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## **THE PROMISE OF WOMEN'S EQUALITY: THE TRANSFORMATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA**

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## I. Introduction

Local government is now expected to play a proactive role in the social, economic and material development of local communities. Thus, local government is an important sphere of government for women and gender equity, as it has the potential to transform women's lives through the provision of services, such as water, sanitation, clinics, child care facilities, roads and transport.

This is particularly important given that women and children are amongst the groups most disadvantaged by inequality and most vulnerable to poverty. Women tend to face social and economic constraints due to the structural basis of gender inequality in the South African economy and society. They are more likely to be excluded from the formal employment sector and rely heavily on informal employment. Women predominate at the lowest rungs of the informal sector in South Africa where they are clustered in highly competitive, low profit and overcrowded sectors.<sup>1</sup> For the majority, their income is less than the minimum income standard or the poverty line. Women tend to be engaged in low-profit trading activities, such as the hawking of fruit and vegetables, because these activities offer low barriers to entry. Women also tend to be less educated, less self-reliant and more illiterate than men. This affects their ability to engage in higher levels of economic activity. Where women are involved in the formal economy, they tend to earn less than men because of the structural gender bias within the economy. As a result of their weaker earning capacity, women often face difficulties in providing services and basic necessities for their families. Without access to services and capacity-building programs, it is difficult for women to escape poverty.

It follows then, that the participation of women in local government and the integration of gender analysis in programming and service delivery is essential to ensure effective service delivery and contribute to the empowerment of women. Service delivery must be assessed through a gendered lens in order to foster awareness of socio-cultural factors that shape gender inequality. Gender based analysis requires the assessment of the differential impact of policies and programs on women and men. This is true also for service delivery, as the roles of both men and women lead them to be differently affected by service delivery. This is particularly so given that women are primarily the heads of households and as such are the primary users of basic services provided by municipalities.<sup>2</sup>

It is thus crucial that local government be sensitized to the needs of women. Unfortunately, however, legislation does not provide clear guidelines on how and when councils should integrate gender both in its internal functions and procedures, and in service provision.

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<sup>1</sup> Sarita Ranchod, "Women at the Bottom of the Informal Sector Pile", *Khanyisa*, IDASA Publication, 2001

<sup>2</sup> Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP), *Women's Participation in Local Government: Processes in the Breede Valley Local Government*, June 2002 at 5 [hereinafter *Processes in the Breede Valley*]

One way to ensure that the needs of women are met is to increase their participation in policy formulation and decision-making by seeking to hear and encourage women's voices from both inside and outside local government structures. This will allow for the possibility that policy will be undertaken with an appreciation of gender differences, the nature of the relationships between men and women and of their different social realities, life expectations and economic circumstances. This can be accomplished in two ways: externally, through community participation, particularly through the integrated development planning (IDP) process; and internally, through the representation of women on municipal councils and in policy and administrative positions.

As was previously mentioned, local government is uniquely positioned to play a role in transforming the lives of women. The legislative emphasis on the developmental role of local government within communities culminates in the IDP process. It is through the IDP framework that municipal councils must plan their functions and activities in a manner that will assist the socio-economic development of the community. At the heart of the IDP process is the addressing of community needs in a participatory and integrated manner. Thus, the IDP process provides a unique opportunity to mainstream gender into the planning processes of local government.

Women can ensure their needs are met through external participatory processes that mandate the inclusion of all groups in community decision-making, especially the disadvantaged. This will ensure the empowering of women through the development of strategies for capacity building; effective, targeted service delivery; and internal systems and procedures to redress gender imbalances and ensure access to resources and opportunities. If such processes are conducted in a gender-blind manner, women will be disadvantaged and their views and needs will be ignored.

Internally, municipalities can respond to women's needs through the equal representation of women from different backgrounds on the council and in the municipal administration. Female councillors have a strategic role to play in ensuring municipalities respond to women's needs. Women councillors are well placed to represent and address the diverse needs of women within their wards and ensure that the council is sensitive to women's issues and that male councillors take them seriously. Further, participation must also include women's role as employees of local government. Increased participation of women within municipal structures will also foster a change in attitude towards women's involvement in public life and expand women's opportunities beyond those traditionally assigned to women.

## II. Community Participation as a Tool for Women's Empowerment

The new framework for a developmental local government provides substantial opportunities to address the challenges associated with poverty eradication and gender equity. Municipalities must now focus their efforts and resources on improving the quality of life of their communities, especially the disadvantaged members, such as women. The key to fulfilling their developmental role is the adoption and implementation of an IDP, as it "is a policy tool that aims to integrate community involvement with developmental objectives and service delivery."<sup>3</sup> The IDP process requires the participation of municipal stakeholders. Both the *Constitution* and the *Municipal Systems Act (Systems Act)*<sup>4</sup> mandate that local governments ensure the participation of disadvantaged community groups when identifying the developmental needs and priorities of the larger community. The constitutional entrenchment of the right to gender equality and the new roles of local government to promote a safe and healthy environment and encourage social and economic development has the potential to benefit women and encourage and increase women's participation in local government.

