

## A Qualitative Analysis of Democratic Participatory Development in Ngaka Modiri Molema District, North West Province, South Africa

L. P. Bogopane

*Faculty of Commerce and Administration, School of Management Sciences, North West University, Mafikeng Campus, North West Province, South Africa*

**KEYWORDS** Sustainable Development. Community Engagement and Mobilisation. Democratic Decision-making and Problem-solving. Strategic Partnerships and Social Networks. Team-working

**ABSTRACT** Democratic participatory development has recently been identified as one of the key driving forces behind the successful and sustainable implementation of community development programmes and projects in South Africa. Its contribution to the successful completion of community development programmes and projects cannot be compromised. Within the context of this manuscript, the term 'democratic participatory development' is understood to mean a people-driven process that calls for all government institutions, local authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and community-based organisations (CBOs) to modify not only the ways in which they do things (*modus operandi*) but also their attitudes, methods, and procedures in their attempts of enhancing and consolidating the functionality and performance of their development programmes and projects. It is the intent of this article to provide a detailed qualitative analysis and critique of the underlying assumptions and coherence of democratic participatory development as they have manifested themselves in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District of the North West Province. Four pertinent dimensions that are considered to be the prerequisite of a functional and performing democratic participatory development are identified, namely: (1) viability and sustainability; (2) capability; (3) accountability; and (4) purpose-driven, and these are used as the basis for this analysis. Qualitative paradigm and its corresponding research design, as well as qualitative data collection methods and analysis techniques are employed, and the findings reveal that, overall, the functionality and performance of democratic participatory development in the District are not viable and sustainable. Finally, the article suggests a democratic participatory development model that if properly implemented, can lead to the improvement of democratic participatory development process in the District.

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Democratic participatory development has recently emerged as a driving force behind sustainable development revolution, and its contribution to the successful completion of community development programmes and projects cannot be underestimated. This paper represents a broad spectrum of research, teaching, public practitioner, and consultation background, and it employs a qualitative interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary paradigm to analyse and assess participatory development principles and strategies in Ngaka Modiri Molema District of the North West Province in South Africa. The manuscript also serves as an attempt to present an academic text for students at universities, universities of technology and technical colleges throughout the province. More importantly, the article focuses on the development practitioner as a change agent at the local government level, project managers, development consultants, and local government councillors and politicians, as well as non-government organi-

sations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and other organs of civil society. The researcher is of the view that we all somehow can make a difference in the District and as part of the mutual learning process the article also welcomes inputs from readers and other interested parties and/or stakeholders.

Developmental local government is at the centre of the democratic system that has emerged in South Africa since the socio-political transition and transformation. Democracy can only serve its purpose when it connects with, and gives expression to the daily problems and challenges of ordinary South Africans. For this particular reason, developmental local government remains at the forefront in involving residents in all aspects of local governance and development, by allowing them practical and effective opportunities for participation. This means that residents and other civil society organisations must regard developmental local government as an institution that belongs to them and as a legitimate and rightful vehicle for democratic expression. For the purpose of this

article, four themes of a functional democratic participatory development are identified as: (1) viability and sustainability; (2) capability; (3) accountability; and (4) purpose-driven dimension. These themes are then used as a basis for this analysis.

### Background to the Problem

History has taught us that active community participatory development is fundamental and crucial to the success and viability/sustainability of developmental programmes and projects in any given community. Yet in the North West Province in general, and Ngaka Modiri Molema District in particular, the functionality and the performance of participatory development in the development programmes and projects remain evasive and illusive. The reality is that, as explained by development theorists and practitioners for many decades: (1) active participation of ordinary people in their own development, (2) community social learning, and (3) community empowerment, constitutes the building-blocks of development. As a democratic country, South Africa is expected to be among those countries that are poised to capture active participatory democracy as a vehicle for socio-economic development and transformation. This means that (a) active community participatory development, (b) community learning activities and principles, and (c) community know-how and resource base serve as important ingredients for efficient and effective development programme and project performance and functionality. Even though active community participation processes are often blamed for their imperfection and susceptibility and openness to abuse, available evidence shows that transparent deliberations result in a much wider range of possible judgments regarding desirable strategy options, as well as more effective means of bringing together a range of stakeholders in ways that are fair, transparent, and legitimate.

