

DISTORTED GOVERNANCE: A CASE OF THE MUNICIPAL UNIT IN SOUTH AFRICA

*Bethuel Sibongiseni Ngcamu**

Abstract

Local government community participation units or departments ineffectively and inefficiently operate based on the directive from their political organisations instead of achieving the objectives of the municipality as per the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). This has resulted in the marginalisation of the local communities on their participation in municipal governance which also has been exacerbated by the employment of employees based on political competencies rather than the unit's core business requirements.

On the backdrop of the above, this study aims to reveal municipal operational hindrances that prevent local communities to participate effectively in the eThekweni Municipality governance as permitted by South African local government legislation. This stated background has necessitated the study to adopt a qualitative approach whereby non-standardized interviews were conducted by the researcher to the sample size of 23. The findings of the study were analysed using NVivo software (version 10). The study revealed an extreme percentage (39%) of activities performed by Community Participation and Action Support Unit (CP&AS) which were based on coordinating unclear activities. Whereas, 22% were on capacity development of local communities, 12% on communication with internal and external stakeholders, 8% on monitoring and evaluation, 5% on policies, and 3% on partnership with other departments and spheres of government and elected officials and research respectively.

The unbalanced and unclear activities performed by the respondents will assist the municipal decision-makers to understand the core causes of poor service delivery as it lies on the failure of the municipal officials to concentrate on their core business. This study contributes to the decision-makers' understanding of the implications of using the municipal resources to advance political activities, consequently disadvantaging the alleged indigent local communities. The clearly demarcated roles and responsibilities of municipal employees guided by the core business of the units with clear performance standards and expected output set could eliminate the politics-administration dichotomy.

Keywords: South Africa, community participation, eThekweni Municipality, Integrated Development Plan

* *University of KwaZulu-Natal*

E-mail: ngcamub@mut.ac.za

Introduction

Community participation units or departments in municipalities are perceived as the extension of political party structures as employees are seen achieving political mandates, which totally violate the legislative requirements for the existence of this portfolio. Mulgan (2006: 5) suggests that in order to be able to offer the same degree of loyal service to the governance of differing political persuasions, professional public servants are expected to maintain a certain distance from the concerns of their political masters. Mafunisa (2010) cites public meetings and hearings, consultative sessions with locally recognized civil society and traditional authorities listed as legislated functions to be performed by community participation units or departments in municipalities. Section 17 (2) describes appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures which include receipt, processing and consideration of petitions and complaints lodged by members of the community, notification and public comment procedures.

Community Participation and Action Support Unit (CP&AS) under the Governance Cluster within the eThekweni Municipality has been plagued by controversies emanating from attracting competent

employees on the African National Congress (ANC) operations rather than municipal operations. Mulgan (2006: 6) argues that politicized appointments process, it is hypothesized, will encourage politicized actions on the part of public servants. This has exacerbated the core business of the unit being interfered with by politicians which subsequently distanced and marginalized local communities who are not affiliated to interfering political organizations with the rippling effect of slow service delivery.

Meanwhile, a considerable body of literature on mitigating the ripple effect of poor service delivery by implementing policies (Tshishonga and Mafema, 2010); meeting citizens' expectations, participation and continual political engagement (Brynard, 2009) has been recently published. Different authors such as Mafunisa (2010); Svava (1998) and Montjoy & Watson (1995) have also commented on the politics-administration interface which has contributed on the unclear roles and responsibilities of administrative and elected officials with direct negative effect on service delivery most especially to the previously disadvantaged communities.

The pro-activeness of both loyal municipal officials and local communities has been detrimentally affected by political interference which has confused the core business of municipal officials within the CP&AS Unit. This study questions whether CP&AS unit officials adhere to functions performed by employees as per employment contracts or not. The primary objectives of this study are to assess whether municipal officials within the unit perform the functions as per their employment contracts and to explore municipal officials' challenges thereof. The next part of this study commences by unpacking legislative framework of community participation standing, stakeholder capacitation, policy formulation and implementation, politics-administration interface and professionalism. This is followed by the methods used in this research, presentation and discussion of results, recommendations, conclusion and proposed future studies to be explored.

