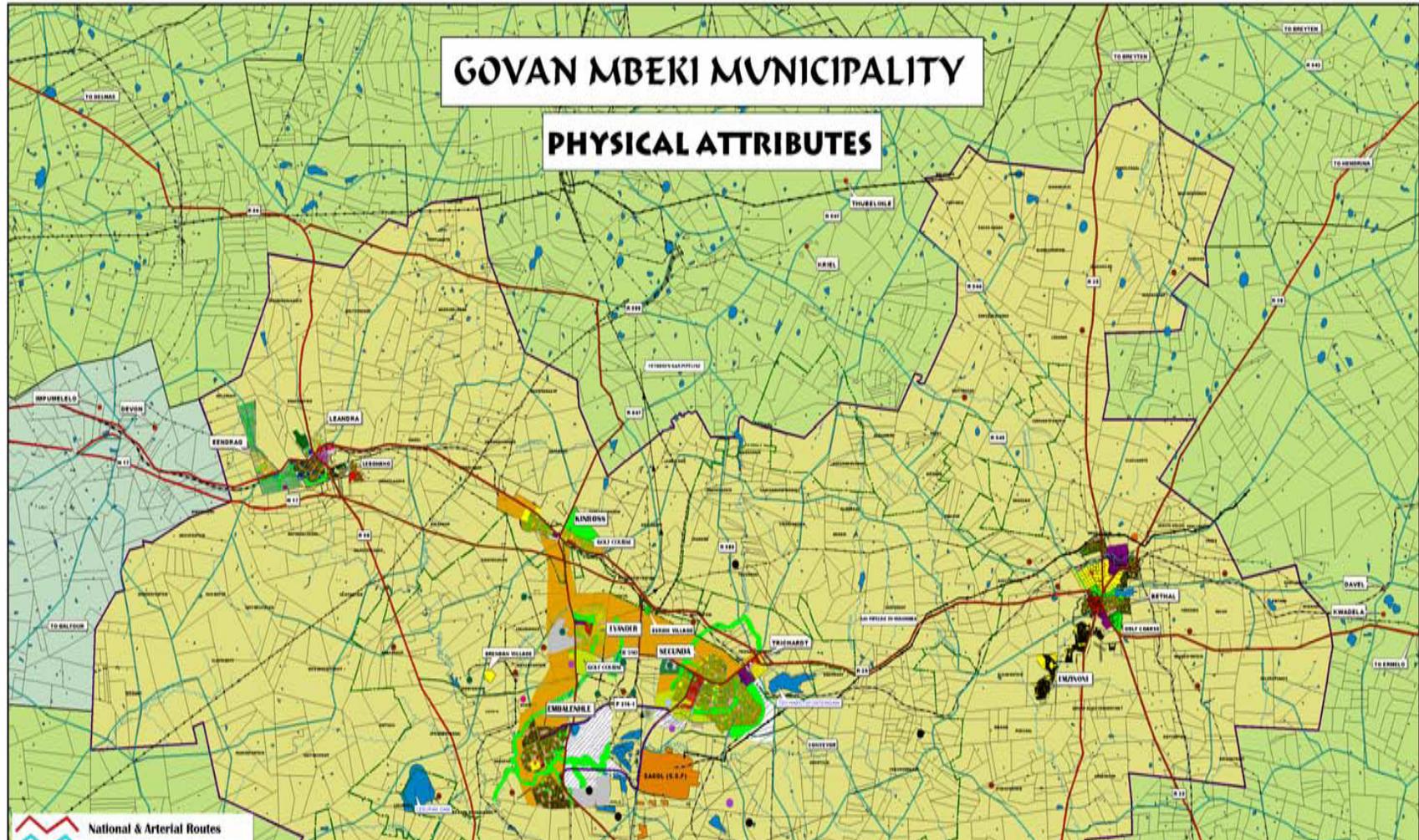
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## Appendix 1



## **Appendix 2**

## **Appendix 3**

## **Appendix 4**

### **Consent Form**

**Research study: The role of community participation in the Integrated Development Plan of Govan Mbeki Municipality.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (the respondent), have been asked to participate in a research project titled: The role of community participation in the integrated development plan (IDP) of Govan Mbeki municipality. The purpose of the study is to explore the role of community participation in the IDP process.

