CIVIC EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

ACTIVATE!
change drivers

Acknowledgements

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Contents

Glossary of terms

ACCOUNTABILITY - *In ethics and governance, accountability is equated with answerability, blameworthiness, liability, and the expectation of account-giving.*

ACTIVATOR - *A member of the ACTIVATE! Change Drivers network. Activators have a shared purpose, commitment and responsibility to forge a better, more just South Africa for the public good and themselves.*

ACTIVATE! CHANGE DRIVERS - *an organisation with a Network of more than 4300 Active Citizens with the capacity to drive change for the public good across South Africa.*

ACTIVE CITIZENRY - *members of society who take charge of their future and are the agents of what they want to happen in their communities.*

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP - *a philosophy espoused by organizations and educational institutions that advocates that members of charitable organizations, companies, or nation-states have certain roles and responsibilities to society and the environment. However, those members may not have specific governing roles.*

APARTHEID - *a system of institutionalized racial segregation in South Africa and South-West Africa (now Namibia) from 1948 until the early 1990s.*

BATHO PELE PRINCIPLES - Batho Pele, *a Sesotho word, which means "People First", is an initiative launched in 1997 by the Public Service towards transformation service delivery.*

BILL OF RIGHTS - *a human rights charter found in chapter two of the Constitution of South Africa and is a cornerstone of our democracy. It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and protects the civil, political and socio-economic rights of all South Africans.*

BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT - *Our Constitution contains an important democratic principle called the separation of powers. That means that the power of the state is divided between three different but interdependent components or arms, namely the executive (Cabinet), the legislature (Parliament), and the judiciary (Courts of law).*

BY-LAWS - *The Constitution of South Africa gives municipalities the power to pass their own legislation for particular subject areas in the form of by-laws. These by-laws hold the same power and force as other national and provincial legislation.*

CIVIC EDUCATION - *all the processes that affect people's beliefs, commitments, capabilities, and actions as members or prospective members of communities.*

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - *a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems.*

CONSTITUENCY - *a group of voters in a specified area who elect a representative to a legislative body.*

CONSTITUTION - *a body of fundamental principles or established precedents according to which a state or other organization is acknowledged to be governed.*

CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY - *in a constitutional democracy, the authority of the majority is limited by legal and institutional means so that the rights of individuals and minorities are respected.*

COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE - *a set of internal and external mechanisms and controls enabling the members to define and ensure the attainment of cooperative objectives, securing their continuity and cooperative principles.*

COUNCIL - *a group of people elected to govern a local area, such as a city or municipality.*

COUNCILLOR - *a person elected to represent their local community in running their local council. They play a significant role in many major decisions that affect people's lives.*

DEMOCRACY - *a form of government where the people of the country choose their government and enjoy certain rights, which are essential for any human being to live happily and freely.*

DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY - *a district municipality or Category C municipality is a municipality that executes some of the functions of local government for a district. The district municipality will, in turn, comprise several local municipalities with which it shares the functions of local government.*

ELECTIONS - *a process in which people vote to choose a person or group to hold an official position.*

ELECTORAL CYCLE - *the period beginning the day after the general election, up to and including the following general election, including any primary, special primary, or special general elections.*

FINANCIAL YEAR - *the financial year for South African municipalities runs from 1 July of each year to 30 June of the following year.*

GOVERNANCE *is defined as structures and processes designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, the rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment and broad-based participation.*

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN - *integrated development planning is an approach to planning that involves the entire municipality and its citizens in finding the best solutions to achieve good long-term development. It aims to coordinate the work of local and other spheres of government in a coherent plan to improve the quality of life for all the people living in an area.*

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - *local economic development (LED) is an approach towards economic development that encourages local people to work together to achieve sustainable economic growth and development, thereby bringing economic benefits and improved quality of life for all residents in a local municipal area.*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT - *local government in South Africa consists of municipalities of various types. The largest metropolitan areas are governed by metropolitan municipalities, while the rest of the country is divided into district municipalities, each of which consists of several local municipalities.*

METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY - *a metropolitan municipality or Category A municipality is a municipality that executes all the functions of local government for a city or conurbation (an extended urban area, typically consisting of several towns merging with the suburbs of a central city).*

MUNICIPAL BUDGET - *the projected financial operating plan of a municipality. In general, a budget accounts for expected revenues and allocates resources to particular expenditures.*

MUNICIPAL INDIGENT POLICY - *a policy intended to guide the national initiative to improve the lives of indigents (the poor and needy) and improve access to free basic*

services. It aims to include those currently excluded from access to basic services at the local government level.

NATION-BUILDING - *the unification of the people within the state to remain politically, socially and economically stable and viable in the long run towards fostering social harmony and economic growth.*

PETITION - *a request to do something, most commonly addressed to a government official or public entity. It is a document addressed to some official and signed by numerous individuals. For a petition to be valid, it needs to meet the stipulated number of signatories determined by the municipality).*

POLICY - *a deliberate system of guidelines to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. A policy is a statement of intent and is implemented as a procedure or protocol.*

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - *a process wherein citizens exercise their individual and collective initiatives to promote their interests in decision-making and oversight processes. It is also how the state and its organs consult with the people before decisions are made.*

PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ACT - *An act that aims to regulate financial management in the national and provincial governments; to ensure that all revenue, expenditure, assets, and liabilities of those governments are managed efficiently and effectively; to provide for the responsibilities of persons entrusted with financial management in those governments; and to promote transparency, accountability as well as sound financial management.*

SOCIAL ACTIVISM - *working with other people to bring about a change in society.*

SPHERES OF GOVERNMENT - *there are three spheres of government in South Africa, and each sphere's responsibility is outlined in the Constitution:*
  • *National government - makes laws and sets policies for the country and provides services that fall under national competencies.*
  • *Provincial government - provinces are responsible for social services like education, health and social development; economic functions like agriculture and roads; and provincial governance and administration, including the legislature, provincial treasury, local government and human settlements.*
  • *Local government - consists of municipalities that deliver the services people use daily.*
The spheres of government are distinctive, interrelated, and interdependent.

TRANSECT WALK - *a systematic walk along a defined path (transect) across the community/ project area together with the local people (who are well informed about the community) to identify the location and distribution of resources, features, landscape, main land uses by observing, asking, listening, looking and producing a transect diagram.*

UBUNTU - *a Nguni Bantu term meaning "humanity". It is sometimes translated as "I am because we are" (also "I am because you are") or "humanity towards others. It is often used in a philosophical sense to mean "the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity."*

WARD - *a geopolitical subdivision of municipalities used for electoral purposes represented by a ward councillor.*

WARD COMMITTEE - *a ward committee is an advisory body made up of community representatives without any executive powers to assist the ward councillor in their duties. It is the official communication channel between the community and municipality regarding municipal matters in a particular ward.*

VOTING DISTRICT - *the wide variety of small polling areas within a ward or precinct that government and local governments create to administer elections.*

About Activate!

ACTIVATE! Change Drivers is an organisation with a network of more than 4300 Active Citizens with the capacity to drive change for the public good across South Africa. The organisation connects young people (referred to as Activators) who have the skills, sense of self and spark to address tough challenges and initiate innovative and creative solutions to reshape our society. Activators have a shared purpose, commitment and responsibility to forge a better, more just South Africa for the public good and themselves.

MISSION, VISION & VALUES

- Our vision is a network of young leaders with the capacity to drive change for the public good across South Africa.

- Our mission is to build the capacity of Activators to become leaders for public innovation and catalyse connection points giving rise and support to growing the influence of a network of change drivers as a new political, social and economic force.

- Our work is based on values of empathy, humanity, accountability, integrity and responsibility.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

- **CONNECT:** To create a web of young people with a strong sense of identity in order to create opportunities for each other while overcoming geographic boundaries

- **INSPIRE:** To create hope and possibilities; tell new stories about ourselves as a country

- **PROVOKE:** To provide platforms for provocative, diverse, authentic and informed conversations led by young thought leaders in their communities towards driving change

- **INFLUENCE:** To enable Activators to enhance their capacity and use their agency to develop their communities and South Africa.

Our role is to ensure that young people are empowered, enabled, capacitated and 'activated' to take an active role in creating a tomorrow that is better than today.
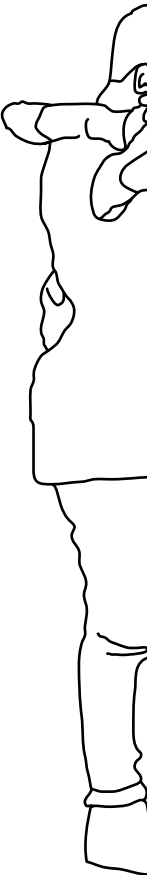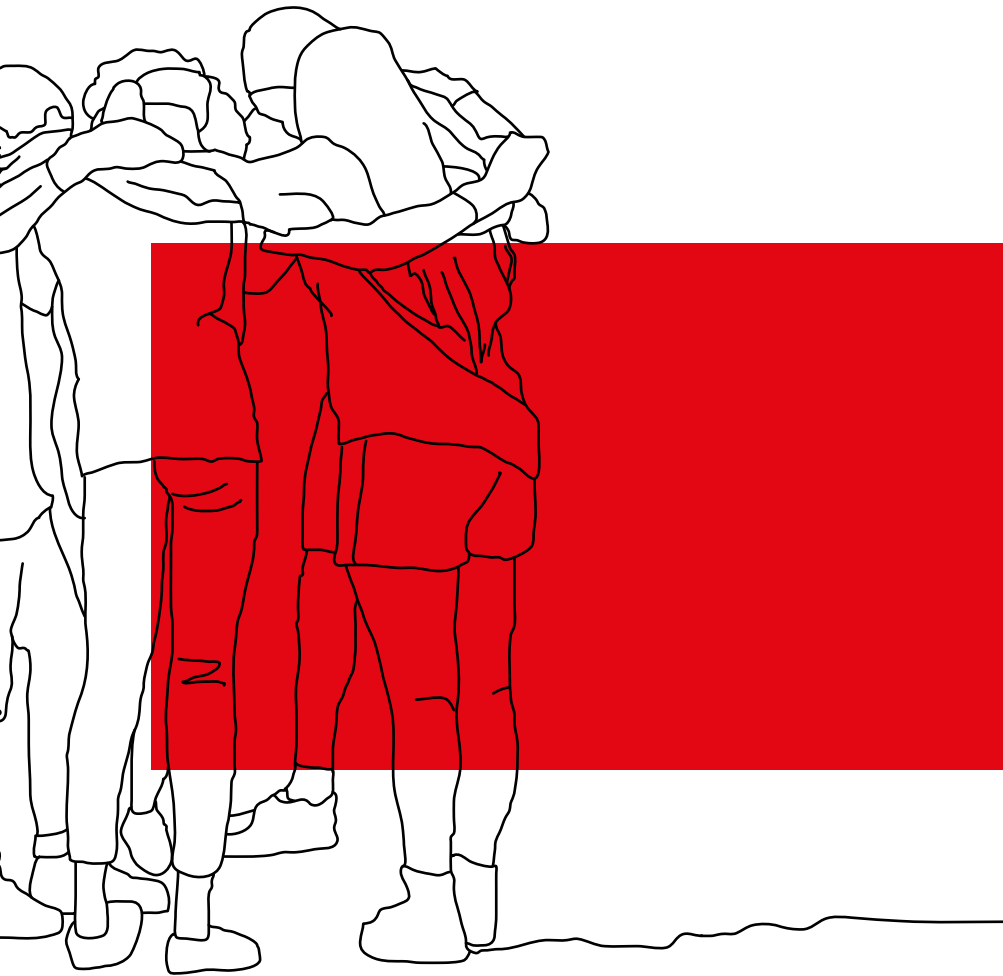
Introduction

The dawn of democracy in South Africa has ushered in several positive outcomes for the country's development. Despite this, young people in South Africa continue to face many problems, including high unemployment, poor educational outcomes and poverty, among other issues. There has been growing dissatisfaction with government services over the years, particularly at the local government level, due to these and other factors. Vast numbers of communities have resorted to violent protests to vent out their dissatisfaction and anger at poor governance, corruption, maladministration and the collapse of the delivery of quality basic services.