Literature Review

Institutional framework: Community participation

Different prescripts in South Africa have mandated municipalities to involve local communities, civil society and traditional leadership on their daily activities and processes thus promoting economic development. Section 152 (1) (e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 provides that the objective of local government is to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of local government. Section 152 (a) of the Constitution suggests that "A municipality must structure and manage its administration, budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community and to promote the social and economic development of the community". This is supported by the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 (Act 1187 of 2000)'s focal purpose which is to provide for the core principles, mechanisms and processes that are necessary to enable municipalities to move progressively towards the social and economic upliftment of local communities.

The Municipal Systems Act's additional primary purpose is to define the legal nature of a municipality as including the local community within the municipal area, working in partnership with the municipality's political and administrative structures. The Act further aims to provide for community participation thereby ensuring universal access to essential services that are affordable to all. Section 16 (1) of the Act suggests participatory governance which encourages and includes the local community to partake during the planning and implementation of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), monitoring and evaluation of performance as well as on strategic decisions based on the provision of services. Section 2 of the Act puts an emphasis on Subsection (1) that it "must not be interpreted as permitting interference with a municipal council's right to govern and to exercise the executive and legislative authority of the municipality". It could be argued, however, that modern participatory governance requires proactive and knowledgeable local communities to partner with elected and appointed officials in realising the priorities as prescribed in the IDPs. Furthermore, the above mentioned Acts seem to require local communities who are involved in all project phases (initial, planning and implementation) whilst monitoring the progress and evaluating the agreed objectives without interfering in municipal operational issues and matters.

Capacity building programmes: A local government perspective

Section 16 (1) (b) (i) of the Municipal Systems Act contributes to building the capacity of the local community to enable it to participate in the affairs of the municipality. Section 68 (1) of the Act states

that a municipality must develop its human resource capacity to a level that enables it to perform its functions and exercise its powers in an economical, effective, efficient and accountable way, and for this purpose must comply with the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 81 of 1998), and the Skills Development Levies Act, 20 1999 (Act No. 28 of 1999).

The eThekweni Municipality's IDP (201/2012: 34) contends that skills development is also not confined to internal employees but on external stakeholders and communities as well. There is a dedicated skills development unit that ensures that internal as well as external capacity is enhanced so as to ensure effective service delivery (eThekweni Municipality IDP, 2011/2012: 34). Normally, training in municipalities is viewed as not responding to the needs of employees and communities. Capacity building programmes are rather conducted merely for compliance purposes with the training and development legislation.

The prevalence of municipal underdevelopment and lack of human development has prompted people to protest and express their disappointment in the government's poor track record in service delivery. Sebugwawo (2012: 7) avers that there seems to be agreement among development practitioners and social activists that these protests were about the failure of local governments to engage ordinary people in political processes. Furthermore, the study conducted by Chipu (2011: 86) revealed the institutional challenge of insufficient municipal capacity owing to lack of some scarce skills. In order for the local government to be effective and to maintain its infrastructure, it requires skills and experience and in the current situation it is alleged that many public servants in the municipalities lack skills, are inexperienced and in many instances are brought in through nepotism (Mafunisa, 2010: 564). This is supported by Ngcamu (2013: 22) that the South African Sphere of Local Government is often as embroiled in a polluted political landscape characterized by tender rigging, nepotism (Mle & Maclean, 2011: 1344), corruption, sex in exchange for formal employment opportunities and the mushrooming of fly-by night politicians which directly affect the smooth functioning of customer care centers within the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality.

Programme management: a local government perspective

A project is regarded as a temporary endeavor to create a unique product (Koelmans, 2004: 230), although its output is meant to be sustainable. Project management can be used for a variety of reasons towards attaining the project's success (Mzini, Masike & Maoba, 2013). Projects require lots of planning, organization, communication, and coordination between members. Koelmans (2004: 231) identify three separate elements for consideration when a project is measured. The first element is the existence of standardized procedures to do the work. The second element is the team's conformity with the procedures. The third element aims to ascertain the effectiveness of the procedures for enabling the project team to work (Koelmans, 2004:231). The proliferation of the unplanned combination of tasks, initiatives and sub-projects in municipalities confuses the officials on the standardized procedures to be conformed to, which subsequently exacerbates ineffectiveness and inefficiencies.