Effectively, active community participation refers to a people-driven process that calls for all government institutions, local authorities, non-government organisations (NGOs), and community-based organisations (CBOs) to modify not only the ways in which they do things (*modus operandi*) but also their attitudes, methods, and procedures in their attempts of enhancing the functionality and the performance of their

development programmes and projects. Within the context of the provisions of both the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development published in 1994, the White Paper on Local Government published in 1998, and the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, active participation of community stakeholders as beneficiaries in the development process ensures that development should relate to empowering and freeing people (Van Donk et al. 2008). This, in the long run, is expected to lead to the development of self-reliance, self-confidence, sense of pride, initiative, innovation, responsibility, accountability, skills capacity, and cooperation as part of human and community development.

Participation in the form of partnerships and networking with civil society remains a dominant theme in fields of mainstream development theories (Nederveen-Pieterse 2001). Within the ambit of this development mainstream, issues around (1) prioritising poverty reduction; (2) participation by the poor in decisions affecting their lives; (3) safety nets; (4) appropriate economic growth; (5) labour-intensive production processes; (6) democratisation; and (7) environmental protection and sustainability became more dominant and largely acceptable. Blair (2000) advocated for a broad-based *consensus* that democratic decentralisation will result in effective and efficient developmental local government that is responsive to the needs of the poor and can provide opportunities for participation around issues that matter most in people's lives. Within the context of this article, democratic participatory development is understood in terms of two dimensions: firstly, as a social discourse intended to identify those who view it as a useful process to legitimate state actions and fast-track compliance, and secondly, as an alternative and more radical view focused on civil society empowerment and state democratisation as the primary functions of participation. However, Parnell et al. (2002) highlighted the fact that these dimensions could lead to very different approaches to promoting and establishing participatory governance.

It is on the basis of this overview and within the scope of this article to provide a detailed analysis and critique of the underlying assumptions and coherence of the Ngaka Modiri Molema District government's policy framework pertaining to democratic participatory development, and attempt to forge for a viable model that can,

when properly applied, could lead to the efficient and effective functionality and performance of the democratic participatory development in the District. Even though the District has registered some progress in certain areas of the socio-economic development in the past decade and a half, there are still a number of stubborn challenges that serves as stumbling blocks to the successful achievement of a democratic participatory development process in the District. Central to these stumbling blocks, focus is hereby given to the following four:

- ♦ Viability and sustainability;
- ♦ Capability;
- ♦ Accountability; and
- ♦ Purpose-driven dimension.

### Problem Statement

Following from the above background is the key research problem underlying the study, which is stated thus:

*The democratic participatory development process in Ngaka Modiri Molema District is ineffective and inadequate to enable the District to carry its developmental mandate.*

Contributing to this key problem are the following sub-problems:

- ♦ *Viability and Sustainability of the Process:*

The position regarding the viability and sustainability of democratic participatory development process in the District

- ♦ *Capability of the Process:*

The position pertaining to the capability of the District to enhance democratic participatory development process in its area of jurisdiction

- ♦ *Accountability towards the Process:*

The level and the degree of accountability regarding democratic participatory development process in the District

- ♦ *Purpose-driven Dimension of the Process:*

The nature of elements constituting the purpose behind democratic participatory development process in the District

### Research Questions

This analysis centres on the following key research question and its sub-questions:

*Does the District's democratic participatory development process delivering on the desired outcomes on a viable and sustainable basis?*

Associated to this key question are the following sub-questions:

- ♦ *Viability and sustainability of democratic participatory development process in the District:*

Are democratic participatory development process structures, systems, strategies and procedures in the District viable and sustainable?

- ♦ *The District's capability to handle the challenges posed by democratic participatory development process:*

Are democratic participatory development process plans, policies, programmes, and projects in the District capable of handling the challenges posed by democratic participatory development in the District?

- ♦ *Accountability towards democratic participatory development process:*

What is the level and extent of accountability pertaining to the implementation of democratic participatory development process in the District?

- ♦ *Purpose-driven dimension of the democratic participatory development process in the District:*

Is democratic participatory development process in the District purpose-driven?