The researcher (Elizabeth Tshabalala) is a master's degree student at the University of Pretoria, Department of Social Work and Criminology. She is required to subscribe to a code of ethics that respects participants' rights. The researcher will make every effort to safeguard the confidentiality of the information provided by the participants. I understand that any information obtained from this study that can be identified with me will remain confidential and will not be given to anyone without my permission.

I have been requested to take part in a focus group interview conducted by the researcher and have been assured that there will be no risks or anticipated discomforts suffered for participating in this research study. I understand that the researcher will neither offer any benefits nor incentives for my participation. I am aware that it is anticipated that through my participation, this study will enhance my understanding of the IDP process.

I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate in this study. I also understand that if I do agree to participate, I have the right to change my mind at any time and terminate my participation. My signature below indicates that I have given my informed consent to participate in the above-described project and further indicates that:

- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the described project and my participation and that my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I have been permitted to read this document and have been given a signed copy of it.
- My participation in this study does not require me to give up any legal right.

I understand that if at any time I would like additional information about this project, I can contact the researcher at the following contact numbers or e-mail address:

Fax: (013) 243 5225

Cell: 082 796 7744

E-mail: [lizzyt@bks.co.za](mailto:lizzyt@bks.co.za)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix 5

### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATIVES

#### ***Goal of the study***

The goal of the study is to determine the role of community participation in the IDP process of Govan Mbeki Municipality.

#### **Biographical information**

1. How long have you been employed as a municipal official at Govan Mbeki municipality?
2. What is the nature of your involvement in the IDP process of Govan Mbeki?

#### **Section 1: Development and community participation in the IDP process**

- 1.1 The Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) states that local government should become developmental in its approach. What is your understanding of a *developmental approach*?
- 1.2 The IDP is the framework upon which local development takes place. Based on the practice of your municipality, how does community participation occur in the IDP process?
- 1.3 What is the purpose and role of community participation in the Govan Mbeki IDP process?
- 1.4 To what extent does community participation affect decision-making in the municipality, in particular with regard to the IDP process?
- 1.5 In what way could the community's decision-making role be expanded?
- 1.6 What are the challenges facing community participation in the IDP process of the Govan Mbeki municipal area?

## **Section 2: Participation through representation by structures**

***Community participation in the IDP process of the Govan Mbeki Municipality takes place through community based structures. In relation to this:***

- 2.1 How does the municipality identify the stakeholders they invite to the IDP consultation meetings?
- 2.2 How representative of all relevant communities are the participating organizations?
- 2.3 To what extent are the participating organizations capable of articulating the interests of their communities/ constituencies?
- 2.4 How do the representatives of the participating organizations account to their organizations as far as the decisions made in the IDP are concerned?
- 2.5 What influence do organizations have in the IDP?
- 2.6 How do community members who do not belong to structures, or whose structures are not invited to the IDP process, participate in the IDP process?

## **Section 3: Recommendations**

- 3.1 What suggestions do you have to enhance community participation in the Govan Mbeki Municipality?

## Appendix 6

### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

#### ***Goal of the study***

The goal of the study is to determine the role of community participation in the IDP process of Govan Mbeki Municipality.

#### ***Biographical information of participants***

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Ward of representation
4. Time period of involvement
5. Capacity of involvement
6. How many members does the structure you represent consist of?

#### **Section 1: Community participation in the IDP process**

- 1.1 What is your understanding of community participation in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of Govan Mbeki?
- 1.2 At which stages of Govan Mbeki's IDP process does community participation occur?
- 1.3 What is the role of community participation in the IDP process?
- 1.4 What is your experience of community participation in the IDP process?
- 1.5 How effective is community participation in decision-making in the IDP of the municipality?
- 1.6 The IDP aims to respond to local community needs. Given the limitation of resources coupled with community diversity, how does the community agree on issues of priority?