#### A. Constitutional Objectives of Local Government

The *Constitution* establishes that municipalities are now required to be developmental in their approach and activities in order to give priority to the basic needs of the community. Section 152 of the *Constitution* enumerates a number of objectives of local government, including establishing representative and participatory democracy, addressing poverty and inequality, and promoting local economic and social development. Municipalities must ensure that scarce resources are allocated and spent effectively and that all citizens have access to at least a minimum level of basic services. Municipalities must also structure and manage their administration, budget and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote the social and economic development of the community.<sup>5</sup> Thus, municipalities must plan for present and long term development. Local government is also mandated to "respect, protect, promote and fulfill" the equality rights in the *Bill of Rights*.<sup>6</sup>

Key to the attainment of these objectives is the further objective of encouraging "the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of local government."<sup>7</sup> In order to be able to identify the needs of the community and to best promote social and economic development, councils need the input of their constituents to be able to best identify those areas that need addressing.

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* at 18

<sup>4</sup> *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* (Act 108 of 1996), s. 153; *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000* (Act 32 of 2000)

<sup>5</sup> *Constitution*, s. 153(a)

<sup>6</sup> *Constitution*, ss. 7(2); 9

<sup>7</sup> *Constitution*, s. 152(1)(e)

B. Municipal Systems Act and Community Participation

A municipality must encourage the involvement of the community and community organizations in municipal governance.<sup>8</sup> The statutory framework allows municipalities to develop “a culture of municipal governance that compliments formal representative government with a system of participatory government”.<sup>9</sup> This process of integration is important for improving management and service delivery. Chapter 4 of the *Systems Act* emphasizes three elements of participatory governance: First, municipalities must foster participation in the IDP process, performance management, the budget process, and strategic decisions regarding service delivery. Second, they must enable participation through capacity building in communities among staff and councillors, and third, funds must be allocated and utilized for the above purposes.

Participation must take place through structures, such as ward committees, established under the *Municipal Structures Act (Structures Act)*<sup>10</sup> and through the processes that exist in the *Systems Act*. Municipalities must also establish mechanisms, processes and procedures to enable community participation.<sup>11</sup> Besides establishing ward committees, the council may also establish advisory committees that consist of persons who are not councillors.<sup>12</sup> Where a council decides to establish an advisory committee or a ward committee, gender representation must be taken into account when appointing members. Ward committees are an important opportunity to build the capacity of women and build their self-confidence. These committees act as formal communication channels between the community and council, and thus, enable municipalities to translate women’s representation into active participation to ensure that gender-specific needs are met.<sup>13</sup>

Further, municipal councils must take into account the special needs of certain disadvantaged groups, such as women. For example, when planning a public meeting, Council must try and accommodate all these groups and consider issues such as whether the venue or time chosen may effectively exclude certain groups of individuals from attending.

III. Representation of Women in Municipal Structures

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<sup>8</sup> *Systems Act*, s. 4(2)(c)

<sup>9</sup> *Systems Act*, s. 16(1)

<sup>10</sup> *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998* (Act 117 of 1998)

<sup>11</sup> *Systems Act*, s. 17

<sup>12</sup> *Systems Act*, s. 17(4); *Structures Act*, s. 73(3)

<sup>13</sup> *Processes in the Breede Valley, supra* note 2 at 18

In order to become a gender sensitive institution, local government must undergo an internal transformation and remove obstacles to the effective participation of women in local government structures. The need to increase women's participation in local government has been recognized by many, including the Deputy Minister of Local Government, Ms. Ntombazana Botha, who has stated that men and women should be equally represented in all local government structures.<sup>14</sup>

Representation is an important indicator of the social and political status of women. Generally, women tend to be under-represented in positions closely identified with power and predominate in administrative and service occupations.<sup>15</sup> Adequate representation of women in local government is crucial to ensure that municipalities are more representative of the communities that they serve. Further, it is a vital step toward greater gender equity within society as a whole.

#### A. Reasons for Under-Representation

One reason for the under-representation of women in local government is political party and voter bias towards male candidates. Conservative attitudes, particularly towards women at the senior management level, means that women do not fit the image of the "man in charge". This attitude contributes to the lack of confidence that voters have in female candidates.<sup>16</sup>

The "masculine model" of political life also disadvantages women. Once elected into office, women often experience various barriers that limit their effectiveness. Political life tends to be organized around a male lifestyle. Thus, meeting schedules, lack of administrative support and the lack of infrastructure, such as child care facilities and transport after 6 p.m. are biased against those responsible for family care.