### Research Objectives

Linked to the research sub-problems stated above, are the following specific research objectives, which are to explore:

- ♦ The viability and sustainability of democratic participatory development process structures, systems, strategies, and procedures in the District;
- ♦ The capability of the District's democratic participatory development process plan, policies, programmes, and projects in tackling the challenges posed by democratic participatory development;
- ♦ The level and extent of accountability pertaining to the implementation of democratic participatory development process in the District; and
- ♦ Purpose-driven dimension of democratic participatory development process in the District.

### Theoretical Framework

To clearly understand and appreciate the democratic participatory development process

in the District, it becomes necessary to identify some of the pertinent elements that are characteristic of a democratic participatory development process in the so-called “viable, sustainable, and functional” municipality. To begin with, it must be pointed out that participation and partnerships with society are, and will remain fundamental themes in the development domain. A number of outstanding authors in development literature have alluded to the strong emergence of decentralisation as a key prerequisite for the successful and sustainable implementation of development programmes and projects, particularly at local community level.

In South Africa, this similar position was also captured and enhanced as it prevailed in almost all of the policies pronounced throughout government departments, in particular, between 1994 and 2000. In essence, this stemmed from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996; The Reconstruction and Development Programme Base Document, which later became to be known as an RDP White Paper and subsequently adopted as official government policy; and also the White Paper on Local Government, which was published in March, 1998. The latter holds that developmental local government is characterised by:

- ♦ Exercising municipal powers and functions in a manner which maximises their impact on social development and economic growth;
- ♦ Playing an integrating and coordinating role to ensure alignment between public (including all spheres of government) and private investment within the municipal area;
- ♦ Democratising development;
- ♦ Building social capital through providing community leadership and vision; and
- ♦ Seeking to empower marginalised and excluded groups within local communities. (Department of Provincial and Local Government 1998).

The other most important themes to be taken into consideration are that of effectiveness and efficiency. The former theme relates to the fact that local municipalities are urged to minimise wastage in the use of scarce resources available to them, by applying them both sparingly and prudently. On the other hand, efficiency suggests that with the scarce little resources that local municipalities have at their disposal, they

must thrive to maximise and optimise outcomes to the benefit of their local communities. In this respect, Minogue et al. (1998) suggests the following reform measures for local municipalities: (1) adoption of strategic planning techniques to develop rational frameworks to inform budgeting, resources allocation, definition of targets, and divisions of labour between managers and agencies; (2) various forms of incentives and sanctions to improve performance; (3) reduction of procedural rules in the public sector to create more discretionary room for senior and middle-level managers; (4) adoption and utilisation of various types of contracts to delineate lines of responsibility and accountability; (5) privatisation of public services in order to improve quality and coverage; (6) pursuit of public-private partnerships if full-scale privatisation is not viable; (7) whenever possible, opening up providers roles to competition between agencies or even departments within the public sector; (8) reducing the public sector wage bill through ‘down-sizing’ and ‘right-sizing’; and (9) eliminating all forms of subsidisation by charging full costs for services rendered.

It is generally accepted that this approach, amongst others, promises financial discipline and savings through greater effectiveness and efficiency, with less political risk as many local government responsibilities are shifted to other actors that can potentially be blamed for the lack of development. Paine (1999) is also of the view that these new public management (NPM) interpretive frameworks also provide simple answers for complex issues and clear procedural steps to solve specific problems, and so create a false sense of achievement. Often, in terms of narrow financial performance targets, certain successes are achieved, but this is typically divorced from indicators that deal with outputs and outcomes. On the other hand, Bardill (2000) argues that most of the assumptions and tools on the new public management approach are in evidence in the policy framework to restructure the public service in South Africa. This vision and approach are clearly spelled out in the White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service which was published in 1996, the ultimate objective of which was to make the public sector more representative, coherent, transparent, efficient, effective, accountable, and responsive to the needs of all. All these elements are essential to what can be considered to be a functional developmental local government.