Young people, who constitute a large pool of the total population in South Africa, bear the brunt of these collapsed services. Furthermore, their increasing participation in the violent service delivery protests, civil unrest, and public looting over the last few years clearly indicates the need to empower youth to actively contribute towards finding lasting solutions to the country's challenges. As a large demographic, young people represent the core of the country's untapped potential, which requires extensive and continuous support. This potential can be harnessed to effect positive change in communities across the country.
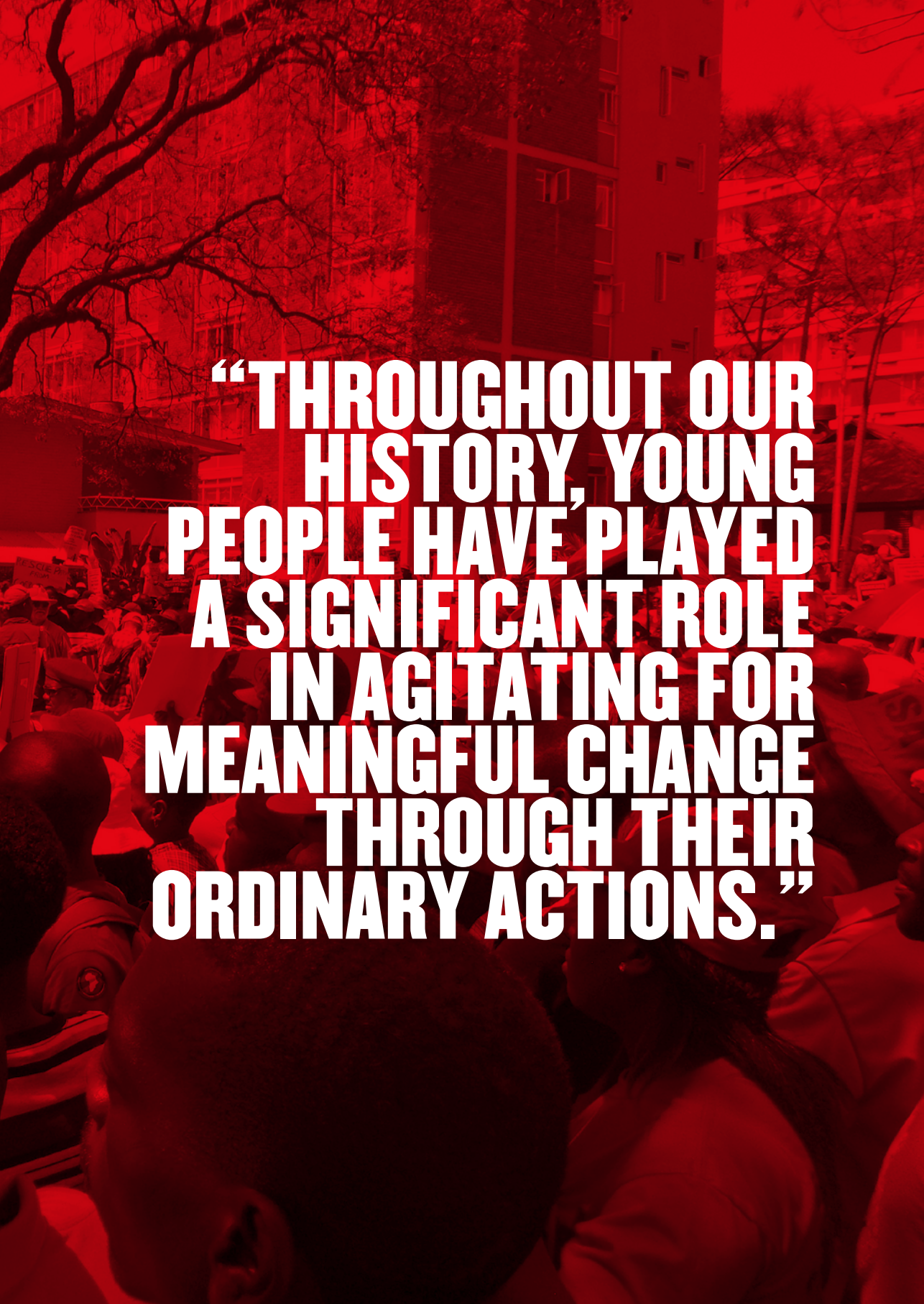
Civic education, aimed at promoting active youth citizenship, is an essential tool for enabling young people to hold the government accountable and engage in a democratic and non-violent manner in addressing issues. Empowering communities through civic education can also help create cultures of good governance and accountability across various levels of society.

The ACTIVATE! Civic Education Toolkit aims to empower young people in particular and communities in general with tools and knowledge on local government, democracy, active citizenry, including engagement methodologies to entrench democratic practices in society and foster community-based active citizenry. The toolkit further sets out to promote collective accountability and the creation of enabling conditions for young people to interrogate, question and continuously hold political representatives to account through legitimate, non-violent and democratic means for meaningful change and social transformation.
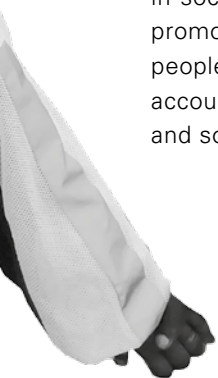
"THROUGHOUT OUR HISTORY, YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN AGITATING FOR MEANINGFUL CHANGE THROUGH THEIR ORDINARY ACTIONS."

Foreword

I t gives me great pleasure to write this foreword to Activate's Civic Education Toolkit Booklet. The booklet forms part of a toolkit whose primary purpose is to increase and bolster young people's understanding of the local sphere of government in South Africa. Further, the idea behind the toolkit is to promote and increase youth participation in processes that strengthen South Africa's democracy, the development of communities, as well as equip young people with the knowledge and skills to help them promote accountability.

The authors of the booklet are on a mission to do what they can to build and nurture the confidence of young people so that they can confidently lead conversations and interventions that will contribute to the socio-economic upliftment and transformation of South Africa and its communities.

I view the efforts of the authors in the context of at least two challenges that plague South Africa: first, a declining belief in the efficacy of voting and a decline in satisfaction about democracy. Both of these have seen a rise in civil strife that is characterised by violence as a means of addressing issues that affect not just young people but South Africans in general.

As a believer in the power of civic and democracy education in shaping how we think about ourselves and the world around us; how we act or do not act, I place a particular premium on the youth-focus defined for this Booklet. From the vantage point of election management, I am painfully aware that young South Africans – like their peers around the world, vote at remarkably lower rates compared to the older cohorts in South Africa's demographic composition. South Africa's population is predominantly young. In fact, the average South African is a black woman in her mid-20s. *"Although young people are numerically dominant, their low registration (as voters) levels diminish their ability to significantly influence election outcomes … voluntary registration is based on the principle that voting is a right of citizenship and … citizens can choose whether to vote or not."* (Collette Schulz-Herzenberg (2019): The New Power Brokers …). This phenomenon ensures that South Africa's representatives populating especially municipal legislatures have arrived there with very few votes from young people. Voter turnout in local government elections is notoriously low and it was even lower in the most recent elections that were held on 01 November 2021.

With that said, the entitlement to basic services accrues to young people even as most opt out of the democratic process that results in the selection of representatives

in the country's legislatures. It is important that their voices are heard when it comes to the allocation and use of resources. For this reason, Activate wants to bridge the communication and relationship gaps between government and the communities that contribute to violent protests as a result of poor service delivery and corruption.

Activate will also share their Toolkit with its network of partners who have access to young people and do work that complements that of Activate.

Finally, I wish to congratulate Tebogo Suping, Thamsanqa Masingi, Rammolotsi Sothoane and Erika Joubert for investing time and effort in putting together the Booklet. I wish the 30 Activator Champions across South Africa who will be trained using the toolkit fortitude, grace and wisdom as they conduct Civic Education workshops in their communities targeted at young people.

To them I offer one of my enduring sources of inspiration in the cause of civic and democracy education:

"I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take from them, but to inform their discretion by education. This is the true corrective of abuses of constitutional power." (Emphasis my own)(Thomas Jefferson to William C. Jarvis, 1820 ME15:278)

May you discover and rediscover your power as you set out to educate, to facilitate others' journeys of discovery and finding more robust ways to think …

DR NOMSA MASUKU

Commissioner: *Electoral Commission of South Africa*

MARCH, 2022

Chapter

1

CIVIC EDUCATION FOR ACTIVE CITIZENRY

Active Citizenry is at the core of all democratic societies. South Africa's history is a story of racial segregation, colonization, oppression, and discrimination. Amid this difficult background, Active Citizenry has helped influence and shape actions that contributed towards South Africa becoming a democratic country in 1994. In simple terms, Active Citizenry refers to the voluntary capacity of citizens, communities, civic society organizations, faith-based organizations, working directly together or with elected representatives to exercise economic, social, and political power in pursuit of the betterment of our society.

F or democracy and development to flourish, an Active Citizenry and social activism are necessary (National Development Plan 2030 [NDP] 2012). The state must engage with the people and other institutions to provide opportunities for the advancement of communities rather than merely acting on behalf of the people through representation only. South Africa's constitution makes citizen participation central to exercising one's democratic rights and promoting local governance. With that being said, studies indicate that citizens are not adequately living up to their constitutional obligations, highlighting the need for citizens to be empowered to actively participate in advancing democracy.

Therefore, it is imperative to note that democracy is not a spectator sport (a show for elected political parties and a spectacle for citizens). It requires active participation from all of us as a society in order for it to function optimally, thus making Active Citizenry a key contributor to sustainable democracy in South Africa and across the globe.

Throughout our history, young people have played a significant role in agitating for meaningful change through their ordinary actions. Hector Pieterson, a young black South African youth, took part in the Soweto Uprising of 1976 against the apartheid regime. The Soweto Uprising was a series of demonstrations and protests led by black school children in South Africa that began on the morning of 16 June 1976. Students from numerous schools began to protest in the streets of Soweto in response to the introduction of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in local schools. During the protests, Hector Pieterson was killed at the age of 13. The iconic image of the shot Pieterson being carried away by Mbuyisa Makhubu became a powerful symbol of resistance against apartheid.

Beyond this important role played by young people in the fight against apartheid, there are numerous examples of individuals, organisations and community groups who voluntarily organised to work together in the struggle against "racial segregation, oppression and discrimination". The United Democratic Front (UDF) is an example of citizens working collaboratively to actively respond to the apartheid system. This anti-apartheid body was launched in 1983 in Mitchells Plain when Allan Boesak called for a 'united front' of 'churches, civic associations, trade unions, student organisations, and sports bodies' to fight oppression. [SA History n.d.]

Violence, unfortunately, marred our political landscape then, as it still does now. The challenge is to engage without violence and in a manner that will be effective and lead to real change, better (and equal) service delivery, and constructive engagement between communities and government. One way then of being an active citizen is to participate

in the political scene. Therefore, as an active citizen, you can "interrogate, question and continuously hold political representatives to account through legitimate, non-violent and democratic means". But then one must understand how the government works, how the democratic process works, and the roles and responsibilities of the various role-players, including the community.

Active Citizenry is, however, not limited to participation in political processes. There are countless examples of ordinary citizens who continue to develop their own communities through individual and collective action. In 2020, the world experienced an outbreak of the Covid 19 virus, which had far-reaching effects on all countries' health systems and economies. Beyond the loss of lives and income, the pandemic also increased psychological risk factors for ordinary citizens across South Africa. During these testing times, Activators have demonstrated their commitment to active citizenship by initiating and supporting efforts aimed at helping communities deal with the effects of the pandemic. Among other things, Activators initiated awareness campaigns to encourage communities to observe Covid 19 lockdown restrictions. Moreover, Activators supported efforts initiated by the National Development Agency and other stakeholders to distribute food parcels across disadvantaged communities to respond to the economic impact of the pandemic.

Notes

CIVIC EDUCATION

What is it?

Given the central role active citizenship plays in sustaining democratic societies, citizens need to be empowered to become actively involved in democratic processes; civic education is one such mechanism with which this can be achieved. Civic education is about ensuring that you as a citizen can understand the workings of the political system and your own political and civic rights, roles, and responsibilities. It also ensures that you can acquire the skills and ability to analyse, evaluate, take and defend positions on public matters and use your knowledge to efficiently and effectively participate in civic and political processes. Therefore, we can agree that civic education is a tool that enables communities to address critical issues that they face and ensure that public representatives, including members of society, can be held accountable for their actions or the lack thereof.

WHY IS CIVIC EDUCATION IMPORTANT?

Citizens' participation in a democratic society should be based on informed, critical reflection and on understanding the rights and responsibilities of that membership. Thus, civic education is important insofar as it entails the continuing understanding of the basic concepts and values underlying democratic & political processes that contribute towards the development of communities, the empowerment of the people, and nation-building.

There are many examples of ordinary citizens playing an active role in influencing change for the public good, from being involved in a clean-up drive in a local community to voting for public representatives. ACTIVATE! Change Drivers is a network of over 4000 active citizens with the capacity to drive meaningful change across South Africa. Members of this network share a common purpose, commitment, and responsibility to forge a better and more just future for the public good and themselves.

One such example is Renier Louw, a youth leader and Activator based in Cape Agulhas in the Western Cape. Over the last few years, Renier has committed himself to empower young people in his community through civic education engagements over physical and virtual spaces. Moreover, Renier was nominated by his political party to stand as a ward councillor candidate for the 2021 local government elections and was successfully elected in his ward.

A number of Activators from across the country have also been nominated by their respective political parties to stand as ward councillors and PR candidates for the 2021 local government elections, and nine were elected into the council. Moreover, we have had over 450 young people from the ACTIVATE! Network serving as Election Observers in the 2016 local government elections, the 2019 general elections and the 2021 local government elections, respectively. Beyond the ACTIVATE! Change Drivers network, other young people are working in various sectors of society in South Africa who continue to demonstrate their agency and capacity to safeguard democracy.

"No one person can do everything, however, everyone can do something. Being an active citizen is as simple as attending community meetings, reporting a street light and upholding the laws and values of your community. Part of the active citizenry concept is making sure that one is deliberate about exercising their democratic right to vote. For me, it also means being aware of your environment and taking action towards positively impacting your community." Thamsanqa Masingi (People's Assembly, 2021) Civic education is an important contributor to developing a democratic political culture and a critical tool for empowering communities to hold the government accountable and promote effective service delivery.