Community-driven policy formulation and implementation

Tshishonga & Mafema (2010) argue that in an attempt to mitigate the ripple effects of the lack of development and service delivery, a myriad of public policies as well as development programmes were introduced and implemented by the post-colonial and post-apartheid national regimes. Policies are therefore designed to tackle and solve problems (Hill 2009:6). The author termed distributive policies as meant to ensure fair distribution of resources to the general public more particularly to the poor of the area. There have been outcries on top-down consultation approach that has yielded poor results in the policy formation and implementation caused by the absence of people-driven process. In consequence, implementation of unhealthy policies encounter resistance from the previously disadvantaged communities and favors previously advantaged as they have the resources to access draft policies for comments and inputs which automatically suit their needs.

Insufficient coordination of policy implementation is cited in virtually all sectors, and has significantly hampered the implementation of policies. Khosa (2003:49) suggests that there is a need to close the gap between policy formulation and implementation in South Africa as the discrepancies between policy formulation and implementation are largely caused by unrealistic policies, and a lack of managerial expertise.

Brynard (2009:313) argues that successful implementation of policies requires other critical elements such as citizens' expectations, participation, and continual political engagement. It can be deduced that the lack of policy formulation and implementation skills from the said political appointed managers have the potential to disadvantage local communities with less ownership in partaking in these processes, which in turn automatically derail service delivery. The lack of skills on policy issues fosters municipal managers to appoint external consultants who normally fail to consult and communicate with local communities through lobbying, advocacy and research which in turn also fails to respond to the needs of previously advantaged communities.

Meanwhile, Programme 7.4 of the eThekweni Municipality's Integrated Development Plan (IDP, 2011/2012: 161) indicates that present Local Government policies and legislation put great emphasis on municipalities to develop a culture of community participation. The creation of appropriate and relevant community participation mechanisms, processes and procedures is therefore vital. The municipality promotes good governance through effective customer relations, opening platforms for community participation and the effective communication of policies and plans.

Politics-Administration dichotomy: municipality viewpoint

Svara (1998: 51-52) holds that the Politics-Administration dichotomy model where city councils do not get involved in administration, city managers, having no involvement in shaping policies, efficiently and effectively carry out the policies of the council. Montjoy and Watson (1995) express the view also held by many practitioners that the Politics-Administration dichotomy model is useful because it provides a rationale for insulating the practice of public administration from political interference. This is confirmed by the State of Local Government Report in South Africa (2008: 10) that the reasons for distress in municipal governance are insufficient separations of powers between political parties and municipal councils. The immature South African democratic government does permit political parties to deploy their cadres to senior management positions without relevant competencies, which directly promotes political interference on day to day operations of the municipal units or departments.

Politics-Administration contributes to communication failures within the municipal managerial system and detrimentally affects lines of authority within the system. It is a requirement in Section 53 (5) (a) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) that the municipality must determine the roles and areas of responsibility of elected representatives and of the municipal manager concerning lines of accountability and the interaction between the two (Mafunisa, 2010: 554). The Presidential Review Commission (1998 Chapter 2:7) asserts that one of the key weaknesses in the system of governance is the uncertainty and confusion about the roles and responsibilities of political office bearers and their administrative heads of departments.

Professionalism in local government

Nalbandian (1999: 188) defines professionalism in local government as grounded in a broader array of community values than had been posited as tradition. The study conducted by Nalbandian (1999) through in-depth interviews and focus groups to local government managers has revealed that local government professionals from California to Virginia comment that the greatest change they have seen over the past ten years is the amount and character of participation expected in public policy-making and problem solving. Another expression of participation and community engagement is the number of partnerships that local governments are involved in both externally and internally.

Professionalization will also insulate the employee from undue political and public pressures; facilitate communication and innovation in the municipality; breed professional loyalty; provide worker satisfaction and increase the undertaking of the responsibilities of the employees (Mafunisa, 2001: 326). The nature of municipalities includes constitutional, legal, political, economic, social, administrative and service-rendering dimensions. The demands emanating from these environmental dimensions would require the orientation of new appointees and retraining of the existing municipal employees in the meaning and significance of professionalism; laws and regulations governing the conduct of municipal employees; conduct in relation to the prohibition of using public office for self-interest; efficiency and effectiveness; respect of societal values and the fundamental rights of members of the South African

society as contained in Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996).