Women in local government also sometimes encounter hostility or ridicule from male colleagues who feel threatened by their presence.<sup>17</sup> They also find their skills and competencies are often not recognized and must confront sexist attitudes and behaviour; finding they are often not afforded the same legitimacy and credibility as their male colleagues.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> SALGA National Conference, November 2002

<sup>15</sup> GAP/Foundation for Contemporary Research, *Local Government and Gender: A Reality Check*, 1998 at 20

<sup>16</sup> Jean Drage, "Women in Local Government in Asia and the Pacific", 25 February 2002. This document can be found at [www.lgnz.co.nz/news](http://www.lgnz.co.nz/news)

<sup>17</sup> Women's Development Foundation, *Women and Local Government: The Centre of Delivery*, 2000 at 30; GAP, *From the Margins to the Centre: Women in Local Government as Change Agents*, June 1999 at 37 [hereinafter *From the Margins*]

<sup>18</sup> GAP, *Ibid.* at 12, 42

B. Possible Strategies to Increase the Representation of Women

The mere presence of women in political leadership positions opens and challenges gender stereotypes and attitudes, as well as entrenched ways of working. Women councillors and women in management positions dispel gender stereotypes by being in positions commonly considered male domains. Research indicates that when women enter government institutions they challenge and force the transformation of such institutions to accommodate women and to become more gender sensitive.<sup>19</sup> This is especially important in a system of participatory democracy, as it creates vital opportunities to hear the views of residents and respond to their problems, and for councillors to represent the views of communities in a real and meaningful way.<sup>20</sup> Strategically, municipal councils are an important structure for the empowerment of women as council makes all decisions concerning the exercise of all powers and performance of all the functions of the municipality.<sup>21</sup> Municipal councils also have the exclusive power to pass by-laws and approve budgets.<sup>22</sup>

Women's representation in local government can be increased in a number of ways. Political parties can set quotas to include a certain percentage of women on their lists. The ANC, for example, has established an internal quota, which provides that women must comprise 30% of all candidates on party lists. The *Structures Act* mandates that parties seek to ensure that 50% of the candidates on the party list are women and that female and male candidates are evenly distributed throughout the list.<sup>23</sup> The *Municipal Electoral Act* also mandates the full and equal participation of women in political activity.<sup>24</sup>

The *Constitution* provides for the establishment of a proportional representation system for municipal elections that may or may not be combined with a system of ward representation.<sup>25</sup> However, women fare better in a proportional representation system than when they stand as ward candidates.<sup>26</sup> Currently, only 10% of all ward councillors are women, compared to 27% of all candidates elected through party lists. Thus, a system of proportional representation is more conducive to facilitate women's access to political office, as parties can actively support and promote women in political leadership positions.<sup>27</sup>

Capacity building for women at all levels of municipalities (council and administration) is also extremely important. Councillors should be provided opportunities for training and confidence building, such as training in media, public

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<sup>19</sup> GAP, *Gap Talk*, 2002 at 2

<sup>20</sup> GAP, *Laws for Local Government: A Guide for Women Councillors* at 7

<sup>21</sup> *Constitution*, s. 160(1)(a)

<sup>22</sup> *Constitution*, s. 160(2)

<sup>23</sup> *Structures Act*, Sched. 1, s. 11(3); Sched. 2, s. 17(5)

<sup>24</sup> *Municipal Electoral Act, 2000* (Act 27 of 2000), Sched. 1, s. 6

<sup>25</sup> *Constitution*, s. 157(2)

<sup>26</sup> Lindiwe Ndlela, "Women Still Under-Represented in Local Government", *Khanyisa*, IDASA Publication, 2001

<sup>27</sup> GAP, *Processes of the Breede Valley*, *supra* note 2 at 30

speaking, and assertiveness. They should also be provided information and support so that they have a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Further, policies favouring women in job selection and promotion must be in place, as well as the provision for their training and development. This would include public speaking, assertiveness training, mentoring and networking.

However, merely increasing the number of women in local government is not alone sufficient to transform the prevalent organizational culture and work practices of local government, as the organizational culture of an institution reflects dominant societal perceptions, values and customs.<sup>28</sup> It is crucial that the interests of women be taken up by municipalities, possibly through such mechanisms as gender equity committees and gender budgets, to review councils' planning and implementation to meet the needs of both genders equitably. Policies and programs must be devised and implemented in order to make local government a more enabling environment for women. However, for this to be fully accomplished, changes must occur in all facets of society.

