Public Participation and Accountability in Local Government with Particular Reference to Jozini Municipality

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ABSTRACT This paper examines whether public participation and accountability in local government assist in improving service delivery and whether community members consider their involvement in the participation process to be meaningful. In examining public participation and accountability, the objectives of the paper were to determine (i) whether the municipality has mechanisms in place to ensure public participation and accountability, (ii) the existence or otherwise of mechanisms for public participation, mechanisms for holding councillors accountable for the delivery of services and determining how effective they are, (iii) whether, if mechanisms for public participation and accountability exist, the municipality has measures that determine their effectiveness for service delivery, and (iv) whether the community has knowledge in terms of how the municipality works in assisting the participation processes. This paper sheds new light on the neglected issue of public accountability and the need to establish sound relationships between local government and the communities they service. Furthermore, the paper shows that without public participation, it is often difficult to hold local government officials and politicians accountable for their actions. It also shows that effective processes of public participation and more accountable local government gain trust from the public.

INTRODUCTION

After South Africa successfully dismantled apartheid in 1994, the new government devoted itself to creating an extensive participatory processes in the different levels of government. Through participatory processes, local government should be in a position to know what affects communities and try to deliver according to their needs. According to Lawton and Macaulay (2014: 76), public participation has correlation with public trust. This implies that the more the public get involved in the government matters, the more trust is gained with government. On other hand, the lack of participation or failure of municipalities to meet the expectations of the community contribute to the low level of trust.

The failure or inability of local government to meet its objectives has a huge impact on how the members of the public perceive it, which leads to a decline in public trust as evidenced by numerous service delivery protests. In the past years, numerous protests have been recorded regarding the state of service delivery in South African municipalities (Akinboade et al. 2014; Mukwevho and Mtapuri 2014; Netswera and Phago 2013; Ngwane 2011). According to Alexander et al. (2013), the highest number of protests (470 protests) were recorded in South Afri-

ca in 2012. Numerous researchers such as Alexandra (2010), Netswera and Phango (2013), and Netswera and Kgalane (2014) note that the protests at the municipal level can be caused by frustrations and unhappiness with service delivery effectiveness and efficiencies by municipalities, as well as the lack of community involvement in local government matters. Thinyane (2013) citing Buccus and Mathekga (2007) argues that municipalities continue to "…fall short of their constitutional mandate because government's top-down technocratic approach emphasizes local government as a vehicle for service delivery at the cost of (and simultaneously instead of) emphasizing local government as a vehicle for participation". The lack of or poor communication in sharing with the communities the challenges and progress towards effectively delivering services becomes the core cause of the public's frustrations. It is not clear as to why the municipalities are failing to involve the citizens in their matters not is it clear why is it difficult to account for the actions undertaken. Hence, this paper aims at contributing to knowledge by thoroughly investigating the lack of public participation and accountability at municipal level in order to ensure the effectiveness of service delivery.

Objectives of the Study

Fostering participation and ensuring accountability at local governance level, and facilitating sustainable development and improving service delivery are important in ensuring good governance. With an increase in protests in South Arica, the issue of public participation and accountability becomes questionable. Antonini et al. (2015), Basri and Nabiha (2014), and Kyohairwe (2014), Mathebula (2015) reported that public participation and accountability play an important role in deepening democracy. Hence, this paper aims to critically investigate the main role of public accountability and participation in improving service delivery. The specific objectives of the paper are as follows: To determine whether (i) the municipality has mechanisms in place to ensure public participation and accountability, (ii) there are mechanisms for public participation, mechanisms for holding councillors accountable for the delivery of services and how effective they are, (iii) if mechanisms for public participation and accountability exist, the municipality has measures that determine their effectiveness for service delivery, and (iv) the community has knowledge in terms of how the municipality works in assisting the participation processes.

In the process, the following will receive attention: Firstly, public participation and accountability within the context of local government in South Africa; secondly, a legal framework for public participation in South Africa; and thirdly, Integrated Development and Planning and service delivery in local government.

