



## Impact of Implementation of Back-to-Basic Programme in Raymond Mhlaba Municipality in Eastern Cape

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**ABSTRACT** The study aim to investigate the impact of the implementation of Back-To-Basic (B2B) programme in Raymond Mhlaba Municipality. The study used a qualitative approach that involved in-depth interviews to collect the data from one (1) Municipal Manager, two (2) Ward Councillors and seven (7) community members. The findings of the study revealed that the implementation of B2B programme has brought about encouragement and community supports to the municipality to remain focused on maintenance, development and empowerment of people and their community areas. Despite these benefits, the implementations still have some setback which makes for the poor performance of the municipality. The findings revealed that poor service delivery, fake promises, corruption and mismanagement of funds were some of the negative impacts of the implementation of B2B programme in their community area. Hence, the impact of the implementation of B2B programmes has played a significant role in improving the standard of living of the people, although a lot still needed to be done by the municipality management and its other stakeholders in improving the standard of living of people with low income. The paper recommended that the municipality management should make proper provision for maintenance and construction of basic social amenities such as roads, electricity, and water, etcetera for the community members as there is a need for the municipality to urgently address these cogent issues.

### INTRODUCTION

The cooperative governance section is accompanied by a desktop valuation in all nine provinces with the determination for municipalities to look at efficient capacities similar to governmental solidity, with its strength of constructing an accomplished indigenous administration, delivery of services, governance, financial management, institutional management as well as community satisfaction (Republic of South Africa 2019). Three categories of municipalities identified are those not doing well, those doing well and those having the potential to do well (Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) 2014). The Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) (2014) also stated that the municipalities assessment indicated that above a third perform well (these are municipalities that do not have audit queries), a third that is likely to perform (these are municipalities that have audit queries but are still surviving) and below third are not performing (these are municipalities that have bad audit reports). Moreover, the assessment outcomes directed the strategy of an action programme called Back-To-Basics (Republic of South Africa 2019).

The objectives of the programme were to guarantee a strong boundary amongst governmental substances plus government, implementing an inventory as well as upright inventory accomplishment strategies, building formal progressions plus structures as well as providing a building capacity for councillors. It further aimed at developing how infrastructure audits and maintenance are planned as well as how expenditure is effectively controlled and implemented (Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) 2009, 2017).

However, it is for this purpose that the CoGTA was mandated by the Provincial Cabinet as the Department championing the Back to Basics plan to compartment valuation that was designed for evaluating whether the progress accomplished in the B2B programme was important to the understanding of the plan intentions as specified in the Governments Local Strategy (GLS) for Back to Basics manuscript. The Cooperative Governance Department is accountable for building in addition to strengthening the capability and accountability of municipalities as well as to advance the functioning of municipalities (Tshishonga 2018). The Back-To-Basics has five pillar areas

that ensure that municipalities set the proper standards for municipal performance, namely: people being put first and their concerns, representative governance as well as management, providing public facilities, sound economic administration and accounting, as well as sound institutional and administrative capabilities (CoGTA 2009, 2017).

The Amathole District Municipality Integrated Development Plan (ADMIDP) (2017-2022) states that the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality has been struggling with the backlog of service delivery in infrastructure. However, unsuccessful basic service delivery has been responsible for a number of factors which includes shortage of qualified and experienced candidates, limited municipal budget, uncertain legislation as to which sphere of government is accountable for certain service delivery, as well as the ongoing impacts of municipal differentiation process (Van Nieuwenhuyzen and Peters 2012). The Raymond Mhlaba Municipality is under the authority of the Amathole District Municipality (Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council (ECSECC) 2017). It is categorized under Category B and a municipality that is within the Winterland of the Eastern Cape. Raymond Mhlaba Municipality is the largest municipality of the six within the district, which makes out a third up of its geographical area. The Nkonkobe and Nxuba Local Municipalities amalgamation in August 2016 resulted in the establishment of the Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality Integrated Development Plan (RMLMIDP 2017).