#### IV. The Much Spoken About IDP

The national legislator has determined that an IDP should be "...the principal strategic planning instrument which guides and informs all planning and development, and all decisions with regard to planning, management and development in the municipality."<sup>29</sup> Strategic planning within a municipality is done within the framework of the IDP, seeing that an IDP –

- Links, integrates and co-ordinates all developmental plans within a municipality.
- Aligns the municipality's resources and capacity with the implementation of the plan.
- Forms the basis on which the budget is based.
- Is compatible with national and provincial development strategies and plans.<sup>30</sup>

The IDP is a planning and budgeting device that aligns all three spheres of government's plans, strategies, policies and funds. Thus, the IDP is the mechanism through which a municipality undertakes developmentally orientated planning and budgeting that is geared towards fulfilling the objects and developmental duties of a municipality.<sup>31</sup> The national legislator gave an IDP a unique status within the local government dispensation. This planning and budgeting tool binds a municipal council in the exercise of its legislative and executive authority. This means that no

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<sup>28</sup> GAP/FCR, *supra* note 14 at 20

<sup>29</sup> *Systems Act*, s. 35(1)

<sup>30</sup> *Systems Act*, s. 25(1)

<sup>31</sup> For example, the rights to a safe and healthy environment, protection of property, housing, health care, food, water, social security and education. See *Constitution*, ss.152, 153 in this regard.

council decision may be in conflict with its IDP. An IDP stays in force for five years, thus until after the next municipal election, when the new municipal council will adopt a new five year IDP.<sup>32</sup>

A. Synergy between Community Participation, the IDP and Performance Management

Although chapter 5 of the *Systems Act* (integrated development plan) and the regulations promulgated accordingly set out a detailed legal framework for an IDP, chapter 4 (community participation) and chapter 6 (performance management) of said Act, gives an important backdrop to the detailed IDP legal framework.

Each municipal council must adopt an IDP within a period as prescribed in legislation. This statutory obligation cannot be delegated and the IDP should only be adopted after the municipal council has conducted an assessment process (community participation) regarding the development needs of the residents within the municipality's area of jurisdiction. These needs must be evaluated and prioritized through the same community participation process. The community should also be involved in the drafting of the IDP.<sup>33</sup>

The national legislator set a minimum content for each IDP, but a municipal council may, on its own accord, add other components to the plan.<sup>34</sup> One of the more important elements of an IDP is the so-called key performance indicators (KPIs) and the key performance targets (KPTs). These indicators and targets are critical components of a performance management system (PMS). KPIs "(are) a yardstick for measuring performance, including outcomes and impact, with regard to the municipality's development priorities and objectives set out in its IDP."<sup>35</sup> KPTs are "measurable performance targets with regard to each of those development priorities and objectives."<sup>36</sup> Seven general national performance indicators were set to which all municipalities must adhere to in setting up their PMS<sup>37</sup> and they must report on the general KPIs by the end of the 2002/2003 municipal budget year. Another important element of an IDP is a financial plan, which includes a budget projection for at least the following three years. This projection is referred to as a medium term expenditure framework (Mtef).

The IDP gets reviewed annually and this review is conducted in accordance with the performance management report as well as the municipality's budget cycle.<sup>38</sup> During the initial adoption phase of each IDP, the provincial MEC

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<sup>32</sup> *Systems Act*, ss. 35, 36. Also see Jaap de Visser, "Integrated Development Planning in the *Systems Act*", LGL Bulletin (April 2001)

<sup>33</sup> *Local Government: Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations, 2001 (IDP & PMS Regs.)* (GG 7145 of 24 August 2001).

<sup>34</sup> *Systems Act*, s. 26

<sup>35</sup> Penny Mckenzie, "Gender and Performance Indicators for Local Government", Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP) Publication (2002) at 10

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* at 10

<sup>37</sup> For example, households earning less than R1100 per month with access to free basic services. See *IDP & PMS Regs.*, item 10 in this regard.

<sup>38</sup> *Systems Act*, s. 34

responsible for local government has the statutory obligation to monitor the drafting process and assist a municipality in the drafting, adoption and review of its IDP. The MEC may also request a municipality to adjust its IDP in accordance with such proposal, if –

- the IDP does not comply with chapter 5 of the *Systems Act* and the *IDP & PMS Regs* promulgated accordingly, or
- the IDP is not aligned with any of the plans and strategies of other affected municipalities or organs of state, such as the national and provincial spheres of government.<sup>39</sup>

#### B. The IDP functioning within a participatory democracy

Chapter 7 of the *Constitution* and the *Systems Act* create a participatory democracy for the new local government dispensation based on a culture of representative government with a system of participatory government.<sup>40</sup> This results in a bottom-up approach when the needs of the community must be assessed as well as realized. The tool used for this is an IDP. But participatory democracy should not interfere with the right of a municipal council to govern and execute its executive and legislative authority in serving the community.