Public Participation

Government exists to provide public goods and services that the public require to enjoy a meaningful life. Continuous participation and feedback from the public is essential in improving service delivery, since every member of the community has a constitutional right to enjoy a satisfactory quality of life. Moshebi (2012) indicates that public participation is important in ensuring that government addresses community needs in the most appropriate way. It therefore helps in "building an informed and responsible community with a sense of ownership of government development and projects" (Nembambula 2014: 149). Kgalema et al. (2012) and

Nembambula (2014) state that community or public participation could be seen as a two-way interaction where the final decisions and policies are accepted by the public as this will show that they have been involved since the beginning stage of the policy processes. Information exchange between officials and the community becomes critical in order to improve public participation. Therefore, the system of developmental local government is not complete without effective public participation structures and systems.

Public participation is likely in a variety of activities, "but occurs largely at the local government level where needs are most pressing and government most accessible" Nembambula 2014: 149). In South Africa, local municipalities engage the public through public meetings, *izimbizo* (community meetings), *w*ard committees or focus and interest groups. For democratic government to exist, citizens must govern or, at the very least, be actively involved in government. In order for this to happen, local government should ensure that facilities and instruments of public participation are accessible to every individual citizen. Without the necessary support and commitment form the public, it may be difficult for local governments to make meaningful contributions towards developing the areas they serve. Hence, strategies should be put into place so that the process of public participation is effective and has positive outcomes.

When citizens do not engage in the government matters or activities and simply "allow officials and public representatives a free hand in pursuing their own agendas, politicians and public servants may see this as an open invitation to act on their own initiative, sometimes irresponsibly" (Kyohairwe 2014: 92). Hence, the intention of the public to participate is to ensure that better decisions are produced and, thus, more efficiency benefits to the rest of society. Therefore, municipalities will always be judged by how well they respond to the needs and expectations of the community and the extent to which they involve the citizenry in doing so. Thus, public participation is one of the mechanisms for the public to make government more democratic. According to Thinyane (2013) and Mukwevho and Mtapuri (2014), ensuring public participation may create a space for positive transformation in service provision and improvement in the quality of lives of the citizens.

Legal Framework for Public Participation in South Africa

Legislation and policies in government institutions play a vital role in ensuring that politicians and public officials do not abuse power, but act accordingly when dealing with public resources. There are many laws making it mandatory for some form of public participation in local governance, but three are central. Firstly, Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the RSA of 1996 (77) recommends "public participation by citizens in policy-making processes and engagement in issues that affect them". It further expands on public participation in local government as follows: Section 152 (e) states that the objectives of "local government are to encourage involvement of the community and community organizations in the matters of local government" (77). Secondly, the Municipal Structures Act of 1998 offers an influential lawful framework for participatory local democracy and ward committees, in particular. Sections 19 (2) (a) and (c) of the Municipal Structures Act of 1998 (RSA 1998) indicate that a "municipal council must annually review the needs of the community and its processes for involving the community". Lastly, the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 (RSA 2000) defines "…the legal nature of a municipality as including the local community within the municipal area, working in partnerships with the municipality's political and administrative structures to provide for community participation". According to Chapter 4, Section 16 (1) of the Municipal Systems Act, a municipality must develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance.

To further clarify the importance of public participation at the local level, the White Paper on Local Government of 1998 (1998:34) "requires active participation in the municipalities by citizens at four levels: Firstly, as voters, to ensure maximum democratic accountability of elected political leadership for the policies they are empowered to promote; secondly, as citizens who express, via different stakeholders associations, their views before, during and after the policy development process in order to ensure that policies reflect community preferences as far as possible; and thirdly, as consumers and end-users, who expect value-for-money, affordable services and courteous and responsive service". Municipalities need to be responsive to the needs of both citizens and business as consumers and end-users of municipal services. In addition, municipalities are expected to enhance service delivery within the constraints of available resources.

Such policies were established with the expectation that they would help local government with the useful application of a well-planned, resourced and structured participation programme, and also enable the communities to become agents of change and development. Public participation is, therefore, a core element of local government. Without citizens knowing about the opportunities provided for in the legislative framework, it would be difficult for them to participate meaningfully in determining how they are governed.

Accountability

Public participation supports accountability. Democratic government promotes discussion between a government and its citizens. This is essential in establishing a government that is accountable by addressing the needs of citizens. In fact, the citizens should be advising government what they want, not the other way around. Thus, the public should have the opportunity to monitor and evaluate the performance of government and also demand accountability from the representatives. One of the basic values and principles enshrined in Chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA 1996) is that "Public Administration must be accountable". Accountability in government institutions is crucial in ensuring that the public money is used effectively to render services.