According to the review of the report by the new Minister of CoGTA, Des van Rooyen, "more supports will be fully given to the municipalities in implementing Back-to-Basics (B2B) programmes, which was introduced by the former Minister Gordhan saying that as part of the B2B programme, all municipalities should ensure that the implementation of B2B programmes is taken as one of their priorities in order to empower their communities" (PMG 2017). The Minister further revealed that "more efforts will be intensified on monitoring, evaluation and support of local government to accelerate service delivery" (PMG 2017). B2B is based on five pillars which include the following (Parliamentary Monitoring Group 2017): (i) People being put first; (ii) Good governance must be promoted; (iii) Financial sound

management; (iv) Institutional building capacity; as well as (v) Services basic delivery.

### Problem Statement

Despite the fact that the implementation of B2B programme has contributed positively in improving the quality of the lives of the people in their communities (CoGAT 2015-2019; Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs 2016; CoGAT 2017/18), the implementation programme still has some setback which makes for the poor performance of the municipality (IDASA 2010). These setbacks include poor service delivery, which was due to lack of capacity building (IDASA 2010), fake promises, corruption and mismanagement of funds etcetera. It must be mentioned in this study that these setbacks were synonymous to the negative impacts of the implementation of B2B programme in most of the community area. Based on this background, the researchers believed that there is a cogent need to investigate the impact of the implementation of the B2B programme in order to recommend a workable and appropriate implementation of B2B programme policy that would be conducive for the communities.

### Objective of the Study

- ◆ To examine the impact of implementing Back-To-Basic programme in Raymond Mhlaba Municipality.

### Research Question

- ◆ What are the impacts of implementing the Back-To-Basics programme in Raymond Mhlaba Municipality?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research approach was used in this study in order to investigate the impact of the implementation of Back-To-Basic programme in Raymond Mhlaba Municipality in the Eastern Cape. This study used in-depth interviews that involve face-to-face interviews to collect information from 1 (one) of the municipal management team, two (2) Ward Councillors, and seven (7) community members from the Raymond Mhla-

ba Municipality. The data were collected using semi-structured questionnaires. This semi-structured questionnaire enables the participants to express their views on a question in their own way. The study utilised a purposive sampling technique in selecting the participants for the study. The data collected were analysed using thematic analysis.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### The Impact of Implementation of B2B Programme to Communities by the Municipal Management

As already indicated above regarding the improvement of communities through the implementation of the B2B Programme in the municipality area, evidence from several studies conducted have shown that the impact of the implementation of B2B programmes play a significant role in improving the standard of living of the people. The researchers asked the participants if the implementation of the B2B Programme has brought any impact to the communities. The participant revealed that the impact of the implementation of the B2B Programme has contributed positively to improving communities as a whole. The participant also mentioned that the implementation of the B2B Programme has encouraged and support the municipality to remain focused on maintenance, development and empowerment of the people and their community areas. It was also revealed that this impact is a life changer. The participant emphasised that the impact has brought about improvement in several services rendered by municipality management. Hence, it has changed lives of many people who are unemployed to be given jobs. Thus, below are the responses of the participant:

*“The municipality is not dysfunctional anymore, there has been an improvement, the programme has assisted the municipality to give maintenance so as to improve from the middle path as well as to encourage and support the municipality to remain/keep improving. Another influence that has taken place in the municipality is that of efficient and effective service delivery. Through the implementation of the B2B programme, more jobs have been created and people are happy.”*

### Changes since the Implementation of the B2B Programme in the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality

It is very important to mention that the implementation of the B2B programme is very essential in improving the community’s environment in South Africa. This is because improve communities would attract foreign investment. The researchers asked the participant if there have been any changes since the implementation of the B2B Programme in Raymond Mhlaba Municipality. The participant emphasised that there have been several changes since the implementation of B2B programme in Raymond Mhlaba Municipality. The participant further indicated that before the municipality management implements the B2B programme, they first ensure that people’s opinion is sought and considered. In addition, these changes have brought about employment opportunities to the community areas; improve service delivery on social amenities such as clean water, stable electricity et cetera, and income generation for the people within the municipality community areas. Thus, below are some of the participants’ responses:

- “i) People are being put first*
- ii) Services are being provided to the communities in a sustainable manner.*
- iii) The functioning of the municipality better serves the community.*
- iv) The streets are clean, waste removal is being collected every week as well as every street has street lights to help decrease the level of crime in Alice Town.”*

The findings from the study conducted by Selepe (2009) revealed that the objectives of the Back-to-basic programmes were to guarantee a strong boundary amongst governmental matters, improve policies of liability assortment, implementing an inventory as well as upright inventory accomplishment strategies, building formal progressions plus structures as well as providing a building capacity for councillors. It further aim to provide basic facilities or infrastructural facilities such as quality street light, good transport and communication network, sanitation, electricity, as well as removal of refuse at a local level that would make lives bearable for the people living in a particular area (CoGTA 2009, 2015/2016, 2016).

### **Impact of Implementation of B2B Programme in the Ward Community Area**

The ward councillors are people voted for by the community members, elected to represent them in the municipal administration. They are both responsible for the municipality and the communities. It is also very important to mention that they are the closest people in the communities. Their closeness has made it easy for people to see or meet them from time-to-time and lodge there complain of grievances, then this complaint is reported to the municipality for further action to be taken by the Municipality Management. They usually assist the municipality to deliver services such as the implementation of B2B programme to the communities. The researchers asked the participants what impact the implementation of the B2B Programme has created in the ward community areas of the Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality. The findings from two participants in the study revealed that: building of more area committees; the culture of Batho Pele meaning putting people first; and improve standard of living of the people through regular visit to communities were identified as some of the impacts the implementation of B2B Programme has created to the ward community areas. Thus, below are responses from two participants:

#### **First Participant**

*“You start by building area committees which work together with ward committees and we use the culture of batho pele meaning putting people first, by doing that we make sure that we use a tool of profile (area profile) which assists us to resolve the challenges of the area by referring it to a correct channel or department which we call the back to basics.”*

#### **Second Participant**

*“I always go to my ward communities to visit the members and see to their needs and problems as often as I can to avoid situations whereby the community protests due to being neglected.”*

#### **Building Area Committees**

It is very important to emphasise that the impact of area committees (such as the ward council-

lors) in implementing the B2B programme has brought a huge improvement to the municipality's ward community area. The closeness of the ward committees in the communities has enabled the communities to express their minds to their ward committees. One of the participants revealed that building up of more area committees is very necessary, as each ward would work collectively with their ward councillor toward achieving the same goals and objectives.

#### ***The Culture of Batho Pele (Meaning Putting People First)***

It is very crucial to note that, before the municipality make decision(s) as regards the implementation of B2B programme in any municipality, public opinion must be taken into consideration. In addition, it has been noted in several studies conducted by some researchers that the municipalities are established for the purpose of providing service delivery to the grassroots. One of the participants interviewed in the course of conducting interview revealed that one of the impacts of the implementation of B2B programme in this municipality was that the ward committees have been putting peoples' opinions first in their decision. Then for the municipality to perform its functions and responsibility diligently to the communities, community participation where people would be able to express their mind has been seriously encouraged.

#### ***Improve Standard Of Living of the People through Regular Visit toward Communities***

The implementation of B2B programme has created an improvement toward the community members and areas of the municipality. One of the participants revealed that to make changes in the lives of people, to improve the standard of living of the people, to let the people felt the impact of B2B programme in the municipality environment, the ward councillors ensure that they created time to check or visit their community members in order to listen to queries or challenges and provide solutions for them. This means that the ward councillors have a great opportunity to move closer to their community members in order to listen to demands and to avoid an un-

pleasant situation which could cause problems or result to communal riots in the municipality.

*“I always go to my ward communities to visit the members and see to their needs and problems as often as I can to avoid situations whereby the community protests due to being neglected.”*

The above findings are relevant to the Cooperative Governance Department, which stresses the accountable for building in addition to strengthening the capability and accountability of municipalities as well as to advance the functioning of municipalities (Tshishonga 2018). However, the Back-To-Basics has five pillar areas that ensure that municipalities set the proper standards for municipal performance; namely, people being put first and their concerns; representative governance as well as management; providing public facilities; sound economic administration and accounting; as well as sound institutional and administrative capabilities (CoGTA 2009).