Before a municipality starts drafting an IDP, it must adopt a document that sets out the ground rules for the drafting, adoption and review of this strategic planning and budgeting instrument. The community must be consulted on these ground rules before it is adopted.<sup>41</sup> To assess the community's needs and then to prioritize them cannot happen if the community does not become the focal point of the IDP preparation and consultation process. Such process should be structured around the ward committee or sub-council systems established in the municipality, depending on the type of municipality involved. The municipal council must facilitate community participation during every stage of the IDP Process.

After due regard to the legal framework as well as the synergy between the IDP, community participation, performance management and budgeting, let us consider a practical overview of the IDP process that has been conducted in two category B-municipalities, namely –

- the Breede Valley Municipality in the Western Cape Province, and
- the Manguang Local Municipality in the Free State Province.

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<sup>39</sup> *Systems Act*, s. 31, 32

<sup>40</sup> See discussions above as well as *Systems Act*, s. 16

<sup>41</sup> *Systems Act*, s. 28

V. Case Studies

A. Breede Valley Municipality

The Breede Valley Municipality (BVM) consists of the disestablished municipalities of De Doorns, Touws River, Rawsonville, Worcester and the Matroosberg. Matroosberg includes the following agricultural areas (among others): De Wet, Bree River, Orchard, Nuy, Overhex and Goudini. The Breede Valley District Council consists of four municipalities: Worcester, Rawsonville, Touws River and De Doorns, and Overhex and Nuy. The Breede Valley Municipality is a medium-sized local government that serves an estimated population of 128 919 and a total of 29 213 households. A large number of these households can be classified as rural, due to the prominence of agriculture in the economy of the Breede Valley.

i) Process Methodology

The BVM could be considered an example of a municipality attempting to actively address gender issues through the IDP process, as it made a concerted effort to specifically structure its IDP process to be pro-poor and pro-gender in order that there be a specific focus on these areas in the IDP.<sup>42</sup>

The BVM IDP process was divided into three phases. The first phase focused on maximizing the involvement of the various communities in the Breede Valley; the second phase focused on the changing roles of the community from role players to stakeholders; and the third phase consisted of a participatory action research process.<sup>43</sup>

The first phase was geared towards maximum community participation, and comprised of interactive public workshops used to gather and analyze the needs of the community. It was in this phase where, through the establishment of area forums, the participation of women was particularly singled out.<sup>44</sup> A targeted approach was used, as for women to be taken seriously by local government, it is important that women are informed about the processes that will allow for their effective input.<sup>45</sup>

The Gender Advocacy Program (GAP) and the Foundation for Contemporary Research (FCR) co-facilitated workshops with women in the areas of De Doorns, Touws River, Rawsonville and Worcester.<sup>46</sup> In order to ensure that women's views were represented in the IDP process, GAP and FCR conducted gender focus groups in the

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<sup>42</sup> *Breede Valley Municipality Final IDP Document, 2002-2007*, prepared by Claude V. Schroeder- IDP Manager at 12

<sup>43</sup> GAP, *Processes of the Breede Valley*, *supra* note 2 at 19

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* at 20

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* at 7

municipality with the aim to explain the IDP process to women, to encourage them to attend IDP meetings and to vote for women to be represented on IDP representative forums.<sup>47</sup>

iii) Gender Specific Issues

The BVM IDP recognizes that as a result of women's disadvantaged position in the larger society, women in the Breede Valley are more likely to be excluded from the formal employment sector and rely heavily on informal employment, are less educated, less self reliant and more illiterate than males.<sup>48</sup> Thus, it is recognized that much needs to be done to improve the social position of female-headed households, and the social position of women in the workforce and within families.

The municipality itself has recognized that it has not lived up to its responsibility to promote gender equity. It has not, for example, met equity targets with respect to new appointments and does not have an active recruitment program to attract female employees. Further, no programs exist to address women's disadvantaged position in society.<sup>49</sup>

iii) Results

As far as the attempt to educate and integrate women into the IDP process is concerned, GAP reports that women generally felt that they were better equipped to participate in development forum meetings and had a better understanding of the IDP process. Further, the number of women who were elected to sit on the interim IDP representative forum was much higher than other municipalities where the targeted approach was not followed.<sup>50</sup>

However, while the municipality made an effort to include women in the IDP process, it does not appear that an effort was also made to include their views in the IDP document itself in a substantive sense. This is evident from the identification of the needs and development of a priority rating for these needs. The IDP presents the results for the community at large and various interest groups. Remarkably absent is the inclusion of women as an interest group. The IDP specifically mentions the priorities of pensioners, farm workers, youth and "other".