According to Kanyane (2010: 5), there is internal and external accountability. Internal accountability is a process that holds public officials "…answerable to their line supervisors for their own actions and the actions of their subordinates…", while "…external accountability, by implication, holds public officials answerable to the public as well". For a higher standard of public service delivery to be achieved and sustained, public officials as well as politicians are required to display honesty, transparency and both internal accountability as well as external accountability. "Although public officials are indeed directly accountable to their executive authority

and administrative authorities for their actions and activities, it is incumbent upon them to ensure that they are also accountable" (Kanyane 2010: 25) to the communities in which they provide public services. According to Kyohairwe (2014: 88), public accountability includes three facets, namely "political, administrative and social accountability". The "answerability of public officers and the enforcement of the accountability mechanisms are paradoxically both core intents and great challenges of local governance" (Kyohairwe 2014: 86). Furthermore, the author maintains that the democratic government should strengthen public participation in policy-making in order to increase transparency in public processes and to hold officials accountable.

Accountability is one of the fundamental requirements for preventing the abuse of power and the misuse of public resources, as well as for ensuring that control is directed towards the achievement of responsiveness, effectiveness, transparency and efficiency. The participatory processes might have much to contribute to strengthening accountability and improving outcomes. For better services, the measurement performance of the individuals within the local government becomes a crucial part of accountability. It becomes vital that local government account to the public about the resources used as well as the outcomes of the projects implemented.

The public institutions are regarded as the agents of the citizens charged with the responsibility of ensuring effective and efficient functioning of the governmental institutions. It thus crucial that the public institutions deal properly with issues such as financial scandals, lack of transparency, accountability, low quality of financial reporting and mismanagement of resources (Basri and Nabiha 2014; Cabral and Santos 2016). It is the government's "…obligation to give an account of the performance of its duties" (Basri and Nabiha 2014: 8). Proper financial reports have become a crucial component in which "accountability is expected and can be demonstrated. Through financial reports, stakeholders can undertake performance assessment of the organization" (Owe Chi and Namara 2012: 44). It is important to note that the disclosure of all activities must be made public and not in secrecy or under the guise of confidentiality. An absence of transparency usually results in the abuse of public funds (Owe Chi and Namara 2012).

Accountability is paramount in stimulating the openness of municipalities to the poor and to making development more pro-poor (Devas and Grant 2003). In order for the public to hold local government accountable, relevant information regarding the availability and usability of resources is the key. For this to happen, local government should publicly display information about the resources available for local service delivery. The viability of the democratic component of local governance depends, in the final analysis, on accountability and participation. Therefore, local government must share the information widely and strategically in order for participation and accountability to work effectively. Public participation and accountability are two concepts that are inseparable when dealing with service delivery in local government.

Integrated Development Planning (IDP) and Service Delivery in Local Government

The environment in which local government operates comprises many issues. Local government is expected to meet the needs of citizens with limited resources. Some of the challenges facing local government in South Africa are poverty, a high rate of unemployment, shortage of funds and skilled people, service backlogs, corruption and mismanagement, to name a few. Therefore, local government should adopt a strategic, creative and integrated approach in order to address development challenges and promote sustainable development (Van der Waldt 2007: 94).

The IDP is a "…participatory planning process aimed at integrating sectoral strategies in order to support optimal allocation of scarce resources between sectors and geographical areas and across the population in a manner that promotes sustainable growth, equity and empowerment of the poor and marginalized" (Van der Waldt 2007: 95). According to Stellenbosch Municipality (2012: 42), the IDP "serves as an enabler for mutual accountability on the agreed priorities and allocation of resources to contribute to the long-term development of the municipality". It is, therefore, one of the most critical plans in ensuring effectiveness and efficiency at a local government level. Furthermore, it is one of the mechanisms put in place to facilitate participation at the local level. Municipalities are required to produce IDPs in order to fulfil their

developmental goals by adopting the following procedures: "assessing economic, social and environment realities in the municipally area; consulting the community and developing a vision for development; conducting an audit of existing resources, skills, and capacities; and developing integrated frameworks and setting goals to meet community needs" (Davids et al. 2005: 40). According to Mubangizi (2010: 162), municipalities should "…implement IDPs on the basis that communities' needs are included and that they are involved in the participation process". Hofisi (2014) and Mashamaite et al. (2015) note that the IDP is one of the crucial planning tools utilised to provide the strategic and cross-sectoral planning vision.