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

South Africa's growing youth population presents the government with an opportunity to harness this age demographic's energy, potential, and drive to participate in and influence decision-making processes that shape their communities and their own lives. Because of its closeness to the people, local government represents an important platform for young people to be actively engaged in decision-making processes and structures pertaining to the development of their local communities. Young people must be intently and actively engaged to ensure that the youth development agenda is integrated into Integrated Development Plans (IDP), service delivery, and budget implementation plans.

Furthermore, youth may benefit from participating in government processes to gain social capital, enhanced capacity and competence. Moreover, they can gain information about their options and rights, develop decision-making skills, understand decision-making processes, and gain a sense of control in these processes. Thus, participation may also enhance young peoples' interests and propensity to engage in community service, political action, or other forms of public engagement. It may facilitate career interest and development in the public service for some. Secondly, the community may gain from youths' participation. Through youth engagement, the government may gain relevant information that may lead to better-informed decision making, particularly regarding policies that affect young people. Thirdly, as a matter of social justice, youth have the right to engage in decisions that impact their lives. Even in the absence of other measurable beneficial outcomes, the process of including youth is central to well-functioning democratic societies.

The inclusion of youth in the decision-making processes and structures of their own communities empowers them to actively address the development needs of their communities. Moreover, active civic participation equips youth with knowledge on the value of active citizenship and the promotion of human rights. Given its nature, the local government presents young people with an ideal opportunity to actively ensure that basic services are delivered to the people. There is widespread consensus that avenues should be created for young people to participate in community decision-making. However, another view portraying young people as competent citizens with a right to participate and a responsibility to serve their communities offers a significant alternative. Proponents of this view want to build on youth's strengths by enabling them to make a difference in ways that provide them with tangible benefits and develop healthier communities. Young people who view themselves as change agents, and adults who are their allies, are instrumental to this approach.

Notes

"AS A LARGE DEMOGRAPHIC, YOUNG PEOPLE REPRESENT THE CORE OF THE COUNTRY'S UNTAPPED POTENTIAL, WHICH REQUIRES EXTENSIVE AND CONTINUOUS SUPPORT."

Chapter

UNDER- STANDING DEMOCRACY

The history of democracy in South Africa

South Africa's history is characterized by long periods of oppression and segregation under colonialism and apartheid, which resulted in a particular segment of the population being disempowered from exercising their rights as full citizens. Active civic participation and, in particular, widespread opposition to these unjust systems ultimately ushered in the advent of democracy in South Africa. Sadly, many were imprisoned, exiled, and even killed in their struggle for freedom and rightful citizenship.

On April 27, 1994, South Africa transitioned from an apartheid state to a democracy, with all eligible voters irrespective of their race, cultural background, or economic status participating in the country's first free and fair democratic elections. On the backdrop thereof, South Africa became a constitutional democracy, with the constitution being at the heart of our safeguarding this democracy. Many sacrifices were made to achieve democracy in South Africa, and a lot is still required to protect and promote our democratic gains.

What is this thing called 'democracy'?

Democracy is understood to mean government for the people by the people. This essentially means that all citizens are empowered to play an active role in the affairs of their government. Up until 1994, the majority of citizens in South Africa were denied their rightful citizenship, and through democracy, they were granted constitutional rights to elect a government of their choosing. Democracy is a system of government in which power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or through freely elected representatives.

The South African constitution outlines democracy as follows:

- Democracy is a balance between 'might' and 'right'. The state takes all the power (it has all the 'might'), but its power must be limited so that it does not abuse this power (to make sure it does 'right').

- Democracy is about balancing rights and responsibilities. Citizens can expect the government to do things for them like providing protection, health services, education and housing. Citizens also have responsibilities like obeying the law, paying taxes to the state and holding the state accountable.

- Democracy is about balancing the rights of the majority with protection for minorities.

- Democracy is about achieving a greater balance in society so that there is greater equality for all over a period.

LET US USE AN ANALOGY TO UNDERSTAND THIS IN PRACTICAL WAYS...

Suppose we took twenty (20) sweets and put them on the table, with there being enough sweets that would allow ten (10) people to each have two sweets each.

But instead of each getting two (2) sweets, the strongest person grabs most of the sweets for himself/herself and only leaves a few sweets for the rest of the group to fight over.
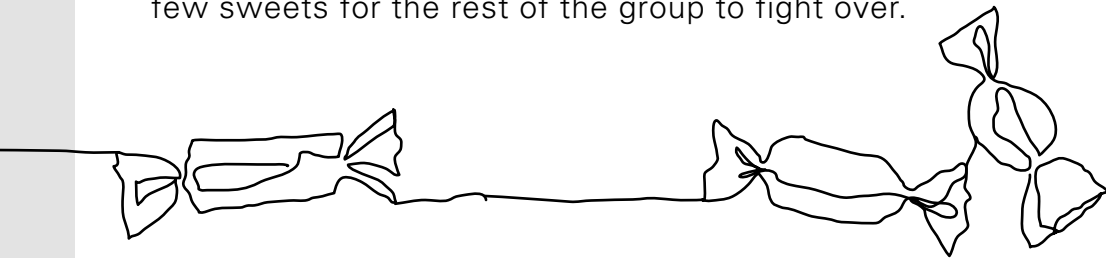
THIS IS NOT DEMOCRACY, OR IS IT?

You might say, but there were no rules.

Or you might say, first come, first serve.

The fittest and fastest person in the room has the right to get the biggest share.

And so forth and so on.

And you might be right if that was the case. So we are learning that for democracy to work, we must have a set of rules that guide us what the policy would be for each person getting two sweets each and then we have to ensure that someone manages that and adheres to the policy or rule. And this is exactly the job of the constitution, law

courts and law enforcement, and human rights groups.

https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/EducationPubs/how-our-democracy-works.pdf

NOW THAT WE UNDERSTAND HOW DEMOCRACY INTENDS TO WORK, LET'S ASK OURSELVES: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITHIN DEMOCRACIES?

In October of 2015, young people who were previously marginalized by not having access to funding for tertiary education protested to prove their dissatisfaction with the status quo. Student-led protests gained momentum in 2015/16 and spread across the country. The #FeesMustFall movement sparked heated debates on fee increases in universities. Other demands by students included the decolonisation of the educational system, the transformation of universities to address racial and gender inequalities in terms of staff composition, and the insourcing of general workers. This collective action against access to tertiary education saw a zero increase in tuition fees in 2016 and subsequent years and increased government expenditure for needy students.

!

THE ABSENCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

Despite the example of youth involvement outlined above, evidence suggests that young people are generally marginalised from the country's democratic culture. According to the Independent Electoral Commission, in 2019, 9 million eligible voters within South Africa did not register to vote. Of those, 6 million were young people. Of those 6 million, 20 % were eligible first–time voters, meaning that they had already turned 18 and could vote. Some of the reasons for this are that young people distrust political parties and government organisations more than older people. **Young people place socio-economic rights above democratic rights.** This is understandable given that more than 50% of young people are jobless. Further, the Independent Electoral Commission recognizes that to protect the future and democracy, the government must restore young people's faith and confidence in democracy if they hope to continue having a politically stable, just, and peaceful society. This can also include civic education directed towards young people.

Young people constitute over 35% of the population in South Africa, and they represent the core of the country's untapped potential. Despite this, young people remain largely alienated from the country's democratic culture.

With under 30 years of democracy, South Africa is a relatively young democracy, yet the country has witnessed a declining euphoria in democratic processes post the 1994 elections. As mentioned above, there has been a low turnout in elections in South Africa, particularly among young people. Research also indicates that while South Africans aged 18-25 years share similar views of the role of citizens in a democracy as their elders, they are less likely to engage in political processes via conventional forms of non-electoral participation such as involvement in civic organisations and contact with elected leaders (Mattes & Richmond 2015). In light of this, it is important to create enabling conditions for the greater inclusion of South African youth in the county's decision-making processes and structures at various levels and across all sectors of society.

Young people currently face various barriers to formal political participation and participation in electoral politics. Among these barriers is that formal politics in South Africa is commonly regarded as the domain of the elderly. This is evidenced by the fact that young people are strikingly underrepresented at various public service and governance levels. Only 9% of South Africa's members of parliament fall under the youth category. Moreover, half of South Africa's cabinet is over the age of 57, while the average age of the members of the National Assembly (parliament) is 50 years old. (The average age of South Africa's population is 27.6)

Furthermore, youth in South Africa have very limited opportunities to access capacity building platforms outside of formal education institutions. This lack of capacity hurts the ability of youth to participate meaningfully in the public realm. **Given the aforementioned, there is a need to develop capacity building and advocacy platforms for youth to enhance their active participation in its democratic processes and structures.**

! WHY YOUTH PARTICIPATION SHOULD BE SUPPORTED

Youth participation entails meaningfully involving young people in the institutions and decisions that affect their lives (Checkoway & Gutierrez, 2006). This essentially means that the youth ought to be intently engaged in decision-making structures and processes and participate on equal terms with other demographics in the affairs of their communities. Active civic participation empowers youth to positively contribute towards the development of their communities but, more importantly, to develop knowledge on citizenship human rights and to promote positive civic action. Local government is the closest sphere of government to citizens and thus represents an important avenue for citizens to participate in their own communities to meet their own needs. Given their status in society, young people can play an important role in shaping the development of their local communities. Therefore, meaningful youth participation should be prioritised across various levels of society, especially at the local level, wherein citizen participation is arguably most critical.

AN EXAMPLE OF A YOUNG PERSON AS CHANGE AGENT

Despite young people's general disillusionment with the current political landscape, an increasing number of young people are involved in various pro-social initiatives that strive for peace, justice, inclusion, gender equality, and human rights promotion. Across the country, there are examples of young people organising groups for social and political action, planning programmes of their own choosing, and advocating their interests in the community as expressions of participation. Young people have the capacity and agency to initiate change in their own communities.

Young people get empowered by participating in the institutions and decisions that affect their lives. These can lead to real positive change in the community. Meaningful youth participation is essentially about the real influence of young people in institutions and decisions and not merely about their passive presence as service recipients. Although participation studies often assess activities in terms of their scope, such as their number, frequency, and duration, quality is their most significant measure. Quality participation affects outcomes, including its effect on community change.

THABO PITSO is a Free State born Activator who, among other things, is very passionate about literacy and unemployment that has plunged our young people. He has collaborated with other Activators to ensure that they do the little that they can in their respective corner of South Africa, the Free State – as is the very purpose of

ACTIVATE! Change Drivers, to cultivate leaders that do all that they can to lead change for the public good. Thabo has been working in the literacy space from 2015 and during his tenure of volunteering at a community library, he has also assists learners in both primary and high school and prima with their homework and ensures that they get assistance with their assignments.

As an Activator, his work is almost never over. He has since established a feeding scheme to assist children that are from disadvantages families in his community. This project also targets days such as Mandela Day – for its inherent giving nature and Christmas in an effort to ensure that the said children are able to feel like others when this merry day is celebrated.

Thabo has a genuine wish to contribute towards changing the lives of young people. He believes that once young people are given expression to challenge the status quo in their respective communities, they will do so with overwhelming excellence. His modus operandi is always putting his community – especially young people first in all that he wishes to do, as far as his community activism is concerned.

Thabo currently works as a librarian and has also partnered with another Activator Mothobi Tshabalala to coordinate CV–Clinic Days where they teach young people about how to draft a professional CV to ensure that they are favourable candidates for their desired jobs – this programme was held in Makeleketla, Windburg. Despite the financial and resource challenges he faces, Mr Pitso continues to assist young people in his community – free of charge. *(Written by Tlotliso May)*

THE CONSTITUTION
of the Republic of South Africa

On 9 May 1994, after the ANC's victory, South Africa's first democratically elected Parliament met for the first time, and the Constitutional Assembly began drafting a new constitution. All South Africans were invited to contribute to the process, which led to what is known as the "birth certificate" of the new South Africa and one of the most progressive constitutions in the world (Constitution Hill, 2019). The constitution was officially signed into law by the first democratically elected President, Nelson Mandela, on the 10th of December 1996 at Sharpeville, Vereeniging.

Besides serving as the foundation of our democracy, the constitution is also the supreme law of our country that safeguards our democracy. No other law within South Africa can supersede the provisions of the Constitution. The Constitution of South Africa provides the legal foundation for the republic's existence. It stipulates the rights and duties of citizens and defines and lays out the structures of the government. Included in the constitution is the Bill of Rights that forbids discrimination.

The role, powers and functions of government are set out in the Constitution. The government structure and all laws and policies are aligned with the Constitution. The preamble commits us to a united and democratic South Africa based on the values of justice and human rights.
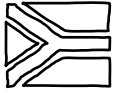
THE PREAMBLE OF
THE CONSTITUTION

The Preamble of the South African Constitution acknowledges and recognizes our country's past and lays out our responsibility as active participants of this country. It is an agreement and commitment between the state and its citizens.

We, the people of South Africa, Recognise the injustices of our past; Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land; Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

We, therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to:

- **Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;**

- **Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;**

- **Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and**

- **Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.**

May God protect our people.

Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika.

Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso.

God seën Suid-Afrika.

God bless South Africa.

Mudzimu fhatutshedza Afurika.

Hosi katekisa Afrika.