The Gender Forum had a rating process where they identified their priority issues as follows:<sup>51</sup>

1. Housing
2. Unemployment and Job Creation
3. Health Issues and Health Services

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<sup>47</sup> GAP, *Gap Talk*, *supra* note 18 at 6

<sup>48</sup> *Breede Valley IDP*, *supra* note 27 at 42-43

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* at 43

<sup>50</sup> GAP, *Processes of the Breede Valley*, *supra* note 2 at 21.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* at 23

4. Social Grants for Children, the Elderly, and people living with HIV/AIDS
5. Crime

This can be contrasted with the overall priority concerns for all respondents, namely:<sup>52</sup>

1. Job creation/unemployment (69%)
2. Crime (67%)
3. Housing (63%)
4. Facilities for youth (54%)
5. HIV/AIDS and Health Issues (46%)
6. Training Farm Workers (39%)

As can be seen, the priorities identified by the women in the community diverged from those of the community as a whole on a number of issues. While some of the women's concerns were mentioned in the IDP, there is no specific inclusion of what women identified as their concerns or needs and where those needs fit into the priority of needs identified in the IDP. Neither were any of the priorities identified by women included in the priority project issues.<sup>53</sup> While women were able to express their concerns in the IDP process, it is not apparent that those concerns have been recognized by the municipality.

For example, unemployment and job creation was identified as a priority by both women and the community as a whole. However, there is no discussion of the particular challenges faced by women in the labour market. This despite the recognition that women are disadvantaged economically, primarily as a result of less education, exclusion from the formal employment sector, and salary imbalances within the formal employment sector. There has also been no identification of strategies to integrate women into the formal employment sector. The gender forum, in its strategic planning workshop in November 2001, indicated a need for skills development, training for women in traditionally male jobs and for education and adult literacy as means to improve women's employment opportunities.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, no programs or strategies were devised to deal with the disproportionate domestic workload incurred by women, the influence of culture on women's position in society or the neglect women suffer at the hands of men; all issues identified by the IDP Manager as problems facing women in the BVM.

In its integrated poverty reduction and social development programme, the BVM has recognized the particular vulnerability of women in the community. Its program aims to facilitate and coordinate integrated developmental services in order to "maximize self-reliance and promote greater interaction and cooperation amongst the

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<sup>52</sup> *Breede Valley IDP*, *supra* note 27 at 50

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* at 57

<sup>54</sup> GAP, *Processes of the Breede Valley*, *supra* note 2 at 24-25

disadvantaged communities and ultimately improve the quality of life of the people of the Breede Valley.”<sup>55</sup> The BVM wishes to create historic opportunities for marginalized groups, such as women, to enable growth, empowerment and redistribution. The BVM has recognized that HIV/AIDS and the phasing out of the State Maintenance Grants are having a disproportionately negative impact on women and children.<sup>56</sup> In an attempt to address these issues the Municipality has pledged to implement an integrated HIV/AIDS strategy involving home based care and social assistance. They have also recognized the need for women to generate income for themselves and their families and plan to address in their service program. Unfortunately, however, the IDP provides no explanation as to how this will be accomplished.

The BVM has also recognized that its employment equity initiatives are lacking as employment equity targets have not been met and there is no active recruitment program for women regarding new appointments. This is a major issue for the Municipality, as currently women comprise only 26% of its total employees, with the majority working at junior management level or lower.<sup>57</sup> The employment of women by the municipality is key, as it provides women an opportunity to influence decisions affecting their lives and those of women generally. The municipality has recognized that the promotion and empowerment of women in decision-making capacities has been hampered as, “external support and promotion is not always forthcoming.”<sup>58</sup> The BVM is attempting to address this issue by setting its employment equity target at achieving a 50-50 ratio women to men, although no recruitment programme is outlined in the IDP itself.

#### B. Mangaung Local Municipality

One system that maximizes participatory governance is community-based planning (CBP). CBP seeks to decentralize decision-making in order to strengthen participatory democracy by providing an environment in which residents can contribute to their own development through influencing resource allocation. It aims to improve the dialogue between the community, local government and service providers. Community based ward planning (CBWP) aims to address the lack of effective structures for planning and managing development by developing an effective community-based planning system at the ward level, which then feeds into municipal-wide planning systems, such as the IDP.<sup>59</sup> A key feature of CBP is the use of residents’ strengths, opportunities, local indigenous knowledge and technical inputs to find effective solutions for their communities.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Breede Valley IDP*, *supra* note 27 at 101

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* at 104

<sup>57</sup> GAP, *Processes of the Breede Valley*, *supra* note 2 at 11

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* at 12

<sup>59</sup> Teboho Maine, “Linking Communities and Local Government: The Mangaung Experience”, LGL Bulletin (September, 2002) at 14

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* at 15

CBP is a potential tool for empowering women, as it enables municipalities to make plans and services more relevant to local needs and conditions and increase a community's control over their own lives and livelihoods. These plans are based on the following principles: that planning must be people-focused and empowering, led and owned by the ward committees, based on vision and strengths, holistic, and promote mutual accountability between community and officials.

i) Community-Based Planning

The Mangaung Local Municipality (MLM) is a pioneer in community-based planning in South Africa, which it sees as an opportunity to promote participatory democracy in the production of its integrated development plan.<sup>61</sup> CBP aims to strengthen the links between communities and local government through active community involvement in local planning, ensure planning decisions are based on people's development priorities, and ensure proper preparation for, and involvement of, stakeholders in the IDP process.