### Empirical Analysis

The research problem and its sub-problems, the research question raised in this study, and the objectives identified, affected the nature of this discourse. For this particular reason, the use of qualitative approach /paradigm, qualitative research design, qualitative data collection methods, and data analysis techniques, was preferred as it has the potential to capture our imagination in the process of understanding how democratic participatory development process is perceived and carried out in Ngaka Modiri Molema District, and also encourages us to come up with a democratic participatory development process model that, if accurately implemented, can lead to the efficient, effective, viable, and sustainable performance and functionality of democratic participatory development process in the District (De Vos et al. 2011). Non-probability purposive sampling was used and the entire qualitative paradigm was adopted on the *rationale* that its data collection methods and data analysis techniques could, if carefully employed, lead to the enhancement of the validity, reliability, and the credibility of data, yet at the same time guard against possible bias in the data. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) present the view that qualitative approach can be adopted based on the justification that qualitative research captures reality and its complexity, in that despite commitment to documenting complexity of appearances, and their rejection of approaches which fail to do this, qualitative researchers, nevertheless, are engaged in processes of theoretical abstraction and data reduction, and that they cannot avoid doing so.

Ababio (2007) talks about *'marriage for development: ward committees as partners in participatory democracy'* in which he stress that for legitimate service delivery, participatory democracy and the mobilisation of masses in decision-making to determine what is good for them remain in line with national development objectives. In this regard, therefore, ward committees are designed to enhance developmental goals as partners in democratic participatory development. Such ward committees are expected to play an active partnership role in developmental local government functioning and performance. As elected representative structures of the community, ward committees are urged to liaise with local government authorities on wants, needs,

aspirations, and potential opportunities, threads, strengths, weaknesses, and problems of the residents. Moreover, they should act as effective and efficient facilitators of communication between the municipal councils and the residents they are supposed to represent. It therefore becomes clear that without strong and visionary ward committees as partners in development, the system of democratic governance and participatory developmental government will never be functional, and its performance will never be realised (Malan and Van Rooyen 2010)

The foundation of this article is primarily the conceptualisation and the contextualisation of democratic participatory development as a process that thrives well in an atmosphere where government partners and networks with the civil associations and organisations in service delivery activities. This *status quo* is critical to the development of a democratic and socially inclusive society and can therefore not be taken for granted. Echoing the same sentiments, Hicks (2006), talks about communitarians and others of similar ideological persuasions, who see themselves as taking a third position, identifying community or civil society as a 'third space' or 'third sector', which approximately intervenes between market excesses and state failure. In terms of this ideology, 'third sector' organisations mainly focus on ways of restructuring democratic development and reinvigorating civil society active participation in development, and thus stimulating the emergence of an active, reflective citizenry, and serving as a concrete foundation for public and private sectors partnerships. Organisations operating between markets and the state, variously labeled 'voluntary', 'non-profit', or 'third sector' are being rediscovered and reawakened by politicians, academics, and the media alike globally. Voluntary and community activity is viewed as fundamental to the development of a democratic, socially inclusive society (Sibanda 2011).

At local government level, the utilisation of ward committees as an effective tool for improving democratic participatory development process must not be compromised in any way. Local government plays a major role in providing basic services as a prerequisite for maintaining and enhancing a reasonable and acceptable standard of living. Smith (2007) highlights the fact that in attempting to strengthen democracy, the South African Government established the ward

committees system in December 2000, in accordance with Sections 72-78 of the Municipal Structures Act, Act 117 of 1998. The intent was to improve service delivery by bridging the gap between the respective communities and the municipal structures. Among others, ward committees should be able to enhance participatory government, by collectively organising communities concerning ward jurisdiction. Thornhill and Selepe (2010) also indicate that Local Government plays an important role in enforcing Municipal, Provincial, and National Government policies within municipalities to ensure effective and accountable democratic participatory development and service delivery in a specifically defined jurisdiction. For this reason, ward committees are recommended. Within the context of this article, a ward committee is perceived as an area-based committee whose boundaries coincide with a ward's boundary. However, these committees in terms of Sections 73 and 74 of the Municipal Structures Act, have no specifically assigned legislative and executive powers and duties. Nonetheless, these ward committees are established as committees that play an advisory role to the municipal councils.