### **Engagement of the Community Members in the B2B Programme in the Municipality**

The engagement of community members by the ward committees in the B2B programme in Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality is very important. This would enable the community members to really exercise their fundamental human rights in their locality. It would also enable them to show concern on the importance of current projects undertaken by the municipality in their community areas. The researcher asked the participants about how often the ward councillors engage their community members in the implementation of the B2B Programme in their municipality. One of the participants interviewed indicated that he usually meets his community members as regards the implementation of B2B programme in the municipality Town Hall every Monday, Wednesday and Fridays of the week, while the second participant indicated that he usually meets them once or twice in a month. Thus, below are the participants' responses:

#### **First Participant**

*“Every Monday, Wednesday and Fridays we meet at the community hall to discuss the implementations.”*

*“Every time I inform them about the events, consult with them on issues that arise, such as service delivery and involve them in the decision making processes. This helps me a lot as a ward councillor I benefit trust from the community and a good connection with the members of the community which is very important when you are a leader.”*

#### **Second Participant**

*“In a month I go and visit them twice. I engage my community members as possible as I can by first meeting up with community leaders that were elected by the community members to represent them in their absences to try and see what the new problems are and the second time I call a meeting with all community members to also hear from them their challenges with the programme and give feedback of the programmes developments and also ask for their input as well as suggestions.”*

The number of times and various ways the Ward Councillors have been engaging the community members in the implementation of the B2B programmes in the municipality are presented and discussed below:

#### **Regular Meetings with the Community Members by the Ward Councillors on the Implementation of B2B Programme**

As noted above, the implementation of B2B programme has created a huge impact in improving the standard of living of people in the community areas of the Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality, regular meetings are attributed as one measure used by the ward councillors to achieve this improvement. More importantly, one of the participants interviewed in one of the interviews section revealed that he often ensures meeting some of his community members every Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays of the week. The participant further mentioned that in attempting to implement the B2B programme in his ward community areas, he usually informs them about the municipality projects activities and how it would be implemented. He stated that he further inform them of the benefits of the projects to them as the beneficiaries. To achieve success in the imple-

mentation, there is the need for community support for the projects. This participant also revealed that meetings on a regular basis with the community members would enhance his capacities to deliver successful services. In the same vein, consultation, or involvement of the community members in the meeting with the participants would improve the decision-making process.

***Good Connection with the Members of the Community Brings Benefit of Trust from the Community***

In order to achieve success in the implementation of the B2B programme in this municipality, the researcher is of this study is of the opinion that trustworthiness is needed and must be exhibited by the ward councillors in order to move the communities forward. In one of the interviews section conducted, one of the participants revealed that meeting the communities on a regular basis and hearing their positive opinions on the implementation of the B2B programme have made him have trust, hope and get connected by working in full capacity with the communities.

**Implementation of B2B Programme Benefits to the Community Areas of Raymond Mhlaba Municipality**

The implementation of the B2B Programme has brought a lot of benefits not only to the community area of Raymond Mhlaba Municipality but also to other local municipalities in South Africa, which have implemented it in their local communities. Other communities within the Local municipal areas which have benefited by implementing the B2B programmes include Ntselamanzi Location, Happyrest and Hillcrest (RMLM IDP 2017). The implementation of B2B Programme is highly needed in order to improve the municipality community environment. More importantly, the implementation is needed for providing employment opportunities to the community member or empowering the communities to be self-employed/self-reliance. Other data on the benefits of the implementation to the community area of Raymond Mhlaba Municipality were collected for the purpose of this study.