THE BILL OF RIGHTS

The Bill of Rights is a very important part of the Constitution, and it safeguards the rights of all who live in South Africa. It is found in Chapter 2 of the Constitution, and among these most important rights are:

- **The right to equality**

- **The right to a secret vote in free and fair elections**

- **Freedom to form political parties, trade unions, and other organizations**

- **Freedom of expression for individuals and the media.**

- **The right to information from the government**

The Bill of Rights also contains socio-economic rights like the right to access to housing, sufficient food, water, health care, and basic education. Government has to provide these "within available resources", which means these rights are limited to what the government can afford. Other laws can limit some rights if the limitations are reasonable and justifiable in a democratic society. For example, defamation or hate speech laws can limit freedom of expression. The constitution guarantees everyone the right to freedom of association. This means that you have the right to associate with other people and form organisations. This right to freedom of association is essential for forming civil society organisations.

CHAPTER 9
INSTITUTIONS

The Constitution provides for constitutional democracy and lists the rights to which the people of this country are entitled. Independent institutions have been established to promote rights and strengthen constitutional democracy, to give substance to these constitutional rights. These institutions are found in Chapter 9 of the constitution and are commonly referred to as "Chapter 9 institutions". These institutions promote and protect the rights within the Bill of Rights which fall within their particular area. They are impartial, independent and subject only to the Constitution and the relevant laws made in terms of the Constitution. They must exercise their powers and perform their functions "without fear, favour or prejudice".

The Constitution guarantees the independence of the courts. Chapter 9 of the Constitution mandates the creation of institutions that are designed to protect and support democracy. These institutions are known as Chapter 9 institutions. They are:

- **The Public Protector;**

- **The South African Human Rights Commission;**

- **The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities;**

- **The Commission for Gender Equality;**

- **The Auditor-General;**

- **The Independent Electoral Commission; and**

- **The Independent Authority to Regulate Broadcasting.**

These institutions are separate from the government and independent from political parties or other interest groups. The function of each Chapter 9 institution as per the constitution is as follows:

■ FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC PROTECTOR

The Public Protector has the power, as regulated by national legislation:

a. *to investigate any conduct in state affairs, or the public administration in any sphere of government, that is alleged or suspected to be improper or to result in any impropriety or prejudice;*

b. *to report on that conduct; and*

c. *to take appropriate remedial action.*

The Public Protector has the additional powers and functions prescribed by national legislation.

The Public Protector may not investigate court decisions.

The Public Protector must be accessible to all persons and communities.

Any report issued by the Public Protector must be open to the public unless exceptional circumstances, to be determined in terms of national legislation, require that a report be kept confidential.

■ FUNCTIONS OF SOUTH AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The South African Human Rights Commission must:

a. *promote respect for human rights and a culture of human rights;*

b. *promote the protection, development and attainment of human rights;*

c. *monitor and assess the observance of human rights in the Republic*

The South African Human Rights Commission has the powers, as regulated by national legislation, necessary to perform its functions, including the power:

a. *to investigate and to report on the observance of human rights;*

b. *to take steps to secure appropriate redress where human rights have been violated;*

c. *to carry out research; and*

d. *to educate*

Each year, the South African Human Rights Commission must require relevant organs of state to provide the Commission with information on the measures that they have taken towards the realisation of the rights in the Bill of Rights concerning housing, health care, food, water, social security, education and the environment.

The South African Human Rights Commission has the additional powers and functions prescribed by national legislation.

■ FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC COMMUNITIES

The primary objects of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities are:

a. *to promote respect for the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities;*

b. *to promote and develop peace, friendship, humanity, tolerance and national unity among cultural, religious and linguistic communities, on the basis of equality, non-discrimination and free association; and*

c. *to recommend the establishment or recognition, in accordance with national legislation, of a cultural or other council or councils for a community or communities in South Africa.*

The Commission has the power, as regulated by national legislation, necessary to achieve its primary objectives, including the power to monitor, investigate, research, educate, lobby, advise and report on issues concerning the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities.

The Commission may report any matter which falls within its powers and functions to the South African Human Rights Commission for investigation.

The Commission has the additional powers and functions prescribed by national legislation.

■ FUNCTIONS OF COMMISSION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

The Commission for Gender Equality must promote respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality.

The Commission for Gender Equality has the power, as regulated by national legislation, necessary to perform its functions, including the power to monitor, investigate, research, educate, lobby, advise and report on issues concerning gender equality.

The Commission for Gender Equality has the additional powers and functions prescribed by national legislation.

■ FUNCTIONS OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL

The Auditor-General must audit and report on the accounts, financial statements and financial management of:

   a. *all national and provincial state departments and administrations;*

   b. *all municipalities; and*

   c. *any other institution or accounting entity required by national or provincial legislation to be audited by the Auditor-General.*

In addition to the duties prescribed in subsection (1), and subject to any legislation, the Auditor-General may audit and report on the accounts, financial statements and financial management of:

   a. *any institution funded from the National Revenue Fund or a Provincial Revenue Fund or by a municipality; or*

   b. *any institution that is authorised in terms of any law to receive money for a public purpose*

The Auditor-General must submit audit reports to any legislature that has a direct interest in the audit and to any other authority prescribed by national legislation. All reports must be made public.

The Auditor-General has the additional powers and functions prescribed by national legislation.

■ **FUNCTIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION**

The Independent Electoral Commission must:

a. *manage elections of national, provincial and municipal legislative bodies in accordance with national legislation;*

b. *ensure that those elections are free and fair; and*

c. *declare the results of those elections within a period that must be prescribed by national legislation and that is as short as reasonably possible.*

The Independent Electoral Commission has the additional powers and functions prescribed by national legislation.

■ **FUNCTIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT AUTHORITY TO REGULATE BROADCASTING**

National legislation must establish an independent authority to regulate broadcasting in the public interest and to ensure fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing South African society.

https://pmg.org.za/page/state-institutions-supporting-democracy

Notes

Chapter

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

"Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu."

Community development is essentially grounded in community participation, and thus it is important to reflect on how community development impacts active citizenship within democracies. As explained in the previous chapter, democracy has historically played an important role in guaranteeing fundamental rights to citizens in order for them to meaningfully participate in the affairs of their communities. Importantly, democracy ensures that citizens are empowered to play an active role in their own development.

Ubuntu, an African philosophy grounded in the essential human virtues of compassion and humanity, is widely seen as a guiding ideal in safeguarding democracy. Within the context of South Africa's transition to democracy, ubuntu has been invoked to foster reconciliation and promote the bill of rights to create a new, just and peaceful society. At the core of this philosophy is the belief that we are only human through the humanity of others - *"Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu"*, loosely translated to mean *"I am because we are"*. Empowering citizens to actively develop their communities is a central feature of democracy and an expression of *ubuntu.*

Community Development is a theory of development, and it emerged as a new type of approach to development promoting public participation and citizen control. It is important to also note that development is a process that happens over time. It has certain principles & values that distinguish it from previous more top-down approaches to development that did not value the interrelatedness between the social, political, cultural and economic factors in communities. The principles and values of Community Development form part of many global societies, also in South Africa. Community Development is fundamentally based on human rights, social justice, equality and respect for diversity. The principles which underpin its practice are:

- **Self-determination** - people and communities have the right to make their own choices and decisions.

- **Empowerment** - people should control and use their own assets and means to influence.

- **Collective action** - coming together in groups or organisations strengthens peoples' voices.

- **Working and learning together** - collaboration and sharing experiences are vital to good community activity.

It often happens that when one starts to define Community Development, the audience will realize that they have been doing it already! And indeed, there are ample examples from our history and our communities of this being a way of life – we only have to think of "ubuntu". And then there are also numerous examples of Community Development interventions by ordinary citizens, including the youth. These include, for example, Activators who initiate Community Development interventions in their communities because of an identified need like assistance with Maths and Science homework, Reading & Promotion of Literacy Clubs, support for youth affected by gang violence, and soccer clubs.

To what extent are the principles of Community Development lived out by councillors, local government officials and decision-makers in our communities? And for that matter, to what extent do our communities apply the principles and values of Community Development as active citizens? How well do local government officials and councillors know their communities? Do they consider the true, deep nature of local issues in their decisions? Do they consult community members/groups in decisions made about projects and programmes? Do they know what different assets the community members have to offer? Have they ever conducted a Transect Walk in a section of the community that they might not be that familiar with? Do they even apply the principles and values of Community Development in any of their dealings with the community? If

not, then we need active citizens to claim that! This is, after all, legislated.

As you will see in the next chapters, our Constitution decrees that in South Africa, local government should be developmental (work with communities seeking sustainable outcomes to issues), and the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 directs that on the local level, there should be community participation and integrated development planning. This speaks again to the principles and values of Community Development.

The Integrated Development Planning process (the IDP) is discussed in detail in the next chapters. Here community members can be true active citizens by participating in IDP meetings, organising around and submitting issues for consideration, asking for a copy of the IDP, and studying it for priority projects and budget allocations.

There are many other ways community members can participate in local government processes. These are outlined in the coming chapters also. The challenge to communities is to expect local government officials and councillors to adhere to the principles and values of Community Development and accept that, as is the case with democracy, rights come responsibilities. Each community member needs to make a conscious decision to be an active citizen.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

An important part of community development is understanding the role of partnerships and collaboration. Two of the principles that underpin community development practice are intrinsically linked to this important role. Firstly, the concept of collective action is commonly understood to entail voluntary action undertaken by a group of people in pursuing a shared interest. This can take the form of resource mobilisation, activity coordination, information sharing or the development of institutions. Secondly, collaboration and sharing experiences are vital in community development as this involves working and learning together.

No one person can do everything, but everyone can do something. The role of civil society organisations and community leaders is critical in addressing the gap between government and ordinary people and ensuring a level of accountability and strengthening our democracy. There need to be robust, accountable, and effective partnerships and representation for this to occur.

Partnerships are a key feature of youth development, as was stated in the National Youth Policy (2009-2014). Social partnerships will have to be strengthened to ensure the

successful implementation of the policy. The best way to do so is to clearly define the key role players' roles and responsibilities and determine the basis for such partnerships (NYP 2009).

People form partnerships for various reasons, ranging from accessing resources to working and collaborating towards a common vision or goal. In considering which stakeholders could contribute to your community intervention(s), think of the following:

- *Which organisations in the community work with youth/community development?*

- *Who is involved in collaborative partnerships, and what roles are they playing?*

- *Where would these members be found?*

- *Why would you choose one or another individual or organisation? What information/ resources would they bring to the table?*

- *What potential barriers exist to collaborating with these partners, and what strategies can help overcome those barriers?*

- *Who are the emerging leaders in the community; who are the informal leaders among volunteers, organised and "developing" sectors of the community, and leaders among youth, elders and people with disabilities who bring often overlooked capabilities to the common work?*

All in all, community development can only be effective when communities are empowered to take charge of their own development.

Notes
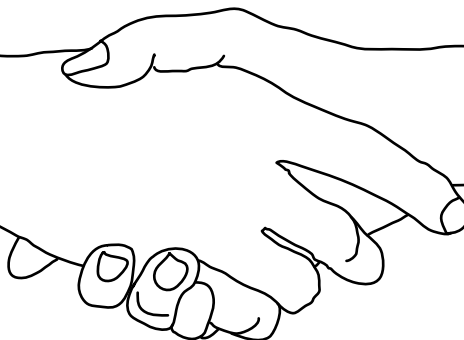
Chapter

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

4

This chapter focuses on local government, what it is, what it's meant to deliver on, and some of the challenges it faces. We will also look into the role of young people and how they can participate in local government processes. South Africa is a constitutional democracy, meaning we are guided by the constitution's provisions, which is the supreme law of the land.

What is the government? We sometimes hear people talking about the government, what it should do for us as citizens and how it fails us. Have you ever stopped for a minute to ask yourself what government is and how it works? Government is a system in which citizens elect officials who can exercise power to make and enforce laws. The South African government can be broken down into three spheres: national, provincial and local.

You might have noticed that we refer to them as "spheres" of government and not "levels" or "tiers" of government. This was an intentional act by our constitution so that the three are given equal status and treatment. Our Constitution refers to them as spheres. In so doing, it takes away the top-down hierarchy that tiers or levels would create and instead creates an integrated relationship between national, provincial and local governments.

We will briefly explain each of the three spheres but largely focus on local government. We will look at the different spheres of government; because the local government does not exist in isolation, and in fact, our Constitution requires co-operative government, meaning that the three spheres of government should work together (co-operate) to provide for citizens.

Three spheres of government
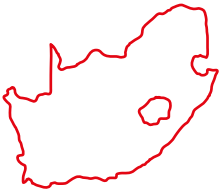
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Makes the laws that set strategies and policy for the country and carries responsibility for national functions. The national assembly is made up of members of parliament, elected every five years. The president is elected by parliament, and the president appoints a cabinet of ministers. They act as the government's executive committee, and each minister is the political head of a government department.
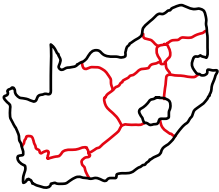
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Works within the framework set by the national government and formulates provincial policies and programmes that are aligned to the national policy and adapted to local conditions. There are nine provincial governments in South Africa. Provincial legislatures in each province approve provincial laws. Legislatures are elected in provincial elections held simultaneously as national elections every five years. A premier is elected by the legislature and appoints Members of the Executive Council [MECs] to be the political heads of each provincial department. The MECs and the Premier form the provincial executive council (cabinet).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The custodian of service delivery also manages the provision for day-to-day needs (electricity delivery, water and sanitation, refuse removal, parks and recreational areas, firefighting services etc.) at a municipal level. A mayor leads municipalities. The full council (PR and ward councillors) elects the executive mayor. They, in turn, may appoint a mayoral committee that will assist in decision making.