Finally, incorporating local residents' issues into the integrated development plans (IDPs) of municipalities must be an all-inclusive and a holistic process that must adopt a multi-sectoral approach. The idea behind this approach is primarily to seek to influence the country's population dynamics in such a way that these dynamics are consistent with the achievement of democratic participatory development and sustainable human development. The integrated development planning framework of municipalities should be design in such a way that it streamlines democratic participatory development and makes it as cost-efficient and effective as possible, through the containment of budgets and the avoidance of over-spending. These plans must ensure that maximum and optimum use of available scarce resources results in efficient and well-managed democratic participatory development process. Consolidating this view, Mubangizi (2011) articulates the fact that the White Paper on Local Government (March 1998) requires municipalities to embark on integrated development planning, focusing on community-based goals. IDPs involve a process in which municipalities assess and prioritise local community needs, set goals, devise and implement

democratic participatory development programmes and projects, and budget and monitor progress. In fact, Section 35(1) of the Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000 refers to IDPs as municipalities' 'principal strategic planning instrument'.

**Empirical Discourse:** Within the parameters of the qualitative research, descriptive and exploratory paradigms were followed by focusing on Mafikeng, Ditsobotla, Ramotshere Moiloa, Ratlou, and Tswaing local municipalities as they all form part and parcel of Ngaka Modiri Molema District's most densely populated areas in the North West Province of South Africa. This exploration concludes with a gap analysis that aimed to determine and define required skills in delineating an ideal profile for democratic participatory development at local government level (Malefane and Khalo 2010).

**Population:** The population selected for this study was five local municipalities constituting the District. The District is located in the North West Province and shares the border with Botswana. It was officially inaugurated in 1995, and its area on jurisdiction covers the following local municipalities; Mafikeng, Ditsobotla (Lichtenburg), Ramotshere Moiloa (Zeerust), Ratlou (Stella and Setla-Kgobi areas), and Tswaing (Delareyville and Sanishof). The District covers an area of 31 039 square kilometres and has a total population of 764 351 (Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality 2010/2011)

**Sampling:** Non-probability purposive sampling technique Patton (2002) was suitable and mostly preferred as it allowed for selection on the basis of knowledge of the population and its elements—in other words, selection of respondents was based on the researcher's judgment and purpose of the study. The sample used in this study is presented in Table 1

### Description of the Sample

The sample consists of 72 respondents comprising of one executive mayor, one municipal manager and ten community representatives from Ngaka Modiri Molema District; one executive mayor, one municipal manager, and ten community representatives from Mafikeng local municipality; one executive mayor, one municipal manager, and ten community representatives from Ramotshere Moiloa local municipality; one executive mayor, one municipal manager, and ten

**Table 1: The sample of the study**

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Executive mayors</i>	<i>Municipal managers</i>	<i>Community representatives</i>	<i>Total</i>
Ngaka Modiri Molema District	1	1	10	12
Mafikeng Local	1	1	10	12
Ramotshere Moiloa Local	1	1	10	12
Ratlou Local	1	1	10	12
Ditsobotla Local	1	1	10	12
Tswaing Local	1	1	10	12
Total	6	6	60	72

community representatives from Ratlou local municipality; one executive mayor, one municipal manager, and ten community representatives from Ditsobotla local municipality; and one executive mayor, one municipal manager, and ten community representatives from Tswaing local municipality.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

Qualitative data collection and capturing methods and data analysis techniques were employed with due care in ensuring that the validity, reliability, credibility, objectivity and dependability of data were not compromised.

### Data Collection and Capturing

**Participant Observation:** This is a qualitative research method that necessitates direct contact with the subjects of observation. In this method, the researcher was involved in the one-continuum ranging from total involvement on the one hand and total observation on the other. This allowed the researcher to decide beforehand on the role he intended to take in the inquiry since the decision affects the total process of the inquiry. The researcher spent lengthy period of actively observing participants in their natural setting in their workplaces (Neuman 2000).

**In-depth Interviewing:** In-depth interviewing is the predominant mode of data collection in qualitative research. All interviews are interactional events and interviewers are deeply and unavoidably implicated in creating meanings that ostensibly reside within participants. The researcher engaged in this mode of data collection knowing that interviewing the participant involves description of the experiences, as well as involving reflection on the description. In this

study, after a lengthy uninterrupted period of preliminary interviews, the researcher prepared a detailed open-ended interview schedule, and on the basis of it, conducted in-depth interviews with the respondents (Krueger and Casey 2000).