Mangaung Municipality is comprised of the city of Bloemfontein, the "peri-urban" towns of Botshabelo, Thaba Nchu and a vast rural area. It has a population of over 750 000 people, and includes wealthy, predominately white suburbs along with very poor squatter settlements.

ii) Process

Community-based ward planning was undertaken in Mangaung Municipality between September 2001 and February 2002.

The MLM established a ward planning process in all wards, which involved a three- to four-day planning process, using a vision-based methodology, planning involving community groups, and developing community actions. The municipality provided R50 000 to each ward to support the process. Approximately 10 000 people participated in the planning, the equivalent of 1.5% of the population.

All 43 wards produced development plans, which the Municipality used to identify the priorities of each ward, decide on the objectives for the whole area, and guide the ward in advancing its own development program. Each ward's planning was done through a ward-planning forum, which included the participation of different socio-economic groups who were asked to identify the priority of outcomes for them as a group and other main areas of vulnerability or threats. All these outcomes were then listed at a community meeting, and residents voted as to which were their highest priorities.

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* at 13

A ward plan must include the socio-economic situation in the ward overall and for various groups, including the most disadvantaged; the vision and goals for the ward; projects and activities to achieve those goals; proposals for spending the R50 000 allocated by the Municipality; and an action plan for the ward.

iii) Results

The priorities for the Mangaung IDP have been derived from the priorities of the wards, as have many of the elements of the plans and IDP projects.<sup>62</sup> The ward plans influenced the MLM's IDP in a variety of ways. First, in the development of overall strategic priorities for the municipality. The community overwhelming identified their number one priority as economic development; a considerable change from previous priorities of the municipality. Second, by suggesting ideas on how the overall development objectives could best be achieved by, for example, having self-built instead of contractor built housing. Third, by suggesting specific ideas for the municipality as a whole, such as a job centre, and lastly, specific project ideas for the local ward.<sup>63</sup>

The process was marked by the widespread participation of residents, including the poor and disadvantaged, which enabled their priorities to be represented. There is some evidence that services are being improved as a result of this process. However, it remains to be seen to what extent CBWP will stimulate local action and local management development.

iv) Potential Benefits for Women's Empowerment

CBP has the potential to contribute significantly to the empowerment of women and drastically improve their quality and standard of living because CBP starts with the community's views and actively involves the community in managing their own development.

Community based planning is a people-driven process that is politically very powerful, as the process allows for the recognition of the specific interests of vulnerable groups. It also ensures that they are active and involved in managing their own development including being involved in decisions on resource allocation, in managing local initiatives, in the maintenance or operation of infrastructure and projects. It also results in their empowerment through overcoming dependency and mobilizing local energy. As a result, it has a greater power to transform the lives of the disadvantaged, including women, given it has the potential to provide greater access to resources and opportunities.

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<sup>62</sup> *Mangaung Local Municipality Final IDP Document, 2002-2007*, prepared by Teboho Maine –IDP Manager at 1

<sup>63</sup> Maine, *supra* note 61 at 14

Through active participation at the ward level, women can ensure that their needs and priorities are heard. CBP will allow women to be more fully integrated into the IDP and budget planning process. They can influence the projects and actions that are contained in the IDP, enabling them to access capacity building initiatives and directly influence service delivery within their communities, insuring that it is targeted and effective.