WHY THE FOCUS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

Local government is the government closest to the people, and it is the sphere of government that forms the focus for this civic education initiative. This is the sphere of government in which community members are more likely to interact directly daily. The mayor and locally elected councillors are better positioned to understand local issues than national and provincial politicians.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE
SOUTH AFRICAN CONSTITUTION

As we mentioned earlier, South Africa is a Constitutional democracy. What this means is that our Constitution guides us. Chapter 7 of the Constitution establishes local government as a separate sphere of government that makes provisions on its established, objectives, developmental duties, powers, and responsibilities. The constitution defines and assigns powers to local governments as follows:

■ STATUS OF MUNICIPALITIES 151

1. The local sphere of government consists of municipalities, which must be established for the whole of the territory of the Republic.

2. The executive and legislative authority of a municipality is vested in its Municipal Council.

3. A municipality has the right to govern, on its own initiative, the local government affairs of its community, subject to national and provincial legislation, as provided for in the Constitution.

4. The national or a provincial government may **not compromise or impede a municipality's ability or right to exercise its powers or perform its functions.**

The constitution also sets out what local government ought to do in the following as follows:

■ OBJECTS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT 152

1. The objects of local government are:
   a. to provide a democratic and accountable government for local communities;
   b. to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;
   c. to promote social and economic development;
   d. to promote a safe and healthy environment and;
   e. to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

2. A municipality must strive, within its financial and administrative capacity, to achieve the objects set out in subsection (1).

ESTABLISHMENT OF MUNICIPALITIES

The Municipal Structures Act, 1998 provides categories of municipalities. The Constitution provides for three categories of municipalities:

- **METROPOLITAN:** Metros exist in the eight biggest cities in South Africa, and they are 'stand-alone' municipalities, meaning they are the only local government in that area.

- **DISTRICT:** These municipalities are made up of a number of local municipalities (between 3 and 6) that fall into one district and come together in the district council.

- **LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES:** fall outside the metropolitan municipalities. They are broken into wards

PRIMARY SERVICES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

As our immediate point of contact with the government, the local government is responsible for many day-to-day services or rather basic service delivery. These services include:

- **INFRASTRUCTURE AND BASIC SERVICES:** this includes water and sanitation, electricity and gas reticulation, refuse removal, stormwater management, municipal roads, municipal public transport, street lighting, among others.

- **SOCIAL AND WELFARE SERVICES:** even though this is primarily an area of the provincial government, municipal functions that fall in this category may include: child care facilities, municipal health services, establishment and maintenance of public parks and other recreational facilities. Other community-based social services are often in practice provided by municipalities (especially the larger municipalities).

- **ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC ORDER:** this includes fire-fighting services, building regulations, control of nuisances, air and noise pollution, traffic and parking; larger municipalities often have established 'metro police' to assist with enforcement in these areas.

- **MUNICIPAL PLANNING:** the development plans of a municipality are the basis for directing and managing land use and infrastructure provision, and they should help plan for public investment whether the particular service is provided directly by the municipality or by province. For example, the province implemented the housing subsidy programme, but effective implementation relies on municipal planning.
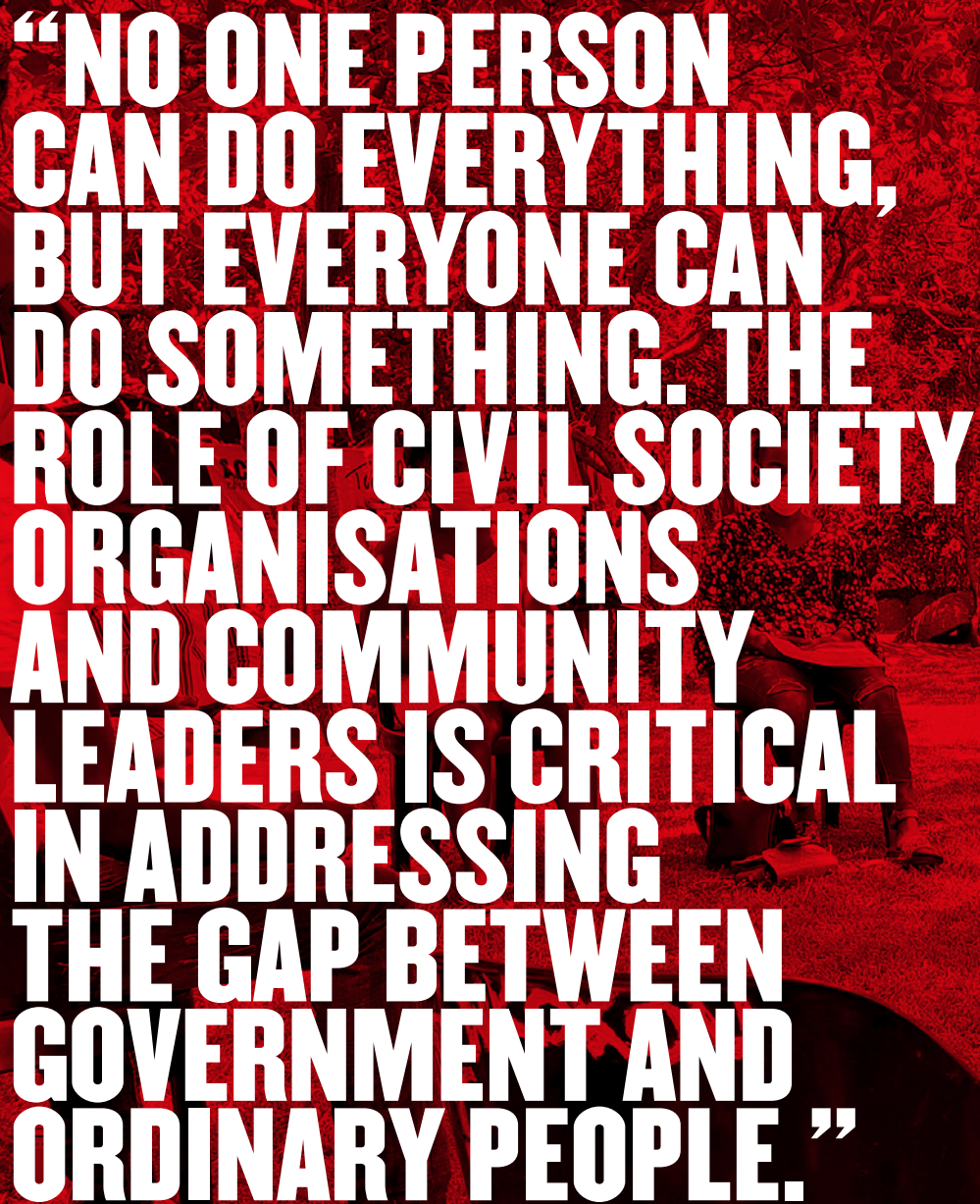
Batho Pele principles

The *Batho Pele* ("People First") principles align with the Constitution. You have to know the service you're entitled to. Government officials must follow the *Batho Pele* principles which require public servants to be polite, open and transparent and deliver good service to the public. *Batho Pele* principles are to transform service delivery in the public sector. The South African government promised the people of South Africa that they would serve the people without discrimination while respecting the dignity of all and ensuring that the needs of the majority of the population, who had been disadvantaged in the past, are met efficiently and effectively.

The 8 *Batho Pele* Principles:

1. **Consultation:** Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they receive and, wherever possible, given a choice about the services that are offered.

2. **Service standards:** Citizens should be told what level and quality of public service they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect.

3. **Access:** All citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled.

4. **Courtesy:** Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration.

5. **Information:** Citizens should be given full and accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive.

6. **Openness and transparency:** Citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge.

7. **Redress:** If the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy. When complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response.

8. **Value for money:** Public services should be provided economically and efficiently to give citizens the best possible value for money.

As extracted from www.localgovernmentaction.org

Notes

"NO ONE PERSON CAN DO EVERYTHING, BUT EVERYONE CAN DO SOMETHING. THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS IS CRITICAL IN ADDRESSING THE GAP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND ORDINARY PEOPLE."

WHO'S WHO IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

ADMINISTRATIVE

MUNICIPAL MANAGER

DEPARTMENTAL EXECUTIVE MANAGERS

POLITICAL

MAYOR

SPEAKER

CHIEF WHIP

MUNICIPAL COUNCILS

MUNICIPAL MAYORAL COMMITTEES

WARD COUNCILLORS

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

WARD COMMITTEES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKERS (CDWs)

ADMINISTRATIVE

Administrative leadership is led by the municipal manager and departmental executive managers and collectively ensures that political decisions are implemented.

The municipal manager is entrusted with developing an economical, effective, efficient and accountable administration that can implement the IDP and other decisions of the council, such as policy. All of the Municipal Manager's responsibilities are derived from his position as Head of Administration and Accounting Officer for the municipality. The municipal manager's role includes:

– *The employees of the municipality operate within frameworks of the labour laws*

– *Implementing and monitoring the work of the municipality*

– *Financial administration of the municipality.*

POLITICAL

The political leadership, comprised of councillors and the mayoral committee, is headed by an executive mayor. After elections, elected local government councillors form the council. This can also be called the local government legislative structure. All spheres of government have the power to make laws within their jurisdiction. At the local government level, we have a council responsible for determining policy and making decisions in the form of by-laws and resolutions. According to the Education and Training Unit, "all resolutions and by-laws have to be in line with the national Constitution as well as national and provincial laws." In essence, the council's role is to make policies and by-laws, monitor implementation and intervene or take corrective actions where necessary. The council is made up of:

1. *A mayor who heads the council;*

2. *An executive or mayoral committee that coordinate the work of the municipality and makes recommendations to the council;*

3. *A speaker (except in very small councils) who chairs council meetings;*

4. *Council meetings where the full council meets to make decisions;*

5. *Committees where a few councillors meet to discuss specific issues; and*

6. *Political Caucuses.*

Key role players and structures within local government *

MAYOR

The mayor is the public face of the municipality and should be present at big public meetings, municipal stakeholder forums and media. Mayors are councillors elected by members of a municipal council.

Powers and functions of the Executive Mayor as set out in Section 56 of the Structures Act:

The executive mayor, in performing the duties of office, must:

– *Identify and develop criteria in terms of which progress in the implementation of the strategies, programmes and services can be evaluated, including key performance indicators which are specific to the municipality and common to local government in general;*

– *Evaluate progress against the key performance indicators;*

– *Review the performance of the municipality to improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the municipality; the efficiency of credit control and revenue and debt collection services; and the implementation of the municipality's by-laws;*

– *Monitor the management of the municipality's administration in accordance with the directions of the municipal council;*

– *Oversee the provision of services to communities in the municipality in a sustainable manner;*

– *Annually report on the involvement of communities and community organisations in the affairs of the municipality; and*

– *Ensure that regard is given to public views and report on the effect of consultation on the decisions of the council.*

* Taken from https://www.mogalecity.gov.za/our-council/

SPEAKER

The speaker is sometimes referred to as the chairperson of the municipal council.

Functions of the Speakers as set out in Section 37 of the Structures Act:

– *Presides at meetings of the council;*

– *Performs the duties and exercises the powers delegated to the speaker in terms of Section 59 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000);*

– *Ensures that the council meets at least quarterly;*

– *Maintain order during meetings;*

– *Ensures compliance in the council and council committees with the Code of Conduct set out in Schedule 1 to the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000); and*

– *Must ensure that council meetings are conducted in accordance with the rules and orders of the council.*

CHIEF WHIP

The speaker is sometimes referred to as the chairperson of the municipal council.

Functions of the Speakers as set out in Section 37 of the Structures Act:

– *Presides at meetings of the council;*

– *Performs the duties and exercises the powers delegated to the speaker in terms of Section 59 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000);*

– *Ensures that the council meets at least quarterly;*

– *Maintain order during meetings;*

– *Ensures compliance in the council and council committees with the Code of Conduct set out in Schedule 1 to the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000); and*

– *Must ensure that council meetings are conducted in accordance with the rules and orders of the council.*

MUNICIPAL COUNCILS

Municipal councils are elected every five years during local government elections. Below is how councils are formed after each local government election.

- **LOCAL AND METROPOLITAN COUNCILS:** (50% ward councillors and 50% PR councillors) Each voter votes for a political party on a Proportional Representation Ballot. Parties are allocated seats according to the percentage of votes received in the area as a whole. Proportional Representation Councillors are drawn from a party list. Each voter also votes for a ward councillor. Half of the council comprises the PR councillor, and the other half comprises the directly elected ward councillors.

- **DISTRICT COUNCIL:** (40%/60%) In local municipalities, each voter also votes for a party to represent them on the district council in terms of the system of proportional representation in the whole district. 40% of district council seats are accorded to parties based on the Proportional Representation ballot, and 60% of seats are allocated to the local councils in that district area. Each local councillor is given a number of seats that councillors from each area must fill and should represent the support that the party has in the local council.