The researchers asked the participants on how the implementation of the B2B Programme

has benefitted them in the community area of Raymond Mhlaba Municipality. One out of seven participants interviewed in one of the interviews section indicated that their community members have not benefitted in the implementation of the B2B programme introduced by the municipality although the municipality does visit their community. In addition, this participant further mentions that it was recently the municipality provided services such as cleaning of the streets and waste removal. These and many more services provided have created employment opportunities for the community members. Other benefits of the B2B programme to the community area of Raymond Mhlaba Municipality according to the other six participants in the interviews include the following: Provision of Sanitation; Provision of electricity; Provision of water; and Creation of Job opportunities. Thus, below are the participants' responses:

**Participant One**

*"We have not really benefitted from the programme but we do see that the municipality is trying. We get visits from members of the municipality, we see that streets are cleaner, waste removal is being collected as well as jobs for our brothers and sisters are being created."*

**Participant Two**

*"As a community member, I benefit from the programme by gaining trust from the ward councillor, connection with the municipality which is very important when working together and when wanting to achieve something positive."*

**Participant Three**

*"Job creation has been made, decreasing the number of unemployed people in my community."*

**Participant Four**

*"I am a 65-year-old man who is always indoors, I guess the only thing I benefitted from is water, which I have to pay anyway, sanitation and electricity."*

### Participant Five

*“I haven’t benefited from anything, the services I was receiving before the implementation is still the same but now with challenges. For example, before we never experienced in the water crisis that is taking over at RMLM and now that the municipality has taken over the prepaid electricity it is very expensive and doesn’t last long.”*

### Participant Six

*“So far there is nothing that I have been benefiting from instead the services that the municipality is providing for us as a community are just costing us, we pay so much for the services that we are not even happy about it.”*

### Participant Seven

*“I for one haven’t benefited anything from the b2b programme besides the services I was receiving before the implementation which I haven’t seen any changes so far, but as for my fellow community mates, I see quite a huge number of the people have benefited because they are now employed.”*

In the same vein, the report of the study conducted by the Republic of South Africa (2019) indicated that a municipality that is getting the basics right, according to the B2B campaign, is one where, amongst other things: The municipal councillors are holding meetings and making decisions; officials and councillors are adhering to their roles and responsibilities; ward committees and other public participation structures are functioning; basic services, including water, roads, refuse removal, etc. are being delivered and maintained; finances are being effectively managed and lastly municipalities have appropriate staff doing their work and being.

### The Negative and Positive Impacts of the Implementation of B2B Programme in Your Community Area

It is very necessary to analyse and discuss both negative and positive impacts of the B2B programme in the community area of Raymond Mhlaba Municipality in the Eastern Cape because

these two important variables make the research get a clear understanding of the current situation of the municipality. The researcher asked the participants to mention and explain the negative and positive impacts of the implementation of the B2B Programme in their community areas based on their personal experience. Some of the participants indicated that water crises, empty promises, etc were some of the negative impacts that they have experienced during the implementation of B2B programme in their community area. While some other participants mentioned that Proper accountability, transparency among the municipal officials, and the engagement of the community by ward councillors etc. were some of the positive impacts of the implementation of the B2B Programme in their community area.

In order to analyse and discuss the negative and positive impacts of the implementation of the B2B programme in the community area in logical and appropriate manners, the researcher discussed these under two headings as follows:

#### ***The Negative Impacts of the Implementation of B2B Programme in Your Community Area***

Despite the lots of benefits the implementation of B2B programme brought to the community areas of the municipality, however, the implementation still has some setback which makes for the poor performance of the municipality. In one of the interviews section conducted with the community members, Two of seven participants indicated he has not experienced any negative impact of the implementation, while the remaining five of the participants interviewed indicated the following as the negative impacts of the implementation of the B2B programme in their community area: poor service delivery; unrealistic/fake promises; corruption and mismanagement of funds; improper understanding of the municipality’s IDP and roles of the different government departments; Poor communication skills between the municipalities ward councillors and the community members. Thus below are the participants’ responses:

### Participant One

*“Negative impact-Water crisis, no one warns us about the problem we just see that there is no*

*water and that can last for days no provision will be made to assist us in that problem. Secondly, is the bad road conditions whereby tires of our cars always get slow punches because of the bad potholes.”*