- 1.7 What imposes limitations on the role of the community in the participatory processes of the IDP?
- 1.8 What are the obstacles to community participation in the IDP of Govan Mbeki?

## ***Section 2: Participation through representation by structures***

***Community participation in the IDP process of the Govan Mbeki Municipality takes place through community based structures. In relation to this:***

- 2.1 How representative of all communities in the municipal area are the organizations participating in the IDP process?
- 2.2 How capable are the ward committees participating organizations of articulating the interests of their communities/ constituencies?
- 2.3 How do the representatives of ward committees participating organizations account to their organizations?
- 2.4 How effective is community participation through organizational representation, in particular with regard to the meeting of people's needs?
- 2.5 How are the voices of community members who do not belong to structures heard?

## **Section 3: Recommendations**

- 3.1 What suggestions do you have to enhance community participation in the municipality?

## Appendix 7

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION- COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

#### *Goal of the study*

The goal of the study is to determine the role of community participation in the IDP process of Govan Mbeki Municipality.

#### *Biographical information of participants*

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Age

18- 25 yrs

26 -35 yrs

36- 45 yrs

46 -55 yrs

56 & older

3. Ward of representation

4. Time period of involvement in community participation in the IDP

5. Capacity of involvement

6. How many members does the structure you represent consist of?

## Appendix 8

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION – MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATIVES

#### *Goal of the study*

The goal of the study is to determine the role of community participation in the IDP process of Govan Mbeki Municipality.

#### *Biographical information of participants*

1. Gender

 Male Female

2. Age

 18- 25 yrs 26 -35 yrs 36- 45 yrs 46 -55 yrs 56 & older

3. How long have you been employed as a municipal official at Govan Mbeki municipality?

4. What is the nature of your involvement in the IDP process of Govan Mbeki?

---

5. In which section of the municipality are you employed?

# GOVAN MBEKI MUNICIPALITY

HEAD OFFICE:  
CENTRAL BUSINESS AREA, SECUNDA  
P/BAG X 1017, SECUNDA, 2302, RSA  
TEL: +27 (0) 17 620-6000  
FACSIMILE +27 (0) 17 634-8019  
E-MAIL: [GBRECORDS@GOVANMBEKI.GOV.ZA](mailto:GBRECORDS@GOVANMBEKI.GOV.ZA)  
WEBSITE: [WWW.GOVANMBEKI.GOV.ZA](http://WWW.GOVANMBEKI.GOV.ZA)



REGIONAL OFFICES:  
MARK STREET, BETHAL  
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TEL: +27 (0) 17 624-3000  
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1 MAIN STREET, LEBOHANG  
P/BAG X 5, LEANDRA, 2265  
TEL: +27 (0) 17 683-0054  
FACSIMILE: +27 (0) 17 683-0385

YOUR REFERENCE: GUGULETHU SIBEKO  
OUR REFERENCE: LIZZY TSHABALALA IDP RESEARCH STUDY

22 March 2006

Department of Social Work and Criminology  
M.SD (Soc.Dev. and Policy)

Attention: Ms KE Tshabalala

**RESEARCH STUDY: THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE  
INTERGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF GOVAN MBEKI MUNICIPALITY**

I refer to your request to conduct the abovementioned research with our Council.

We confirm acceptance of your proposal to conduct the abovementioned research our Municipality subject to the following conditions:-

1. The studies are fully paid off by yourself or your institution and Council will not be liable for any costs regarding yourself and the project as per your request.
2. You will be requested to work through office of the Municipal Manager and/ or his representative only.
3. All information to be requested will be given in good faith and Council or its employees will not be held responsible for any mistake or delays which may occur during the research period.

Thank you.

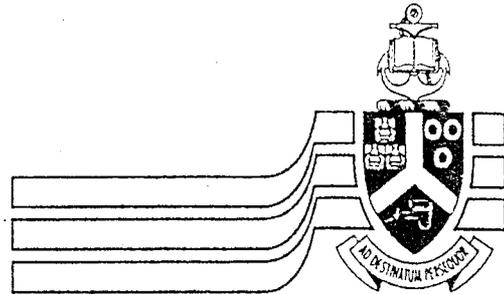
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Selwyn Naidoo".