The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service 1994 identified the need for a code of conduct in South Africa as an essential element to enhance high standards of ethics and professionalism (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Ababio, 2010: 411). The White Paper on the Human Resources Management for the Public Service (1997) was one of the policy initiatives established to achieve a managerial shift from a centrally controlled, process-driven Public Service to a service which conducts its business professionally, transparently and ethically. Furthermore, the White Paper indicates that the Public Service Commission has issued the Code of Conduct for Public Servants which require departments or administrations to develop supplementary codes to suit their own circumstances. The managers could create a conducive working environment by showing high standards of honesty, responsible use of resources, courtesy, punctuality and conscientious performance of their duties. The White Paper (1997) requires managers to deal with misconduct with appropriate departmental measures or unlawful criminal activity should be referred to the South African Police Service (SAPS) immediately to be dealt with under due legal process. It is well understood that managers in local government positions are appointed based on political affiliations and loyalty rather than on competencies. The perceived lack of managerial competencies among municipal managers has a tendency to create a culture of lawlessness, indecisiveness and unprofessional behaviour caused by inability to enforce labour legislations on misconduct by their subordinates who are mostly their masters in their political organisations.

Research Methodology

Research approach

This study adopted qualitative research interviews (King, 2004) as it permitted interactive nature of data collection and analysis as it revealed important themes, patterns and relationships as the researcher was collecting data. In-depth interviews can be very helpful to find out what is happening and to seek new insights (Robson, 2002: 59). Furthermore, Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2007: 314), indicate that semi-structured interviews may be used in order to understand the relationship between variables such as those revealed from a descriptive study.

Research method

This study followed a qualitative tradition as this was appropriate for this study because it is used when a researcher wants to study a phenomenon in its natural setting and interpret it in terms of the meanings attached in that situation (Swanson & Holton, 1997). Patton (2002) supports the notion of researcher's involvement and immersion into the research by suggesting that the real world is subject to change and therefore, a qualitative researcher should be present during the changes to record an event after and before the change occurs. The non-probability purposive or judgmental sampling was used in this study as it enables the researcher to use judgment to select cases that will best enable to answer research question(s) and to meet objectives (Anderson, Herr & Nihlen, 2007: 230). The authors assert that for other business and management research projects the researcher's research question(s), objectives and choice of research strategy may dictate non-probability sampling.

Target population

The researcher targeted the population of 35 respondents from the Community Participation and Action Support (CP&AS) Unit whereby 23 consented to partake in this study, thus generating a response rate of 66%. These subjects were chosen because of their ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, empower others to create strategic change as necessary. The research participants were constituted of the middle and junior managers within the unit.

Data collection methods

The data was collected through semi-structured or in-depth interviews from different management levels, including middle (senior managers) and junior (managers, coordinator). Non-standardized (semi-structured and in-depth) interviews were used to gather data, which are normally analyzed qualitatively. Saunders *et al.* (2007: 313) indicate that these data are likely to be used not only to reveal and understand

the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ but also to place a more emphasis on exploring the ‘why’. In an exploratory study, in-depth interviews can be very helpful to ‘find out what is happening and to seek new insights’ (Robson, 2002: 59).

Researcher’s role and recording of data

An in-depth interview was researcher administered to the respondents based on their willingness to partake in the research without breach of their confidentiality. Thus, the researcher documented all deliberations solicited from the interviewees and produced a summary of the themes as per their functions they were performing and the challenges thereof. The data was captured on the qualitative analytical software (NVivo version 10) where themes in the form of nodes were developed.

Data analysis

The researcher used NVivo software (version 10) which was designed to facilitate common qualitative techniques for organizing, analyzing and sharing data. This software allows for qualitative inquiry beyond coding, sorting and retrieval of data. It was also designed to integrate coding with qualitative linking, shaping and modelling (Wong, 2008: 15). The qualitative research study was analyzed using NVivo software (version 10). This tool provided insight into in-depth information about the attitudes, beliefs, motives, or the behaviour of managers in this municipal unit.

Research results

In-depth interviews of this study were related to the current functions performed by employees on their daily basis. This study further intended to diagnose challenges faced by the employees which might have the potential to hamper local community participation thus compromising service delivery.

Community Participation and Action Support Unit management functions

The researcher used NVivo software (version 10) to code themes emanating from the interviews which were conducted related to the functions performed by CP&AS unit management staff within the eThekweni Municipality. The study findings as shown in Table 1 below reveal that “Coordination of activities” (node/theme) had 1-14 reference codes which equalled to the highest percentage of 39% coverage as compared to other functions performed by the respondents. This is supported by the Word Frequency analysis conducted using NVivo whereby “Coordination “appeared as frequently occurred words or concepts.