**Qualitative Document Study:** In this study the researcher used a variety of non-personal documents such as minutes of meetings, agendas, internal office memos, newspapers, magazines, and government's legislative and policy documentation, with the knowledge that if these documents are studied and analysed for the purpose of scientific research, the method of document study as a data collection method becomes operative. Local government publications, journal articles on democratic participatory development, as well as minutes and agendas of the District meetings were used to amass the relevant and required data (Ritchie and Lewis 2003).

**Qualitative Case Study:** The researcher is of the view that a descriptive or factual statement makes a claim about what really is the case. Subsequently, there are various kinds of descriptive statements that allow the researcher to distinguish between types of descriptive statements according to the following dimensions: the number of cases covered by the description; the number of variables included in the description, and the level of measurement in this study. Cases lodged with the District and having special contribution to make, were secured and studied for the purpose of this particular analysis (Leedy and Ormrod 2001).

### Data Gathering Process

Data was gathered through participant observation and in-depth interviewing of executive mayors, municipal managers of the District itself and its constituent local municipalities and

community representatives and various community representatives. Relevant municipal legislative, policy and administrative documents were studied and scrutinised and appropriate democratic participatory development cases were explored and analysed. In this process, special care was taken to ensure that the validity, reliability, consistency, objectivity, authenticity, and credibility of the data remained intact. Moreover, vigilant approach was adopted to guard against bias in the data.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

**Qualitative Content Analysis:** Content analysis is described as a process of identifying patterns and themes of experiences research participants brings to the study: what patterns characterise their participation in the study, and what patterns of change are reported by and observed in the participants (Patton 2002). As a qualitative research method, content analysis played an important role in this study as it involves detailed and systematic examination of the content of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, and even biases. The contents of the relevant documents secured during data collection were subjected to rigorous analysis through this technique. The same is true with the information gathered through participant observation and responses from the in-depth interviews.

**Qualitative Case Study Analysis:** Case study is an intensive investigation of a single unit or an examination of multiple variables (Babbie and Mouton 2001). This method has been used in this study as it takes multiple perspectives into account and attempts to understand the influences of multilevel social systems of subjects' perspectives and behaviours—the defining characteristic of this method is its emphasis on an individual. In this study relevant cases from the District were assimilated and their relevance to the study cautiously scrutinised to assess their contribution to the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Viability and Sustainability of Democratic Participatory Development Process in the District

To be viable and sustainable, democratic participatory development process must be

based on effective and efficient structures, systems, strategies and processes, and these must be designed in such a way that they optimise and maximise their impact on social development and economic growth. This can only be achieved when a good local governance comes up with a shared vision that recognises and gives prominence to a wide role of community leadership and citizenship. Therefore, the fundamental role of such a government should be to facilitate the community in achieving its goals by creating an enabling environment in which many are willing and able to contribute in democratic participatory development process. This implies that the District must assume as a priority, the design of its democratic participatory development process' structures, systems, strategies and procedures and ensure that are supportive of this environment (Stoker 1999).

### The Capability of Democratic Participatory Development Process' Plans, Policies, Programmes and Projects in the District

The cornerstone of planning at local government level is the so-called *Integrated Development Planning (IDP)*. However, it is still a worrying factor to imagine why so many development programmes and projects in the District have failed and still continue to fail. A brief analysis of this *status quo* indicated that in almost all the cases, democratic participatory development process' plans, policies, programmes, and projects in the District are based on the ideas of the so-called *consultants*, who wrongfully claim to know and fully understand the needs and aspirations of local communities, only to realise that they know absolutely nothing about such needs and aspirations. When looking closer to these IDPs, one notices that such IDPs reflect only the misguided ambitions of these consultants, and in no ways represent the real needs and aspirations of the local communities. This implies that any form of exclusion of active community participation in the planning, policy-making, problem-solving; and programme and project evaluation and monitoring, will constitute an anomaly and possible recipe for disaster. Bekker and Van Zyl (2004) talk of promoting a development-oriented client interface and stress the fact that there must be alignment of municipal integrated development plans to the practice of the client interface between the municipalities and their communities.