#### **Participant Two**

*“Negative impacts – (i) Empty promises which at the end of the day make us look bad to the people that don’t attend meetings, because the councillors always, make promises and at times they fail to deliver but never come back to the people and explain the challenges they faced while trying to fulfil the promises.*

*(ii) Corruption is very high in this municipality in the sense that funds that are meant for the development of communities are being used incorrectly for the things they were allocated for. For instance, it has been 3 full years we were waiting for pavement but the roads are still not fixed. Painfully, the material is there but people are stealing it.”*

#### **Participant Three**

*“Negative impact – it’s the community members that do not understand the role of the IDP and roles of the different government departments, for example, when there is no water the district is the main provider for water but the people protest to the local municipality. People should be made aware.”*

#### **Participant Four**

*“Negative impact: I have not noticed any negative impact of this implementation.”*

#### **Participant Five**

*“To me, everything about the implementation of the b2b in Raymond Mhlaba Municipality is just negative, by negative I mean that the services the municipality are providing are very poor and what makes it worse is that we pay for them and they are not free. For instance, we pay every month for water and if we don’t pay the water, it will be cut off as well as the electricity”. Our hope and trust in the municipality are lost.”*

#### **Participant Six**

*“Negative impact – Potholes or road infrastructure. Poor water provision, but at the end of the day, we need to pay. Poor communication skills between the municipalities ward councillors and the community members.”*

#### **Participant Seven**

*“Negative impact – None at the moment, the municipality is doing all in its powers to avoid conflicts and protests, which is what is keeping the community members happy at the present moment.”*

Each of these negative impacts is also discussed by the researchers below as thus:

#### **Poor Service Delivery**

The implementation of the B2B programme which is expected from the municipality to bring better service delivery to the community members has not been adequately delivered. In fact, it has been poorly delivered in some community areas of the municipality. One of the participants revealed that lack of information on irregular or unstable water and electricity supply by the municipality, bad road conditions, etc. were seen as some of the negative impacts of the implementation of the B2B Programme in their community area.

#### **Unrealistic/Fake Promises**

Most of the information given by the municipality to the community member at the meetings are unrealistic, which means fake information. This has made many community members lost interest or trust in the Local municipality manifestoes or programmes. Many community members have because of this lost confidence in the municipality and as a result, they decided to abscond their meetings. Two of the participants (precisely, participant two and five) interviewed revealed that they have even lost interest in attending most of the municipality’s meetings due to their fake or empty promises delivered. In addition, the ward councillors have failed severally to return back to the communities and inform them about some of the reasons why they could not



meet up to their expectations as promised. They further mentioned that those that did not attend meetings were even making jest of them.

#### ***Corruption and Mismanagement of Funds***

The researchers of this study have noticed that corruption and mismanagement of funds have severally been the order of the day in municipalities in most African countries including South Africa. One of the participants interviewed revealed that there is high corruption in this municipality and huge funds allocated for essential community projects have been diverted to something else. The participant further indicated that the community members have been long waiting for pavement road to be constructed by the municipality although the materials were delivered but there was no construction. Sadly, the participant emphatically stressed that the municipality was wasting money because these materials once delivered without used were stolen by the people.

#### ***Improper Understanding of the Municipality's IDP and Different Roles of the Different Government Departments***

It is very important for the municipality to educate the members of its communities as regards the IDP of the municipality. Inadequate awareness of information pertaining to the IDP of the municipality to the communities could yield negative results in the implementation of the B2B programme or municipality's manifesto, if not properly coordinated and communicated to the community members. One of the participants revealed that lack of proper understanding of the role of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and lack of awareness in the effective information of the municipality's Integrated Development Plan (IDP) have been seen as great concerns.

#### ***Poor Communication Skills between the Municipalities Ward Councillors and the Community Members***

Effective communication skills are required to be exhibited by the municipality officials to the community members but vice versa were the case. One of the participants interviewed revealed that some of the municipality officials, such as the

ward councillors, possess poor communication skills. The participant further mentioned that the ward councillors have not been communicating effectively as regards reasons behind their failure for not delivering quality services (such as construction and maintenance of roads) to the communities.