**SELWYN NAIDOO**  
**ACTING MUNICIPAL MANAGER.**

## Appendix 3

**Members:**

**Research Proposal and Ethics Committee**  
Dr P Chiroro; Dr M-H Coetzee; Prof C Delpont;  
Dr JEH Grobler; Prof KL Harris; Ms H Klopper;  
Prof E Krüger; Prof B Louw (Chair); Prof A Mlambo;  
Mr C Puttergill; Prof D Prinsloo; Prof G Prinsloo;  
Dr E Taljard; Prof C Walton; Prof A Wessels;  
Mr FG Wolmarans



University of Pretoria

Research Proposal and Ethics Committee  
Faculty of Humanities

17 July 2006

Dear Professor Lombard

**Project:** *The role of community participation in the Integrated Development Plan of Govan Mbeki Municipality*  
**Researcher:** EK Tshabalala  
**Supervisor:** Prof A Lombard  
**Department:** Social Work and Criminology  
**Reference number:** 26370279

Thank you for your prompt response to the Committee's requests of 15 June 2006.

I have pleasure in informing you that the Research Proposal and Ethics Committee formally approved the above study at an *ad hoc* meeting held on 13 July 2006. The approval is subject to the candidate abiding by the principles and parameters set out in her application and research proposal in the actual execution of the research.

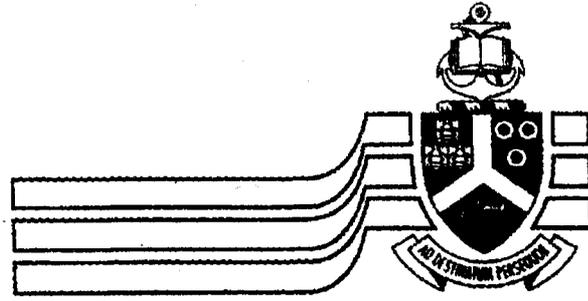
The Committee requests you to convey this approval to Ms Tshabalala.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

Prof Brenda Louw  
Chair: Research Proposal and Ethics Committee  
Faculty of Humanities  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

## Appendix 4



### University of Pretoria

Department of Social Work and Criminology  
Tel. +27 12 420-2325  
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E-mail: antoinette.Lombard@up.ac.za

#### Consent Form

**Research study: The role of community participation in the Integrated Development Plan of Govan Mbeki Municipality.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (the respondent), have been asked to participate in a research project titled: The role of community participation in the integrated development plan (IDP) of Govan Mbeki municipality. The purpose of the study is to explore the role of community participation in the IDP process.

The researcher (Elizabeth Tshabalala) is a master's degree student at the University of Pretoria, Department of Social Work and Criminology. She is required to subscribe to a code of ethics that respects participants' rights. The researcher will make every effort to safeguard the confidentiality of the information provided by the participants. I understand that any information obtained from this study that can be identified with me will remain confidential and will not be given to anyone without my permission.

I have been requested to take part in a focus group interview conducted by the researcher and have been assured that there will be no risks or anticipated discomforts suffered for participating in this research study. I understand that the researcher will neither offer any benefits nor incentives for my participation. I am aware that it is anticipated that through my participation, this study will enhance my understanding of the IDP process.

I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate in this study. I also understand that if I do agree to participate, I have the right to change my mind at any time and terminate my participation. My signature below indicates that I have given my informed consent to participate in the above-described project and further indicates that:

- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the described project and my participation and that my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I have been permitted to read this document and have been given a signed copy of it.
- My participation in this study does not require me to give up any legal right.

I understand that if at any time I would like additional information about this project, I can contact the researcher at the following contact numbers or e-mail address:

Fax: (013) 243 5225

Cell: 082 796 7744

E-mail: [lizzyt@bks.co.za](mailto:lizzyt@bks.co.za)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date