### **The Level and Extent of Accountability Pertaining to the Implementation of Democratic Participatory Development Process in the District**

Recently, the theme of accountability has now become almost synonymous with the concept of democratic participatory development. Understandably so, the public demands accountability in return of the powers granted to the executive to raise and spend revenue. The public sector response by enforcing internal accountability measures and by reporting to the public on how money is spent and on the successes and/or failures of development programmes and projects. Democratic governments typically create and sustain independent public *institutions of accountability* that are empowered to oversee the government's actions and demands explanations. Above all, new policies and legislation that have brought about new modes of thinking, greater responsiveness to public needs and demands as well as rationalisation and integration of the formally unequal apartheid-era public sector organisations in South Africa (Davids et al. 2009).

### **The Purpose-Driven Dimension of Democratic Participatory Development Process in the District**

The purpose that drives democratic participatory development process in the District must be made clear and unambiguous and must be logically well-defined. Above all, stakeholders in the democratic participatory development process must, through training and education, be empowered to understand what is really required of them, and be strongly urged to uphold and own the democratic participatory development purpose in the entire District. Arguably, this process will entail skilling the entire local communities in the District and turn them into knowledgeable and powerful residents who are up to the challenge of taking active participation in their civic responsibilities. To succeed in this endeavour, Van Dijk (2004) speaks about approaches to and types of training, and stress the following important issues in the learning experience: (1) action learning values collaboration, (2) personal autonomy, (3) active engagement and, (4) personal relevance. Based on the findings, discussion, and results of this analysis, the article intended to suggest a model, that

if can be successfully implemented can lead to the improvement to the functionality and performance of democratic participatory development in the District.

From the stated objectives of the study, the following findings are thus presented:

In respect of these objectives, the study revealed that:

**Objective 1:** Exploration of the viability and sustainability of democratic participatory development process structures, systems, strategies, and procedures in the District.

**Finding 1:** The study revealed that the democratic participatory development process' structures, systems, strategies, procedures were not sufficiently and adequately viable and sustainable to enable the District to meet its developmental challenges

**Objective 2:** Exploration of the capability of the District's democratic participatory development process' plans, policies, programmes, and project

**Finding 2:** In respect of this objective, the study found that the District's democratic participatory development process plans, policies, programmes, and projects were not clearly articulated, thus making it difficult to fully assess and ascertain their capacity as drivers of democratic participatory development process in the District

**Objective 3:** Exploration of the level and extent of accountability pertaining to the implementation of democratic participatory development process in the District.

**Finding 3:** The study discovered that the level and the degree of accountability in respect of the implementation of democratic participatory development in the District could not be established as roles and responsibilities of employees and other relevant stakeholders were not clearly defined, coordinated, and integrated

**Objective 4:** Exploration of the purpose-driven dimension of the democratic participatory development process in the District

**Finding 4:** The purpose behind the implementation of democratic participatory development process in the District could not be properly ascertained and was found to be lacking and confusing

## **CONCLUSION**

This article is a qualitative analysis of the democratic participatory development process

in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District. The socio-economic and political transition and transformation imperatives led to the emergence of developmental local government as the centre of the democratic systems in South Africa. The understanding derived from this manuscript is that democracy will and can, only realise its purpose if and only if, it connects with, and gives expression to the daily problems and challenges facing ordinary South Africans. Therefore, developmental local government is expected to be in the forefront in involving local residents in all

aspects of governance and development. As a sphere of government at community level, developmental local government must allow local residents both practical and effective means of participation. In the same breadth, local communities must, through their civic society organisations, regard developmental government as an institution that belongs to them, and also accept it as a legitimate and rightful vehicle for local democratic expression. Notwithstanding, it still remains a puzzle that in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District, the functionality and perfor-