- **WARD COUNCILS:** Local and metropolitan municipalities are divided into wards. A ward councillor represents a specific ward on the municipal council and is elected in local government elections through the first past the post system. They can represent a political party, be independent or represent a local association. A PR councillor represents a political party on the municipal council and is elected through the system of proportional representation.

MUNICIPAL MAYORAL COMMITTEES

The Mayoral Committee is an instrument (that has no power on its own) that is appointed to assist the mayor, to offer advice as well as to take decisions together with the mayor with regard to designated powers. Final decisions however remain that of the mayor.In terms of Chapter 3 of the Local Government Municipal Structures Act of 1998, if a municipal council has more than nine members, the Executive Mayor appoints a Mayoral Committee from among the councillors to assist them and may:

- *Delegate specific responsibilities to each member of the committee.*
- *Delegate any of the Executive Mayor's powers to the respective members.*
- *Dismiss a member of the Mayoral Committee.*

According to the Constitutional Court, the primary task of the Mayoral Committee to assist the mayor in the exercise of his/her powers. It is in essence an extension of the Office of the Executive Mayor. The Mayoral Committee must consist of the deputy executive mayor (if there is one) including as many councillors as may be necessary for efficient and effective government provided that no more than 20 per cent of the councillors or 10 councillors whichever is the least are appointed. Each person appointed to the Mayoral Committee is referred to as a Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) and each one is often allocated a portfolio which they lead and provide oversight over, i.e. health, public safety, infrastructure and development, etc. Mayoral committees are appointed by the mayor and dissolve when the mayor who appointed them no longer holds office.

WARD COUNCILLORS

The duties of a councillor are as follows:

– *To represent the people in the municipality and cooperate with other councillors in the best interest of the community.*

– *To communicate the needs of the community to the municipal council.*

– *To communicate council processes to the community.*

– *To prepare for and attend meetings unless they have a special leave of absence.*

– *To monitor the performance of the municipality and raise issues of concern with the relevant bodies and provide feedback on the municipality's performance.*

– *To follow the code of conduct which includes not disclosing information to people that can unfairly benefit from it.*

Ward councillors are elected directly by the people in their wards. Ward Councillors are the chair in the ward committees. A ward councillor needs to note matters that need attention in their wards. Municipal councillors can be held accountable through:

■ Elections - voting for someone else or a different party

■ Party political meetings

■ Participation meetings

■ Personal contact

■ Enforcement of the code of conduct

■ Letters, petitions and media

■ Peaceful protest

■ Public protector and civic structures

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

The council is responsible for all the municipality decisions, but it may delegate specific functions to committees. A councillor may be assigned or elected to serve on any of the council committees. The committees established by the council are often called standing or portfolio committees and often correspond with the key functions or departments for the municipality, for example:

– *Municipal Infrastructure;*

– *Roads, Transport & Civil Works;*

– *Development Planning;*

– *Finance;*

– *Health and Social Development;*

– *Public Safety;*

– *Housing;*

– *Sports, Recreational, Arts & Culture;*

– *Environment & Tourism; and*

– *Local Economic Development.*

The function of the portfolio committees is to develop policies and review them for consideration by the council. The portfolio committees are usually chaired by the executive committee member responsible for that portfolio. The relationship between the chairpersons of portfolio committees and heads of the relevant departments must be cordial. There are times when officials may participate in portfolio committee meetings relevant to their department if an item needs their contribution.

WARD COMMITTEES

Ward committees comprise a ward councillor and ten members elected in each ward to assist and advise the ward councillor and increase community participation. They can be very useful for spreading information, assessing needs, building partnerships, consulting the community and picking up local problems with services. *"Ward committees are meant to encourage participation by their community."* A ward committee consists of the following:

– *the councillor, who as the chairperson, represents the ward as elected in the local government elections; and*

– *up to ten members from the ward elected by the community they serve.*

The ward councillor should encourage ward committees to provide input into:

– *integrated development planning;*

– *performance management; and*

– *budgeting process.*

The council should support ward committees by providing training for ward committee members, understanding municipal processes, and providing logistical support (transport, meeting venue, reimbursement of out of pocket expenses for transport) to allow ward committees to participate meaningfully. Ward committees support councillors in working with the community in two ways:

– *representing the community; and*

– *building relationships with the community.*

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKERS (CDWS)

The government deploys community development workers to work in communities and ensure that people can access government services. They give advice, help people with problems, assess needs and work with local organisations to build partnerships with the government. They usually know the community well, have good contacts with organisations, and can help with consultation, research, distributing information and monitoring implementation.

Community Development Workers (CDWs) are public officials who work with municipalities where they live to bridge the gap between government service provision and access by the communities. CDWs are required to address, among other things, the lack of information, knowledge and poor communication that communities experience in relation to government services. Municipalities are responsible for the CDW daily programme. CDWs link communities with all government spheres and departments. They are community facilitators and organisers. Their functions are to:

– *assist communities in explaining what their needs are;*

– *develop and support community structures;*

– *facilitate public participation in government development projects (e.g. IDP, LED, infrastructure and service delivery projects);*

– *identify service blockages in the community; and*

– *find solutions to identified needs and blockages by interacting with national, provincial and local government structures.*

WHAT IS THE LINK BETWEEN WARD COMMITTEES AND CDWS?

The ward councillor must support and facilitates a healthy working relationship between CDWs and the ward committee:

■ CDWs could attend ward committee meetings and offer advice;

■ Ward committees should be familiar with the CDWs in their area;

■ Ward committees and CDW's should meet to clarify the roles of each;

■ CDWs could offer operational/secretarial support to the ward committee;

■ CDWs may be able to resolve coordination problems between various spheres of government that arise at the local level; and

■ The ward committee ensures that the municipality is briefed on its efforts to resolve such problems through CDWs.

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICIALS

Most municipalities employ staff to liaise with the community. They should be used as part of any outreach and public participation programme.

Notes

DEPARTMENT OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS (CoGTA)

One of the main functions of the Department of Cooperative Governance and the Department of Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) is to develop national policies and legislation regarding local government.

The aim of CoGTA is to improve cooperative governance across the three spheres of government, in partnership with institutions of traditional leadership, to ensure integrated service delivery and to enable provinces and municipalities to carry out their development functions effectively.

The mission of CoGTA is to ensure that all municipalities consistently perform their basic functions and responsibilities by:

– *Putting people and their concerns first.*

– *Supporting the delivery of municipal services to the right standards and quality.*

– *Ensuring sound accounting and financial management and accounting.*

– *Building administrative capabilities and supporting institutional resilience.*

– *Promoting accountability, good governance and transparency.*

SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (SALGA)

South African Local Government Association is an autonomous association of all 257 South African local governments. SALGA has been mandated to provide oversight for local governments. The organisation has a National Executive Committee composed of elected councillors (primarily mayors and office bearers in municipalities) responsible for the organisation's affairs between National Conferences and Members' Assemblies. These are the second highest decision making bodies of the association. A Chief Executive Officer heads the administration.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Local Economic Development (LED) Plans and the municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) are key instruments for development in any province, with LED usually identified as a municipal priority. The municipality's LED Plan or Strategy is an important policy document to study to understand what priorities have been identified, who the role-players are, and where community members can plug in.

"Local Economic Development (LED) is an approach towards economic development which allows and encourages local people to work together to achieve sustainable economic growth and development thereby bringing economic benefits and improved quality of life for all residents in a local municipal area" (CoGTA, 2019). LED provides support in the following areas:

– *Development and review of national policy, strategy and guidelines on LED;*

– *Providing direct and hands-on support to provincial and local government;*

– *Management of the Local Economic Development Fund;*

– *Management and Technical Support to Nodal Economic Development Planning;*

– *Facilitating coordinating and monitoring of donor programmes; and*

– *Assisting in LED capacity building processes.*

STAKEHOLDER FORUMS

Many different forums already exist, including community police forums and IDP forums. Other forums that are made up of stakeholders should be set up for specific projects and programmes. Forums are very useful for quick and ongoing consultation and for building partnerships between the community and government.

COMMUNITY POLICE FORUMS

Community Policing Forums (CPF's) are a platform where community members, community-based organisations, relevant stakeholders, and the police meet to discuss local crime prevention initiatives. The CPF is the only recognized consultative forum where communities can bring their concerns to the police. Their functions include:

– *Establishing a partnership between police and the communities, they serve to ensure effective protection and a better quality of life;*

– *Examining and advising on local policing concerns;*

– *Evaluating the provision of services such as:*

– *Distribution of resources;*

– *The way of complaints and charges are handled; and*

– *Patrolling of residential and business areas;*

– *Keeping records, writing reports and making recommendations to the Station Commissioners, Provincial Commissioner and the MEC;*

– *Promoting accountability of the local police to the community;*

– *Promoting Cooperation of the community with the local police;*

– *Monitoring the effectiveness and efficiency of the police serving the community; and*

– *Promoting respect for human rights.*

CLINIC COMMITTEES

What is a clinic committee? This community-based structure is essential for ensuring good governance in the health system through community participation. This structure comprises community members, civil society representatives and health professionals in each area. Their functions are as follows:

– *Improving and sustaining health service delivery;*

– *Development and Implementation of Health Policies,*

– *Act as a link between communities and health services;*

– *Promote the mission and values of the Department of Health;*

– *Ensure that measures are taken by management to improve the performance and quality of service;*

– *Provide information about the facility, including services, programmes and campaigns of the Department;*

– *Ensure Accountability and Transparency; and*

– *Allow community concerns to be raised from local to district, provincial and national levels.*

MUNICIPAL LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURES

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT: MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS ACT 32 OF 2000*

The Constitution of South Africa envisages a robust local government system, which can provide a democratic and accountable government for local communities; ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; promote social and economic development; promote a safe and healthy living environment; and encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

The Municipal Systems Act is part of a series of legislation that aims to empower local government to fulfil its Constitutional objects. In 1998 the government issued a Local Government White Paper, which outlined a policy framework for local government. Later that year, the government passed the Municipal Demarcation Act, which enabled the re-demarcation of municipal boundaries; and the Municipal Structures Act, which defined the local government structures. The Municipal Systems Act will complement these pieces of legislation by regulating key municipal organisational, planning, participatory and service delivery systems.

The national government has also prepared the Municipal Financial Management Act, regulating municipal financial matters. Together, these pieces of legislation provide a framework for a democratic, accountable and developmental local government system, as envisaged by the Constitution.

Below is a summary of the objectives of the Municipal Systems Act:

– *To provide for the core principles, mechanisms and processes that are necessary to enable municipalities to move progressively towards the socio-economic upliftment of local communities and ensure universal access to essential services that are affordable to all;*

– *To provide for a code of conduct for councillors;*

– *To outline how municipal powers and functions are exercised and performed;*

– *To provide for effective community participation and mobilisation;*

– *To establish a simple and enabling framework for municipal planning, performance management as well as the use of resources;*

– *To empower the poor and ensure that municipalities put in place service tariffs and credit control policies that take their needs into account by providing frameworks for the provision of services that is not exclusionary;*

– *To establish a framework that can enable local government to integrate the activities of all spheres of government for the overall socio-economic upliftment of communities in harmony with their local natural environment; and*

– *To provide for a wide variety of legal matters pertaining to local government.*

BY-LAWS

Laws made by municipalities are called by-laws. "A by-law is a law dealing with matters of local or internal regulation made by council". Only a member or committee of a municipal council may introduce a draft by-law in the council. Before a by-law is passed, it must be published for public comment, and all municipal council members must have a reasonable amount of time to consider the by-law.

To pass a by-law, most council members must vote in favour of the by-law. Once a municipal council has passed a by-law, it must be promptly published in the Provincial Gazette. Municipalities should, where practical, also publish the by-law in local newspapers or bring it to the local community's attention in another way.

Municipal by-laws form part of the legal foundation for effective service delivery and cooperative communities. Municipalities derive the power to adopt a by-law from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. A by-law passed by a municipal council:

a. must be published promptly in the Provincial Gazette, and, when feasible, also in a local newspaper or in any other practical way to bring the contents of the by-law to the attention of the local community; and

b. takes effect when published or on a future date determined in or in terms of the bylaw

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MAKING OF A BY-LAW

■ A draft by-law is prepared by a councillor or a committee of the council.

■ The council must consult with the community with regard to the draft by-law. It must at least publish the by-law for comment by the public.

■ The by-law is introduced and debated by the council.

■ The municipal council votes on the by-law.

■ If passed by the council, the bylaw is published and becomes law on that date or a later date set in the by-law.

INDIGENT POLICIES

According to Cooperative Governance Affairs, *"in 2001 South Africa adopted a policy intended to provide free basic services to poorer households."* As a deliberate result, municipalities were given the task of identifying households that would receive basic services such as water and electricity. (CoGTA, 2019)

Households have to register with their respective municipalities to qualify for free basic services. Being "indigent" isn't considered a permanent state, and therefore households have to apply on a yearly basis. A municipality's role is to vet every application, selecting only those households that meet various criteria. Those who meet the criteria will be granted indigent status.

Due to financial constraints, mismanagement of funds and lack of adequate infrastructure, a municipality might not be able to provide free service to all who qualify.

The extent to which municipalities subsidize indigent households is completely up to the municipality. A general rule across municipalities is that indigent households are entitled to 6000 litres of water and 50 kWh of free electricity per month.