The research findings have revealed that both middle and junior management positions were responsible for the management and implementation of programmes such as Poverty Alleviation. However, NVivo findings have revealed that “programme management” have 8% coverage of the duties performed by middle and junior managers within the unit.

Table 1. Qualitative analyses: functions performed by CP&AS personnel

Nodes/themes	Reference codes	Coverage in percentage
Capacity development	1-10	22%
Communication with other stakeholders	1-4	12%
Coordination of activities	1-14	39%
Monitoring and evaluation	1-3	8%
Partnership with different stakeholders (internal and external)	1-2	3%
Policies	1-3	5%
Programme management	1-5	8%
Research	1-2	3%

Source: author

The “Capacity development” node had 1-10 (refer to Table 1 above) reference codes with 22% coverage of duties performed by the respondents. This is followed by “Communication with other stakeholders”

with the reference codes of 1-4 with only 12% of employees who were liaising with different units within the municipality and external government departments. This qualitative analytical tool (NVivo) has revealed extremely low percentage (3%) of the duties covered for establishing partnership with various government departments.

Table 1 above indicates a low percentage (5%) of the duties performed by employees focussing on policy development and implementation. The research results showed very few respondents who were performing functions of monitoring and evaluation of programmes within the unit as evidenced by 8% of the coverage in terms of the overall duties performed.

Employees' challenges

The researcher requested the respondents to highlight challenges that have a potential to restrict them from performing their functions as per their unit's core business, that also have a potential to hamper speedy service delivery. The respondents did mention the absence of the approved policies, without any signs of such being approved soon. The respondents unequivocally mentioned that subordinates were failing to follow organizational procedures as per their employment contracts and fail to adhere to the core values and principles of the municipality. The CP&AS Unit clearly pointed out that junior employees within the department were occupying leadership positions from their political organizations (ANC) whereby political matters were often dragged into the organization and the use of the municipal resources to further the interest of their political parties.

The respondents have painted a culture of this department as characterized by unethical behaviour, poor integrity, dishonesty, victimization and intimidation of line managers within the unit. Poor communication channels and delegation processes were regarded as perpetuating the above-mentioned challenges. The interference of the politicians on the Grant in Aid (GIA) destroyed the fairness and impartiality on the equitable distribution of the grants to different recipients without being based on their political affiliations. This is supported by the fragmented business processes of the GIA, which were characterized by the absence of the control measures, including monitoring and evaluation of reports with potential to be exploited by the politicians. The research findings of the study participants claimed that training programmes offered were haphazard and failing to respond to the needs of employees and to that of local communities. The participants have indicated that irrelevant training contributed to the incompetency of the employees who often failed to design a simple database. The research results indicated that managers were not involved in the recruitment and selection of their subordinates and were also not involved in the decision-making processes.

Discussion

The objectives of this study are to explore whether the CP&AS Unit staff perform functions in accordance with their job descriptions and investigate challenges hindering them from achieving the mandate of this unit. This study has a positive contribution to both political and administrative municipal bodies in uprooting the underlying organizational bottlenecks on reactivity of both municipal and local communities on eThekweni Municipality governance. The extreme coverage (39%) of coordination of activities by the respondents within the unit is in disagreement with Khosa's (2003: 49) argument that insufficient coordination of policy implementation has the potential to hamper its implementation. However, more attention to the skills is required in coordinating programmes, projects and initiatives which are community driven. The research findings indicated low coverage percentage (8%) of programme management functions performed by managers within the unit, which was in disagreement with Koelmans (2004: 231) who claims that in a project there should be the existence of standardized procedures, conformity in order to ascertain its effectiveness.

The South African government has legislated on the capacity building for both communities and employees through the Municipal Systems Act section 16 (1) (b) (i), Skills Development Act and Skills Levies Act. This unit does not satisfy the provisions of the latter prescripts based on the 8% functions performed by employees and also based on capacity building of communities which is tantamount to the transgressions of the aforesaid legislations. The respondents in this study indicated that they were responsible for empowering communities (such as Community Based Organisations) in order to be self-reliant by conducting capacity building workshops. The fact that NVivo findings have shed light on the

low percentage (8%) concurs with interviewees' claim that training interventions offered to them were haphazard and were not based on their training needs.