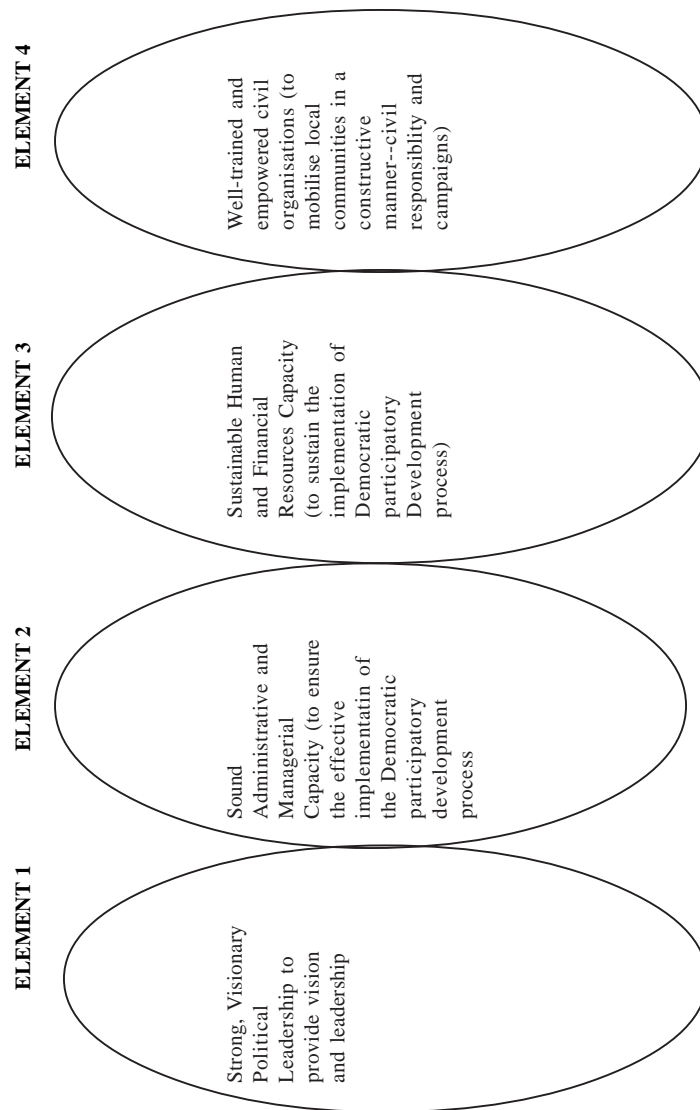


Fig. 1. The relationship of the elements constituting the model

mance of the democratic participatory development process' programmes and projects remain evasive, illusive, and thus questionable.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### The Suggested Democratic Participatory Development Process Model

This model is referred to as a *chain relationship democratic participatory development process model* which first identifies and defines the actual participants/stakeholders/role-players in the democratic participatory development process, and then describes their relationship in the development process as a *chain relationship*, thus considering the relationship amongst the various participants/stakeholders/role-players in the development process as similar to that of various parts of a chain. This model identifies and defines the following elements in the development process: (1) strong visionary political leadership; (2) sound administrative and managerial capacity; (3) sustainable human and financial resources capacity; and (4) well-trained and empowered civic organisations that are expected to mobilise local communities in a constructive manner. The relationship amongst these elements is presented in Figure 1.

### Brief Description of the Model

**Element 1:** This element suggests that a functional democratic participatory development process will require a strong visionary political leadership that will not only provide the leadership and vision, but also spearhead the formulation and adoption of well-thought democratic participatory development structures, systems, strategies, and procedures in the District.

**Element 2:** Under this element, sound administrative and managerial capacity is necessary to enable the District to develop and implement strategic plans, policies, programmes and projects pertaining to the democratic participatory development process in an efficient, effective, viable and sustainable manner. This implies that administrators and managers must be adequately empowered to live up to the challenge in this regard.

**Element 3:** To evaluate and monitor the level and extent of accountability with regard to democratic participatory development in the Dis-

trict in a sustainable manner, adequate human and financial resources must be provided. Roles and responsibilities pertaining to the use of financial resources must be clearly articulated. Any use of public funds must be fully and timeously accounted for.

**Element 4:** The purpose and the success of democratic participatory development can be fully realised if and only if it is made clear to the members of local communities. This in turn will require that local communities should be fully trained, educated, and empowered so that they could take full accountability for and responsibility of their civic rights and obligations. A strong civic culture and awareness remains a prerequisite towards all development efforts.

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