## VI. Recommendations

1. In order to fulfill their developmental obligations, municipalities must be aware of the needs of their residents, especially those of the most marginalized and disadvantaged, such as women. In order to do so, municipal structures must be sensitized to gender issues.
2. Given that the IDP informs all planning and development within the municipality, the community must be the focal point of the preparation and consultation processes of the IDP.
3. To ensure the active participation of women in the IDP process, a targeted approach should be used. A distinct effort should be made to explain the IDP process to women, to encourage them to attend IDP meetings and to vote for women to be represented on IDP representative forums. Gender forums are also an important way to ensure that women are heard and that their needs are accounted for.
4. A concerted effort must also be made to increase the representation of women in local government structures through political party quotas, capacity building, and employment equity programs that target women for recruitment and promotion.
5. Community-based planning is a means to maximize community participation and better address the needs of marginalized communities. Community-based planning enables municipalities to make plans and services more relevant to local needs by specifically targeting different socio-economic groups and having them identify their needs and priorities. Community-based planning could have distinct benefits for the empowerment of women, as it provides an avenue for women to directly influence IDP projects and actions, and service delivery.
6. Most municipalities are currently busy reviewing their IDPs and therefore this period is best suited for an internal review regarding the gender sensitivity of its policies, communication with the community as well as its by-laws. A monitoring and evaluation tool was created to assist not only the political office bearers and the municipal staff members, but also the community to assess the municipality's performance through a gendered lens.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> See Annexure A in this regard.

7. In order to ensure a gender sensitive IDP, the national and provincial strategies and policies with which it must be aligned should guide the content of the IDP on a gender orientated planning and budgeting path. One way in which this can be achieved is to draft an additional general national performance indicator dealing with the percentage of a municipality's budget spent on implementing projects to address women's needs as identified in the IDP.

## ANNEXURE A

### PRO-FORMA QUESTIONNAIRE

*Evaluating the gender sensitivity of your Municipality\**

#### Institutional Mechanisms

Performance Indicator	Measure
1. Does the Municipality have a gender policy?	Yes/ No/ In the process
2. Are gender issues taken into account when drafting policies at the political and administrative level of the Municipality?	Yes/ No/ In the process
3. Do the political structures (council), office bearers (mayor) and municipal staff members (municipal manager) regularly make public statements in favor of gender equality?	Yes/ No
4. Do the policy documents, public communication and by-laws of the Municipality reflect gender sensitive language?	Yes/ No/ In the process
5. Do municipal publications include articles on gender issues?	Yes/ No/ In the process

#### Representation

Performance Indicator	Measure
1. % Of eligible women and men registered as voters (indicate separately)	%
2. % Of registered women and men who voted in the 2000 elections (indicate separately)	%
3. % Of women candidates in the 2000 elections	%
4. % Of seats held by women in Council	%
5. % Of women in top decision making positions (political structures and administration, indicate separately)	%
6. Are there mentoring schemes between more experienced councillors and new women councillors	Yes/ No/ In the process

#### Participation

Performance Indicator	Measure
1. Has the municipality identified impeding factors regarding the participation of women in local public forums?	Yes/ No/ In the process
2. Has the municipality developed action plans to rectify impeding problems regarding women's participation?	Yes/ No/ In the process

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\* Designed analogous to Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP), *Additional Gender Indicators*

### Integrated Development Plan

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Have women been consulted equally with men during the IDP process?	Yes/ No
2. Do participation strategies explicitly attempt to involve individual women as well as women's organizations?	Yes/ No
3. Has information been prepared in advance of the participatory process so as to ensure meaningful participation of all role players?	Yes/ No
4. If women are not participating in the IDP process, have the impeding factors been identified?	Yes/ No/ In the process
5. % Of the IDP steering Committee/ Representative Forum who are women	%
6. % Of the members of Ward Committees who are women	%
7. % Of the Members of the teams preparing the IDP who are women	%
8. Is there a municipal undertaking of how gender will be defined and used in the IDP?	Yes/ No/ In the process
9. Is gender one of the strategic objectives of the Municipality?	Yes/ No/ In the process
10. Has information been collected with regard to women's respective constraints, opportunities, incentives and needs?	Yes/ No/ In the process
11. Are gender indicators included in the IDP?	Yes/ No/ In the process
12. Do all programmes in the IDP include gender equity considerations?	Yes/ No/ In the process
13. Are all line departments required to include gender equity considerations in their business plans?	Yes/ No/ In the process

### Budget

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. % Of expenditure explicitly targeted for the promotion of gender equality	%
2. % Of total expenditure devoted to municipal services prioritised by women	%
3. % Of members of the Budget Finance Committee who are women	%

### Housing

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Do housing policies ensure access on equal terms for heterosexual partners, for women without partners or for same-sex partners?	Yes/ No/ In the process

### Transport

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Ratio of driver's licences issued to women relative to men	Ratio
2. Does the Municipality monitor the usage pattern of public transport by men and women?	Yes/ No/ In the process

**Safety and Security**

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Number of reported cases of domestic violence	Number
2. Number of reported cases of sexual assault and rape	Number
3. % Of road length lit by street lighting	%

**Procurement Policy and Practices**

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Measure</b>
1. Are points given for gender for contracts allocated by the Municipality in its procurement policies?	Yes/ No/ In the process
2. Proportion of contract value given to firms with at least 30 % women ownership and who employ at least 30 % women	% per contract value

## ANNEXURE B

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