#### ***The Positive Impacts of the Implementation of the B2B Programme in the Community Area***

The impacts of the implementation of the B2B Programme have brought about growth and development to the community area of Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality, except in some few areas. Five out of seven participants interviewed in one of the interviews section revealed that they have witnessed the impact of the implementation of the B2B programme in the municipality. While the remaining two participants were of the opinion that they did not perceive any positive impacts. These five participants further mentioned that the programme has shown transparency, accountability, employment opportunities etc. in the community area and they have benefited a lot. Thus, below are the participants' responses:

##### **Participant One**

*"Positive impact – Waste removal is being collected every Wednesday as well as clean streets and the job creation for our siblings."*

##### **Participant Two**

*"Positive impact – None at the moment but hoping for the best now that there is that relationship between us and municipality councillors."*

##### **Participant Three**

*"One of the things that is a positive impact is the support that the community is getting by providing service delivery in a right way and by allowing the community to do public participation with all relevant stakeholders."*

##### **Participant Four**

*"Positive impact for me is that the municipality is doing all it can to deliver better services to the community. For instance: I noticed that*

*Potholes are being fixed and when there will be no water we receive text messages that alert us.”*

#### **Participant Five**

*“Positive impact: I have not noticed any positive impact but all I can say is that my experience of this implementation is always negative because of poor services rendering to us in the community.”*

#### **Participant Six**

*“Positive impact – It’s only the collection of waste removal every week.”*

#### **Participant Seven**

*“Positive impact – the programme has promoted transparency from municipal officials, engagement of the community by ward councillors as well as accountability when things are not going well.”*

Each of these positive impacts are highlighted as follows:

- ♦ The programme has promoted transparency among the municipality officials
- ♦ Engagement of the community by ward councillors
- ♦ Accountability
- ♦ Improve waste removal management
- ♦ Creation of employment
- ♦ Good cordial relationship between the community members and municipality councillors
- ♦ Good service delivery support to the community member
- ♦ Public participation with all relevant stakeholders
- ♦ Good services delivery to the community
- ♦ Avoidance of community or public conflicts and protests within the municipality areas

Similarly, the above findings concurred with the study conducted by Buhlungu and Atkinson (2007) which states that the transformation of local government has sought to improve the delivery of services, which were not provided for all communities by municipalities in the past. The Republic of South Africa, 1996 moreover further stated that the local government’s mandate to deliver facilities to societies remains preserved in

the Republic of South Africa’s Constitution Act No 108 of 1996. The Back-To-Basics programme further stated that in order to stimulate good supremacy, the needs of the programme are transparency, engagement of the community as well as accountability (Republic of South Africa 2019).

#### **Suggestions for Improving the Negative Impact of the Implementation of the B2B Programme**

The researchers asked the participants to give suggestions on various ways for overcoming the negative impact of the implementation of the B2B programme mentioned above. The seven participants suggested that for the management to achieve the smooth running of the municipality, they should ensure that the following are duly maintained: transparency; effective communication with the community members; provision of good service delivery; fulfilment of promises, honesty; proper allocation of budget and spending; effective monitoring and evaluation of the municipal officials; void nepotism in awarding tenders. Thus, below are the participants’ responses:

#### **Participant One**

*“If the municipality councillors could be transparent and communicate with the communities by revealing the challenges the local municipality is facing life, it could be so easy and lastly by getting the roads fixed.”*

#### **Participant Two**

*“If the municipality and its leaders can stop giving empty promises and just deliver there will be no conflict. Secondly, if we could be given reports on how the budget is being allocated and how it will be spent, it will be easy for us to monitor and evaluate if its spend well, and stop complaining all the time.”*

#### **Participant Three**

*“Lack of information from community members, people should be made aware in the monthly meeting that the municipality holds with community members.”*

**Participant Four**

*“I haven’t stated any negative impact so I cannot answer on that one.”*

**Participant Five**

*“The only thing that can assist in overcoming the negative impact is by the municipality officials going out to communities and getting their views on the services they are providing so that they can see what they can improve on, meaning monitoring and evaluation should be applied.”*