The poor communication channels as reflected in the research findings (12%) has been cited by different authors in cases whereby councillors are directly liaising with municipal managers or officials concerned (Nalbandian, 1999: 188) which had detrimentally affected lines of authority. Whereas, Mafunisa (2001: 326) has mentioned professionalism as insulating employees from undue political and public pressures thus facilitating communication. Poor communication channels have been mentioned by the respondents as a major challenge in the smooth functioning of the unit which clearly confirms the results generated by NVivo as indicated above. Poor communication channels further transgress section 18(1) of the Municipal Systems Act which forces the municipality to communicate information on facilitating community participation, the duties of local community members and development available.

The research findings have painted a bleak picture of the role that should be played by CP&AS Unit managers on partnering (2%) with other internal and external stakeholders (Nalbandian, 1999: 188). This lowest percentage indicates contravening the Municipal Systems Act's primary purpose which emphasizes the necessity of local communities in partnering with both political and administrative structures. The 5% coverage of the policy formulation and implementation function is in support of Khosa's (2003: 49) view point that policies in South Africa are unrealistic, with lack of managerial expertise which is also less people driven. Meanwhile, Brynard (2009: 313) and Nalbandian (1999) posit that successful policy implementations require citizens' participation and expectations in public policy implementation. Section 16 (1) of the Municipal System Act permits a local community to partake on the monitoring and evaluation of performance, whereby, the CP&AS Unit management functions (8%) are reacting in performing this function. The lowest percentage on policy formulation and implementation was supported by the respondents' assertion that policies such as Indigence and Poverty Alleviation were not approved, which clearly justified the less coverage of policy orientated functions which includes policy review, enforcements, review and monitoring.

The absence of professionalism and ethics as depicted by the respondents is in violation of the White Paper on the Human Resources Management for the Public Service (1997) and the Code of Conduct for Public Servants which promotes professional behaviour, law abiding, honesty, courtesy, punctuality and responsible use of resources. Different authors have commented phenomenally and supported the sentiment on political interference in the municipal operations as Montjoy & Watson (1995) termed it as a Political - Administration model and Goodnow (1895) who attempted to defend public administrations from interference by elected officials and party organizations. The political interference with municipal operations is in transgression of the Municipal System Act section 16 (2) which promotes participatory governance (sub-section 1) in a manner that should not be interpreted as interference.

The marginalisation of the line managers in the recruitment and selection of their subordinates was the major challenge identified by line managers, which is concurred by the Presidential Review Commission (1998) on the political appointments. This assertion was also supported by Ngcamu (2013: 22) on the political appointments which were based on nepotism and sex in exchange of formal employments.

Conclusion

It could be concluded that the CP&AS Unit has no clear core business that could be of benefit to both the municipality and the local communities as its main focus is on coordination of unclear activities without any value chain. It is quite clear that programme management functions claimed to be performed on the article were campaigns and baseless initiatives which were unsustainable due to the inexistence of various projects to be managed. However, this article presents a number of challenges such as less communication and partnership with the internal and external key stakeholders with no participation on policy issues, monitoring, evaluation and research which were evidenced by the low percentage on the NVivo findings. Another notable finding was the contradictory high percentage of 22% coverage for capacity-building function meanwhile the respondents raised a challenge of irrelevant training courses offered to them by the municipality which were not responsive to their needs and that of their local community.

Both the literature reviewed and the findings of the study have suggested that eThekweni Municipality decision-makers should initiate a process of radical reengineering of the CP&AS Unit with the aim of

clarifying its core mandate. The clarification of the core mandate should include strategic planning workshop involving all key-stakeholders (e.g. municipal and elected officials, civil society, traditional leadership) and benchmarking exercises with other municipalities that could assist on how this portfolio can function. This could also clarify the roles and responsibilities of both municipal and elected officials in the governance of the CP&AS unit. The limitations of the study were on the unavailability of elected councillors to answer the questions on the alleged interference with the municipal operations. Furthermore, the unavailability of the approved job descriptions limited the researcher to cross-reference the functions performed as mentioned by the respondents against the approved job descriptions. Based on the above findings, future studies can assess the impact of the alleged programmes implemented by the respondents on communities. Also, researchers could focus on enquiring on whether the functions performed by the respondents within the unit are within the core mandate of the unit.

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