One of the objects of local government is to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner (RSA 1996). The local sphere of government needs to take the most crucial challenges into account and try to address them in a more co-ordinated and proactive manner to ensure effective and efficient delivery of public services. Delivery of services includes both physical infrastructure and social initiatives that will allow communities to improve their well-being and sustain their livelihoods. According to Van der Waldt (2007: 148), "municipalities are required to give effect to the provisions of the Constitution and, in so doing, prioritise the basic needs of the local community, promote the development of the local community and ensure that the public have access to at least the minimum level of basic municipal services". Public service delivery is provided satisfactorily if the governance system in place is responsive to the needs of the people. Thus, quality public service delivery could be attained provided that technical governance mechanisms, such as accountability, administrative capacity and internal operations, are well organised and in place to meet the challenges (Kanyane 2010). In their service to the public, the conduct and attitude of public servants must be beyond reproach and above the notion of selfishness. Furthermore, the public servants should ensure that the public interest is given a priority than personal interest if government is serious about turning service delivery around for the good of the public.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted in the Jozini area under the Jozini Local Municipality. Jozini is located in the northern part of KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa. It is one of the Category B municipalities in terms of the Constitution of RSA of 1996 and falls under the Umkhanyakude District Municipality. Census 2011 reveals that Jozini is the "…most populated municipality within Umkhanyakude making up (186 502) 29.8 percent of the Umkhanyakude District" (Statistics South Africa 2011). Furthermore, the majority of the land (89%) of Jozini falls under traditional authority (Statistics South Africa 2011). According to the Jozini Municipality (2011), approximately 36 percent of the population earns no income which contributes to the cycle of poverty found in the area. The municipality has a high rate of unemployment and illiteracy, which adversely affects its ability to generate revenue, and causes people move away to the cities to find jobs.

This research paper used qualitative research methodology with unstructured face-to-face interviews for data collection. A qualitative approach was particularly useful for this research paper as it allowed for full exploration of participants' subjective understanding of public participation and accountability. The interviews were conducted with thirty participants who were purposively selected. Purposive sampling was selected as the researcher wanted to select key informants who have a good understanding of the issue under discussion. These key informants were a ward councillor, the municipal manager, the manager under the Corporate and Community Unit, the IDP Officer, traditional leaders and general community members in the Ward Nine area. The population of this study comprised all residents who live in the Jozini area. The thematic analysis technique was employed during the data analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results and explanation of the findings are presented according to the purpose and objectives of this paper, namely to investigate whether public participation and accountability in the Jozini Local Municipality assist in improving service delivery and whether community members consider their involvement in the participation process to be meaningful. The main findings of this research paper are summarized below:

- The majority (fifteen or 68%) of community members interviewed understood public participation, but did not understand accountability;
- At the community level, 64 percent indicated that the municipality had not educated or prepared them about its activities;
- Few participants (30%) at the community level had an understanding of the IDPs, while the majority (70%) had no idea of the IDPs. On other hand, 91 percent of the participants at the community level felt that their contributions are not taken into consideration when drafting the IDPs as their needs are not addressed.
- The majority (60%) of community-level members interviewed indicated that the councillor failed to arrange community meetings, and also that there was no report back by the councillor or municipal officials on the non-delivery of services.

The following sub-sections examine the findings of this research paper.

Understanding of Public Participation and Accountability

Public participation and accountability play a crucial role in local government as they strengthen local democracy. From the findings, the majority of community members interviewed had a common understanding of public participation. They defined public participation as the way in which members of the local community are able to raise their concerns, needs and the challenges that they face within the area. Furthermore, participants also felt that public participation is not only about raising their needs, but also involves good relationships between the ward councillor, municipality, ward committees and the community at large. With regard to public accountability, the majority of the community members interviewed were not in a position to define accountability. The few participants who clearly understand the concept of accountability indicated that it entailed the councillors being responsible and able to report back to the community about issues that have been raised affecting the local community. As highlighted in the literature, the ability of the community to be aware of and knowledgeable about the activities of local government compels the councillors and officials to deliver quality ser-

vices. This is not the case in Jozini because of the high rate of illiteracy in the area.

On other hand, all the participants at municipal level had an understanding of public participation and accountability. They indicated that public participation is about involving the community in all matters pertaining to the governance and administration of its affairs. Accountability was viewed as the way in which the municipality provides answers and feedback about progress made on matters affecting the local community as undertaken by the councillor in IDPs as well as in community meetings.