**Participant Six**

*“If the municipalities could avoid giving out tenders to friends and relatives, people who are clueless on what should be done because now in RMLM money is being wasted we see that different companies are being changed one after another and seeing no progress or improvement in what they were paid for. In fact in South Africa as a whole, tenders are the most dangerous, they promote corruption, this can only be avoided if departments like Public Works can take over and work hand -in -hand with municipalities.”*

**Participant Seven**

*“If the municipality officials could stick to being transparent as well as engaging community members all the time in every decision they make that could help a lot in avoiding negativity between the municipality and community.”*

Each of these suggestions was discussed by the researchers as follows:

**Transparency and Effective Communication with the Community Members, Proper Allocation of Budget and Spending**

Transparency in any organisation or institution is very necessary as it would reduce or prevent frauds among government officials. One of the participants interviewed revealed that the ward councillors should be transparent and honestly disseminate correct information (such as challenges facing the municipality from delivering services) to communities as they are seen as the intermediary between them and the municipi-

pality. The participant further mentioned that the municipality should be transparent in their spending and budget allocations.

**Creation of Better Awareness of Monthly Meetings with the Community Members**

In order to create an awareness of information to communities, it very important to ensure that information is disseminated through effective channels. One of the participants interviewed revealed that the municipality should ensure that they schedule monthly meetings with communities which should be communicated through effective channels.

**Provision of Good Service Delivery**

It is very important to mention that, it is the responsibility of the municipality to provide effective service delivery to the people. In one of the interviews section conducted, each ward councillor should move closer to their communities, listen to their complaint, and make provision that would alleviate their challenges.

**Proper Maintenance of Roads**

As already indicated in this current study that, the municipality is still failing in discharging effective service delivery on road maintenance to the communities, which there is a need for the municipality to urgently address this cogent issues. It is on this note that one of the participants interviewed in one of the interviews section revealed that the municipality should make proper provision for maintenance and construction of roads.

**Effective Monitoring and Evaluation of the Municipal Officials**

For the smooth running of the municipality administration to be effective and for the communities to feel the impact of the service delivery by municipality, there is a need for municipality to set aside or appoint a special team known as monitoring and evaluation team, which will be responsible for checking or assessing the municipality’s officials possibly once in a month. One of the respondents interviewed mentioned that there

should be effective monitoring and evaluation of the municipality ward councillors and other officials as regards their role and responsibilities in implementing the B2B programme.

### Avoid Nepotism in Awarding Tenders

Nepotism or favouritism is very common among the municipality's officials in South Africa. This is a common practice among municipalities across South Africa. Evidence from a scholarly study conducted by several authors has shown that the municipalities employed nepotism by employing their families or friends who are not qualified for positions or awarding tenders to unqualified people in the municipalities. As a result of this, one of the respondents interviewed revealed that the municipality should avoid nepotism or favouritism in awarding tenders or contracts especially to unqualified people either known or unknown to them. Hence, the researchers are of the opinion by suggesting that the principle of nepotism should be condemned as it effect would weaken the progress of the municipality in Raymond Mhlaba Municipality in the Eastern Cape and entire municipalities in South Africa

### CONCLUSION

The impact of the implementation of the B2B programmes has played a significant role in improving the standard of living of the people although a lot of efforts still needed to be done by the Municipality Management and its other stakeholders in improving the standard of living of the communities.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper recommended that the municipality management should make proper provision for maintenance and construction of basic social amenities such as roads, electricity, and water et-cetera for the community members as there is a need for the municipality to urgently address these cogent issues. There should be effective monitoring and evaluation of the municipality ward councillors and other officials with regards to their role and responsibilities in implementing the B2B programme. For smooth running of the municipality administration to be effective and for the

communities to feel the impact of the service delivery provided by the municipality, there is a need for municipality to appoint a special task team known as monitoring and evaluation team, which will be responsible for checking or assessing the municipality's officials performances possibly once a month.

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