Based on these differing understandings, it could be said that the majority of community members do not have an understanding of accountability. Authors such as Kgalema et al. (2012) and Nembambula (2014) note that the lack of information about government activities on the part of the communities affects their ability to participate actively in policy and decision-making processes. In addition, a lack of information could mean that the communities would not be able to hold both officials and councillors accountable for their actions. The municipality needs to take further steps to ensure that the community has a broader understanding of accountability. If the local community, which is entitled to receive explanations, does not have information to provide the basis for asking questions, accountability is meaningless.

The Constitution of RSA of 1996 provides for public participation in local governance through ward committees and IDPs, and it demands that local government promote transparency, participation and accountability. It is the role of ward committees and councillors to ensure that the communities are informed about council decisions that affect their lives. In other words, they should communicate and consult with the public with respect to service and development plans. Based on the findings, the community members highlighted that the ward committees and councillors are ineffective in informing the citizens as well as in advancing public participation at the local government level. According to Nyalunga (2006), the ineffectiveness of ward committees and councillors is caused by, among others, "…a lack of capacity and incentives to persuade them to work whole- heartedly towards the betterment of their constituencies."

The inability of the municipality to educate and explain to the community how the municipality operates through ward committees and councillors was highlighted by community participants as one of the obstacles to public participation. The inability of the municipality to prepare the local community to engage in municipal activities could lead to a situation where the community fails to participate proactively owing to a lack information and understanding. It is the responsibility of ward councillors working closely with the ward committees to ensure that public meetings take place in the local community. This is because ward councillors play a critical role in the communication process between the local community they represent and the municipality. Community meetings organised by ward councillors are important at local government level.

At the municipal level, the participants noted that the municipality utilises mechanisms such as local radio stations and ward committees structures in order to distribute information widely to their constituencies. One of the participants at the municipal level said:

During the community IDP meetings, the local community gets to know which department is responsible for what activity in the municipality. The municipality arrange the mass meeting involving all the wards at the same place in order for the public to raise their inputs for IDPs. This mass meeting comes [sic] the ward meetings among ward committees, councillors, community development workers and the community at large to discuss community needs and draw up the list of things they want. During the mass meeting, each ward would be able to submit its list containing things the community wants. In the ward meetings, the ward councillors should inform the local community of the functions that are in the municipal, provincial and national domain.

It is the right of the local communities to participate in the affairs of local government and voice their needs so that they can be addressed by the municipality. If local communities are not given a chance to participate, there is a strong possibility of poor service delivery and conflict between the communities and municipality due to misunderstandings. For this reason, it is important for the municipality to monitor the process of public participation to ensure it is effective.

Mechanisms for Effective Community Engagement

It is crucial that the local government has mechanisms in place that can assist the municipality in its public participation and accountability processes. Municipalities should have policies and procedures that will ensure effective public participation and accountability in each municipality, taking into consideration the local dynamics of its constituency. It is also vital for the municipality to provide an oversight report in order to improve public participation and accountability for effective service delivery. Municipalities are required to undertake planning processes, and the local community must be aware of such processes. Two of the participants at the municipal level indicated the following:

The municipality has mechanisms to ensure local communities get involved in decision- and policy-making processes. This includes, amongst others, Integrated Development Planning, ward committees, non-profit organizations or community-based organizations and the ward councillor. These mechanisms are effective as allocation of budget per ward and delivery of services will be impossible if a list of projects is not drawn up by the community through these structures. Absence of these mechanisms at local government level would mean money allocated for service delivery could not be spent unless the projects' priority per ward has been raised through public participation processes.

Rowe and Frewer (2005) identified three mechanisms as tools for citizen participation, namely public communication, public consultation and public dialogue. On other hand, Yilmaz et al. (2008: 14) note that "social and political accountability approaches are often part of broader efforts to deepen democracy and ensure a robust public sphere for citizens to give feedback and control government action". Hence, the ability of the municipality to combine both the approaches for participation and accountability could improve the participatory and accountability processes within the local governance. Based on the findings, the municipality also has internal approaches that aim to hold the councillors and officials accountable for their actions. For instance, the municipality has established a committee called the Rules Committee which ensures that the councillors face dis-

ciplinary hearings for non-performance of their duties. Although there are such mechanisms within the municipalities, the lack of service delivery, corruption, mismanagement of resources and lack of citizen participation on local government matters are still the main factors for the service delivery protests (Alexander et al. 2013; Netswera and Phago 2013; Akinboade et al. 2014; Mukwevho and Mtapuri 2014). Furthermore, based on the findings, the community felt that the municipal mechanisms are not effective as their needs and priorities are not incorporated in the municipal decision- and policy-making processes. The inability of the municipality to provide basic services such as clean water, electricity and drivable roads reduces the public's levels of confidence and trust.

Impact of Public Participation and Accountability on Municipal Service Delivery

The literature suggests that the public's unhappiness and frustration regarding local government service delivery efficiency and effectiveness lead to service delivery protests (Netswera and Phago 2013; Alexandra 2010; Netswera and Kgalane 2014). Furthermore, Nleya et al. (2011) maintain that a lack of, or poor communication with the communities about the developments and challenges experienced by the local municipality also contributes towards service delivery protests. Hence, the ability of the municipalities to clearly communicate with the public about any developments, available resources as well as the IDP might assist the public to be aware of the operations within the municipalities.

Based on the findings, the participants felt that public participation and accountability are not only important, but also fundamental. If public participation is properly ensured and no meaning is lost in translation, service delivery could be improved. In all, public participation and accountability have a huge impact on service delivery. Furthermore, these participants felt that national government must strive to make more resources available so that the local communities can be empowered and educated about the municipality's activities. This would assist local communities to better understand how local government works and to engage effectively in the municipality's activities. In addition, these participants were also of the view that the failure of government to invest in remote rural mu-

nicipalities leads to a situation where private investors are reluctant to invest in those areas.

Noteworthy is that the interviewees at the community level felt that public participation is important at local government level and has a huge impact on service delivery. Furthermore, they also believe that accountability is crucial at local government level. Participants at both community and municipal levels felt that without public participation and accountability, delivery of services could be adversely affected. Ensuring transparency, accountability, public participation and professionalism at the municipal level could assist in delivering effective and efficient services to the local community. In a situation where politicians are not adopting appropriate policies, where public officials are not delivering according to the rules or are not monitoring providers for appropriate service levels or monitoring that suppliers are maintaining service levels in terms of quality, accountability should be demanded.

CONCLUSION

In South Africa, local government plays a crucial role in ensuring development at grassroots level and better standards of living for local communities. Consequently, local communities have high expectations that municipalities will provide quality services so that their standard of living will be improved. In this research, the level of citizen's participation and the rate of accountability from local municipalities were examined.

The simple argument was that effective public participation and accountability in the local sphere of government play an important role in promoting the image and quality of local governance. Accountability and public engagement are two of the instruments for local governance and also a basis for citizen empowerment, affording the public an opportunity to engage in local matters. In addition, being accountable to the public and allowing the citizens to engage in local matters create trust and strengthen the relationship between the local government and the public. From the findings of this research it is noted that the level of participation in local government and also its ability to account for the actions taken are low. In other words, people do not participate at the policy- and decision-making level. Their interaction with the councillors is minimal and they are not interested in

holding councillors accountable. Hence, it could be concluded that the public have a limited contribution towards the strengthening of good governance in the local sphere of government. Hence, further studies need to be conducted which will investigate the role of the provincial government, particularly the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, in ensuring that there are proper mechanisms within local government for effective public participation and accounting processes. The main limitation of this paper is that the research was only conducted in KwaZulu-Natal particularly at Jozini Municipality. So, the findings and recommendations might differ when the same research can be conducted to other municipalities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The rate of service delivery protests in the public institutions can be indicative of a lack of trust and confidence in the public sector institutions. An increase in the service delivery protests can be an indication of a lack of citizen participation, as well as transparency and accountability on government activities. On the other hand, a low rate of service delivery protests can mean that the public is happy with government processes and activities. Therefore, the public sector, specifically local government, needs to demonstrate the following:

- Ward committee structures should be used more effectively to ensure that there are sound relationships and linkages among the councillor, ward committee, municipality and the local community;
- Municipalities need to strengthen their mechanisms for public participation and accountability to ensure that the local communities fully participate in municipal policy- and decision-making processes;
- Monitoring and evaluation systems should be in place to ensure that services are delivered to the community; and
- Municipalities must strengthen their communication channels to ensure that the information is communicated widely and effectively to the community.

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