Notes

Chapter

5

ENGAGING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

At the heart of any democracy is public participation and accountability. One of the key responsibilities of municipalities is to work together with local communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives.

South Africa is a Constitutional Democracy, and Section 152 (1) (e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa encourages Local Government to involve community members and organisations in matters of local governance. In essence, our municipalities are required to encourage public participation accountability.

Public participation includes citizens in national and democratic processes and ensures that citizens have a say in matters that will affect them, whether it be a policy or law. When municipalities engage with residents, they create an environment in which they (the citizens) understand what the municipality is trying to achieve with the limited resources. Public participation is the cornerstone of accountability, and public representatives can only claim to be accountable if they have regular interactions with the people they represent and if they consult and report back on key government decisions

Ways in which residents can engage Local Government:

- **Attending public meetings/hearings**

- **Making a written or oral submission**

- **Lodging a petition**

- **Attending IDP Forums**

- **Through Ward Committees**

- **Engaging with Community Development Workers**

- **Reporting both community and municipal issues**

- **Engaging with local councillors**

ACCOUNTABILITY
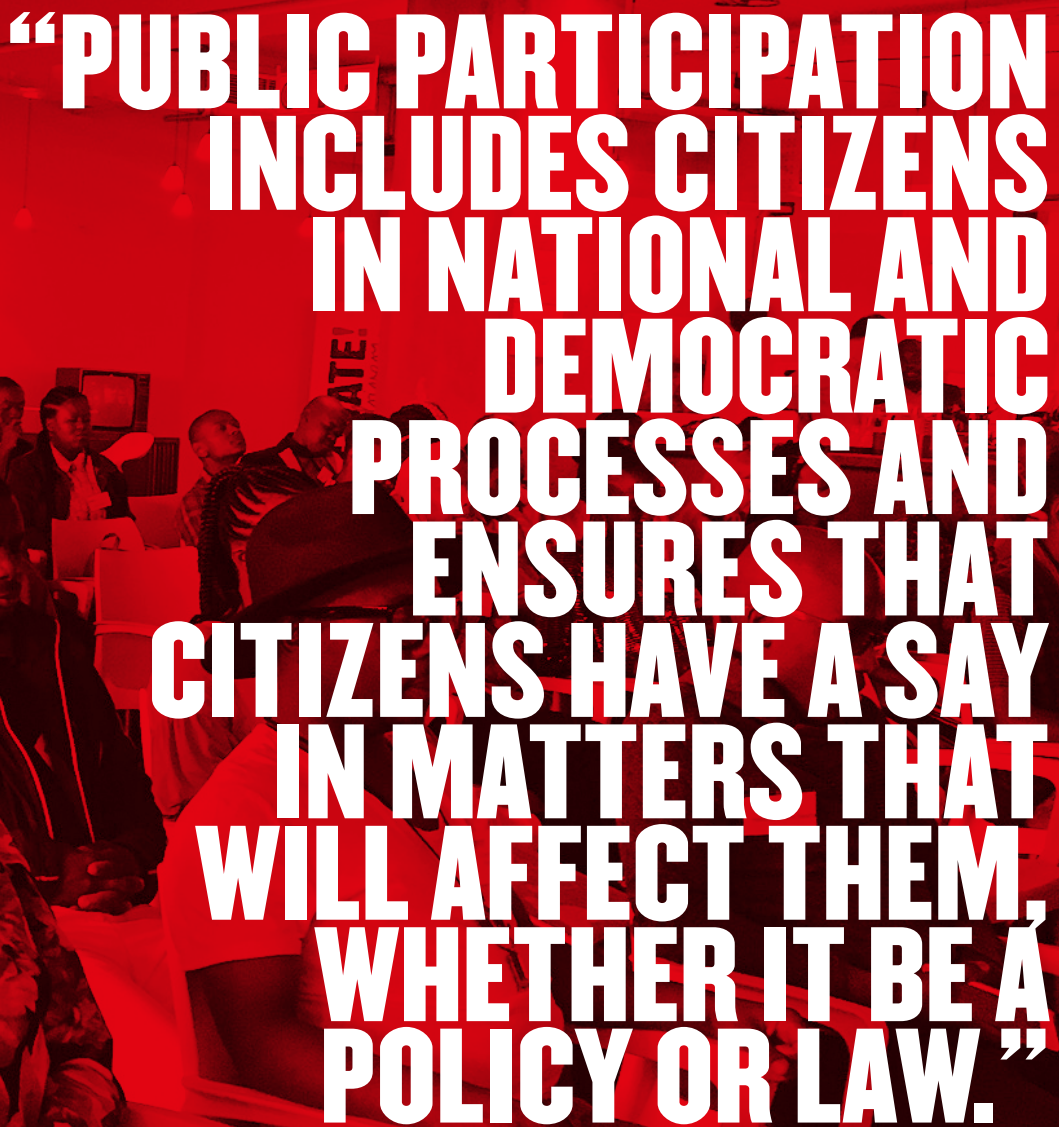
The relationship between government and citizens is very important. Ultimately, the government is accountable to citizens for decisions taken at the government, community, and individual levels.

At a government level, public accountability is through oversight by public representatives in the legislative arm of government. The government should consult and involve communities in discussions about projects and programmes that directly affect them at a community level. At an individual level, citizens have the right to hold the government to account for and get reasons for government decisions that directly affect them.

ACCOUNTABILITY PLATFORM

GovChat, a social media platform for community engagement that connects governments with citizens in real-time, is being rolled out in various provinces. The platform will be accessible via any messaging app such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Viber, etc., and via USSD. Currently, the platform is only open for citizens who reside in pilot municipalities, such as Swellendam Municipality in the Western Cape Province. This platform provides government and citizens with a cost-effective communication platform that will serve as a public education tool, community complaints management system, Facilities Rating and Reporting tool, as well as a citizen satisfaction survey tool. Through GovChat, citizens will learn who their ward councillor is, report services such as water leaks and electricity disruptions, give and/or volunteer in your community, rate and report services provided in public facilities such as police stations, post offices, child care facilities/ Early Childhood Development Centres, etc.

Go to *www.govchat.org* to learn more and try out GovChat.

Notes

"PUBLIC PARTICIPATION INCLUDES CITIZENS IN NATIONAL AND DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES AND ENSURES THAT CITIZENS HAVE A SAY IN MATTERS THAT WILL AFFECT THEM, WHETHER IT BE A POLICY OR LAW."

Frequently asked questions

Sometimes we want to engage with our Municipalities but lack the know-how or where to even start. This chapter covers a few frequently asked questions that will help you and others regarding questions you might have for your municipality. The answers to these frequently asked questions were provided by Ms Thandi Radebe (SALGA), Themba Vryman (Activator) and Bafana Zemo (Ekurhuleni Municipality).

How do I find out who my local councillor is?

There are several ways to find out who your local ward councillor is.

1. The Independent Electoral Commission website assists voters and residents of a ward to use their ID numbers on their website to know who their local councillor is. *https://www.elections.org.za/pw/Voter/Who-Is-My-Ward-Councillor* You can SMS your ID number to 32245

2. You can alternatively enquire from the municipality where the ward office is.

3. After every Local Government Election, all councillors get published in the local newspaper and local media.

How can I reach/access my local councillor?

By attending public meetings in your ward, you will be able to reach and engage with your councillor. Alternatively, you should be able to find your ward councillors' contact details on the council website or through your ward office. Your local municipality should also be able to provide you with their contacts.

How do I report a service delivery issue in my community?

Municipalities have a contact number of various departments within the municipality where a specific service delivery issue can be reported. Citizens can also report their service delivery issues to their local councillors. The government also has a platform called Govchat, a system formulated to assist municipalities in responding to the day to day concerns or complaints of citizens with regards to service delivery.

How do I report an unresponsive ward councillor?

You can approach the chief whip's office of the political party that your local councillor belongs to so that you can file a complaint. For independent councillors, you can send a petition to the council's office. You can also report them to the office of the speaker.

**How does one become
a ward councillor?**

The Independent Electoral Commission allows a legal person to be a ward councillor through two options. The first being through a political party affiliation process, where a person must first be a member of a political party to stand as a ward candidate. The other option being through an independent application process where a person can choose to stand as a ward councillor without belonging to a political party within a ward. For both processes, the person must register with the IEC and must meet all the requirements to qualify as a ward candidate.

**How can I participate
in or join a ward
committee?**

As soon as possible, after the results of the local government elections have been declared, the municipality speaker must arrange ward meetings for those interested in serving as ward committee members. Ward committees comprise a Ward Councillor, and ten members are elected in each ward to assist and advise the ward councillor and increase community participation. They can be very useful for spreading information, assessing needs, building partnerships, consulting the community and picking up local problems with services. *"Ward Committees are meant to encourage participation by their community."* The South African Local Government Association has a manual on becoming a ward committee member.

– Nominations are open for ten and fifteen nominees, after which voting shall take place.
– The ward councillor must ensure that meetings are a fair representation of all recognised sectors and stakeholders identified by the municipality.
– A minimum of a hundred qualifying community members need to be present to vote for the selection of the ward committee members to be valid.
– The term of office for ward committees is the same as that of municipal councils, five years.
– The ward councillor chairs the ward committee.

As a community member, can I attend a council sitting/meeting?

Council sittings and meetings vary depending on which meetings are declared open to the public and/or closed to the public. Meetings declared open for the public are accessible by the general public with adherence to the rules as set out by the municipality. Alternatively, you can attend:

– IDP meeting
– State of the municipality address
– Budget meetings

Where can I find my municipality's Integrated Development Plan (IDP)?

The Integrated Development Plan is placed at a local library, on the municipality's website, and at the offices of local councillors, which is a free document. Within The Speakers Officers, Public Participation Officers should also be able to provide the IDP. The department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) also keeps a record of all IDPs and makes them available for everyone on their website.

What support can my municipality offer if I can't afford rates and levies?

Municipalities have indigent policies for residents and households who do not qualify for affordable rates and levies; the policy assists people who cannot afford rates and levies to access free basic services such as water and electricity. There is an arrangement a resident can arrange with finance credit control. They need to go to the customer care centre and the finance office.

Do municipalities support deserving students who can't afford varsity fees?

Municipalities will support financially needy students through a bursary scheme based on merit, depending on the financial allocation. Local municipalities provide various bursaries to students who live in those areas. You can contact your municipality to check if and which bursaries are available. Several municipalities have Annual Bursary schemes that are awarded to students who are studying towards qualifications in various fields of study.

What role can I play in making my local government work?

A role the municipal resident can play in making local government work is through public participation processes like ward committees, making written or oral presentations in public meetings where public comments are sought to develop policies and working programmes and applying for open vacancies in that municipality to effectively and efficiently contribute your skill and/or work experience. Another way is by paying your rates and taxes and adhering to municipal by-laws and any other laws.

Notes

Chapter

6

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROCESSES

In Chapter 4, you read all about the three spheres of government and their different functions. In this chapter, we will dig deeper into the processes in the local government sphere, specifically planning and financial elements.

WHAT IS THE INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

As per the SA Constitution, local government in South Africa is developmental. Therefore, local municipalities have to use "integrated development planning" to plan future development in their municipality. It is also used to address the legacy of Apartheid, such as poor / racially-motivated spatial planning, racially divided communities, and disparities in service delivery in poor and rich areas and rural and urban areas.

Integrated Development Planning (IDP) is an approach to planning that involves the entire municipality and its citizens in finding the best solutions to achieve good long-term development.

After each election, the new council has to make decisions on the future of the IDP. They can either adopt and extend the existing IDP or undertake a process of developing a new IDP that considers existing plans.

! WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO DO AN IDP?

■ EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES

– *focus on the most important needs in the community (participation by the community is essential to identify the most important needs)*

– *identify the most cost-effective way of providing resources*

■ SPEED UP SERVICE DELIVERY

– *Ensure project proposals are realistic and based on the available resources.*

– *Identify the most impoverished areas in collaboration with stakeholders*

– *Attract additional funds from other spheres of government/ private investors*

– *Strengthens democracy through active community participation*

– *Overcome apartheid legacy and spatial planning*

– *Promotes intergovernmental coordination*

WHO ARE THE STAKEHOLDERS WITHIN THE IDP PROCESS?

■ **The Municipality:** The IDP guides the development plans of the local municipality.

■ **Councillors:** The IDP allows councillors to make decisions based on the needs and aspirations of their constituencies.

■ **Communities and other stakeholders:** The IDP is based on community needs and priorities. Communities have the chance to participate in identifying their most important needs.

■ **IDP forums or committees:** Municipalities must establish an IDP forum or committee that oversees the development, implementation, monitoring and review of the municipality's IDP. These structures should include community members chosen by the municipal council and ward committee members. Each citizen has the right to apply and be informed about the recruitment process.

■ **National and provincial sector departments:** Many government services are delivered by provincial and national government departments at the local level - for example, police stations, clinics and schools. Municipalities must take into account the programmes and policies of these departments. The departments should participate in the IDP process to be guided on using their resources to address local needs.

The IDP process encourages all stakeholders who reside and conduct business within a municipal area to participate in the preparation and implementation of the development plan.

Notes

THE IDP PROCESS

Before starting the planning process, an IDP Process Plan must be drawn up. It is required by legislation that a municipal council adopt a process to guide the planning, drafting and adoption of its IDP.

Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 28(1) *"each municipal council must adopt a process set out in writing to guide the planning, drafting, adoption and review of its integrated development plan."*

This plan should outline:

– *A programme specifying time-frames for the different steps.*

– *The structures that will manage the planning process.*

– *How the public can participate, and the structures that will be created to ensure this participation.*

– *Time schedule for the planning process.*

– *Who is responsible for what?*

– *How will the process be monitored?*

– *A framework will be developed at the District Council level in consultation with all local municipalities within the district. This framework will ensure coordination, consultation and alignment between the district council and local municipalities. The framework will guide the development of the IDP Process Plan for each local municipality.*

The process undertaken to produce the IDP consists of six phases...

1. ANALYSIS

2. STRATEGIES

3. PROJECTS

4. INTEGRATION

5. APPROVAL

6. MONITORING & IMPLEMENTATION

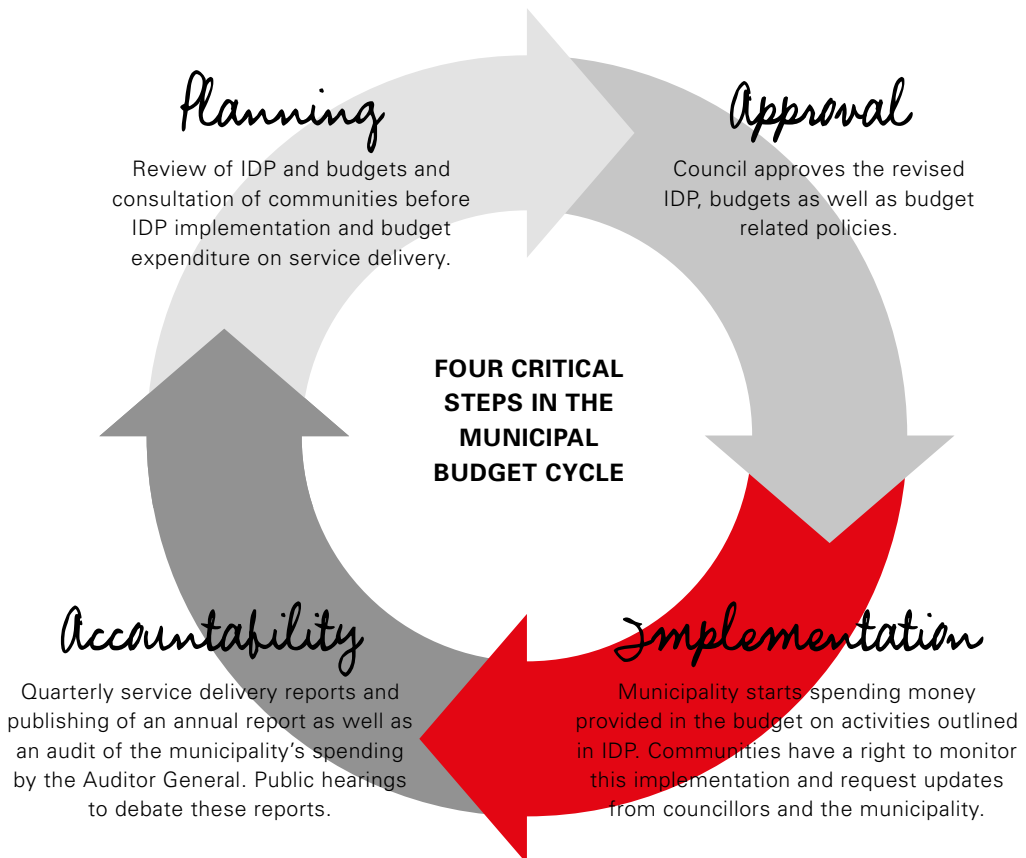| *Description*	*Methods municipalities can use for community participation*
■ **Analyze the current state of development, including available resources.** ■ **Identifying and agreeing on key priority challenges and issues and the underlying causes.**	*Community meetings are organised by the ward councillor and ward committees.* *Stakeholder Meetings.* *Surveys and opinion polls (To gain insights on how people feel about a particular issue).*
■ **The vision, mission, objectives, local development strategies, and development guidelines are developed.** ■ **Identification of programmes and projects.**	*Calls for submissions and comments.* *Meetings with stakeholders and communities.* *IDP representative forums.* *Continuous public debates and discussions on solutions that can work best to solve identified key issues.*
■ **Outline of project objectives, activities, targets, outputs, budgets and performance indicators.**	*Include stakeholder and community representatives in project committees.*
■ **Screening of project proposals and integration of approved projects.** ■ **Development of the IDP and other supporting frameworks such as the financial plan, disaster management plan, gender and local economic development frameworks and performance management plans.**	*Conduct public hearings.* *IDP representative forums.*
■ **Government and public comments on the IDP draft.** ■ **Presentation of the IDP to council for consideration and adoption.**	*Consultations with stakeholders and communities.*
■ **Monitoring and reviewing the IDP implementation by ward committees, civil society and councillors.** ■ **Annual implementation review by the municipality.** ■ **Monitoring by provincial and national departments.**	*Publish project reports.* *IDP representative forums.* *Empowering communities, ward committees and beneficiaries to monitor implementation.*

THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET

The municipal budget reflects the strategic financial plan of the municipality that indicates the priorities and needs of citizens and all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and government employees and administrators.

It shows us the important needs of communities, projected costs and revenue (where the revenue is generated from, what services it will pay for, and for whom), and the municipality's future plans.

The financial year of South African municipalities runs from 1 July of each year to 30 June the following year. Municipalities have to prepare a budget for each financial year. After extensive planning and consultation with ward committees and other stakeholder groups within communities, the budget is then approved by the Municipal Council before the new financial year begins.

Planning

Review of IDP and budgets and consultation of communities before IDP implementation and budget expenditure on service delivery.

Approval

Council approves the revised IDP, budgets as well as budget related policies.

FOUR CRITICAL STEPS IN THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET CYCLE

Accountability

Quarterly service delivery reports and publishing of an annual report as well as an audit of the municipality's spending by the Auditor General. Public hearings to debate these reports.

Implementation

Municipality starts spending money provided in the budget on activities outlined in IDP. Communities have a right to monitor this implementation and request updates from councillors and the municipality.

The municipal budget should be **balanced** (planned income equals the expenditure). If the income is higher than expenditure, this is a **budget surplus**. If the income is less than the expenditure, this is a **budget deficit**.

If a municipality does not responsibly manage its finances, the provincial government may intervene and place it **under administration**. When a municipality is placed under administration, it means that there will be no executive positions and that an administrator is appointed to manage and oversee the day-to-day running of the municipality.

Notes

The municipal budget comprises a

CAPITAL BUDGET and an OPERATING BUDGET

Indicates long term costs, purchases and big investments that will be municipal assets for a year or more. It also shows how they will be paid for. *Example: the purchasing of rubbish collection trucks.*

Deals with day-to-day income and costs to deliver municipal services from which there will be short term benefit. *Example: Petrol for the rubbish collection trucks for costs and revenue charges for income.*

There are various sources of income that municipalities use for their expenditure. Wealthier local municipalities, including metros, raise their income from rates and services for water and electricity, whereas poorer municipalities receive most of their income from national government transfers. Some provinces give municipalities conditional grants to assist with certain programmes or crises, such as a flood, as an example. The bulk of transfers come from the national government in the form of equitable share (a grant given with no conditions to a municipality by the Treasury to assist the municipality in providing the functions and service required).

PRIMARY SOURCES OF A CAPITAL BUDGET

PRIMARY SOURCES OF AN OPERATIONAL BUDGET

EXTERNAL LOANS
From a bank or other financial institution

GOVERNMENT GRANTS
Conditional grants for the purpose specified by the national government

DONATIONS AND PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS
From local or foreign donors

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS
Partnerships between the private sector and municipalities

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM REVENUE
Purchasing a capital item from operating income in the year of purchase

FINES
Traffic fines, late library book fines, and penalties for overdue payment of service charges

SERVICE CHARGES/TARIFFS
From charges on services such as water, electricity, or building plans' approval

PROPERTY RATES
Paid by all people and businesses who own fixed property like land, houses over a certain value, factories, and office blocks within the municipal area based on the property's value

EQUITABLE SHARE
The amount of money a municipality gets from the national government each year. The amount a municipality gets depends mainly on the percentage of low-income people in the area.

TARIFFS FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

A 'tariff' is a service charge that the municipality charges for the use of services. These services should be affordable to the people and businesses who use the services and the municipality itself. An annual review of tariffs is conducted as part of the budget planning process.

Ward committees should advise councillors on the services needed in the area, an affordable price or 'tariff' for the services, and ensure that people pay for their services. Tariffs are charged for:

– *Basic services include water, electricity, rubbish removal and sewerage.*

– *Specialised services such as the approval of building plans.*

– *Penalties and fines for late payments and interest on arrears, including traffic fines.*

The income received from the payment of tariffs enables municipalities to pay for staff salaries, infrastructure maintenance and repairs, and payments to Eskom for their supply of bulk electricity to the municipality.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET PROCESS

Ward committees, local organisations, businesses and community members should be consulted during the budget planning process to ensure that the municipality spends money on the most important and appropriate services and projects. Civil society organisations can also play a critical role in monitoring expenditure and the implementation of local service delivery and ensuring that the municipality gets value for money.

THIS IS WHAT YOU AND I CAN DO TO HELP:

■ Setting an example by paying rates and services fully and on time.

■ Encouraging others in your community to pay their rates and services.

■ Hold your local councillor accountable and fight corruption.

■ Refusing to pay and receive bribes of any kind.

■ Challenging any waste of municipal money and asking for a proper explanation or investigation.

Chapter

7

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND VOTING

Every five years, we have Local Government Elections, also referred to as Municipal Elections. In these elections, we get to choose representatives and political parties who will represent us at a local level, in a municipal council. These elected representatives are called councillors and are responsible for improving communities and delivering services to everyone living in their municipality.

In order to be able to vote, you must be registered as a voter. Your details will then appear on the Voters Roll. The Voters Roll helps the IEC plan for elections, identify fraud, and determine how many people can vote in each election.

Why is it important for youth to vote in local government elections?

We choose representatives and political parties to represent us in a municipal council in the Local Government Elections. These people are our councillors. In Local Government, we will be voting in individual and political parties responsible for all service delivery needs and issues affecting communities at a municipal level. Councillors are responsible for making and overseeing policies and by-laws within our municipalities.

Young people make up the largest proportion of the South African population, yet historically, we have experienced low voter participation levels by young people in South Africa. The minimal participation of the youth in the elections is a great concern for the country, and civil society needs to play its part in promoting youth participation in the electoral process.

When the Local Government fails to deliver basic services, the youth bears the brunt or suffers the most. Young people, therefore, should be at the forefront of ensuring that local government functions at an optimal level and that it can deliver on basic service delivery. Local Government Elections are an opportunity for young people to use their constitutional right to have a say about the next five years of their municipality. It's also an opportunity for young people to ensure that they vote for councillors who will represent their needs through policy and decision-making at the local level.

VOTING Q&A
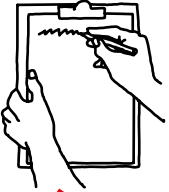
Who can register to vote?

☑ A South African citizen

☑ 16 years and older *(but you can only vote from 18)*

☑ Persons with a green barcoded ID book, Smart ID Card or valid temporary identity certificate (TIC) that's not older than three months
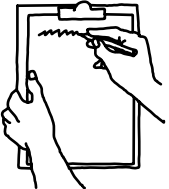
Where can you register to vote?

☑ You can register to vote in person at a registration station in the voting district where you live during voter registration weekend. The IEC determines voter registration weekend.

☑ You can also register at your local IEC office from Monday to Friday during office hours. Registration is ongoing. You can register whether an election is taking place or not.

☑ Voter Portal Online (IEC)
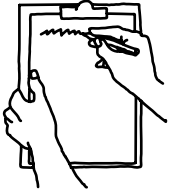
How do you check if you are registered?

✓ SMS Services: SMS your ID Number to any of the below numbers:
  – Registration status: 32810
  – Special vote application status: 32711

✓ Online: Go to the IEC website www.elections.org.za and follow "check my registration status."

✓ Walk-in (Electoral Commission local IEC office) Monday to Friday

✓ Registration Weekends

Where do you vote?

✓ In municipal elections, you must be registered in the voting district where you live. You will then vote at a voting station where you are registered. If you are outside your voting district on Election Day, you may apply for a special vote to vote prior to election day. For Local Government Elections, you cannot vote at a voting station where you are not registered, unlike in national and provincial elections.

Who can vote?

✓ South African Citizens

✓ 18 years and older

✓ Person with green barcoded ID, Smart ID Card or valid TIC (Passport is not valid for elections)

✓ A person whose name appears on the voting district segment of the voters' rolls

If a person's name does not appear on the voter's roll and they have a sticker in their ID that proves that they have registered in that voting district, they must be allowed to vote. They will be asked to complete an MEC 7 form and proceed to vote normally.

How are municipalities broken down?

Local government is divided into three categories: Metropolitan, Local and District.

✓ Metropolitan Councils aka "Metros" are found in the eight biggest cities in the country.

✓ Local Municipalities are the majority of municipalities and fall outside the eight metros

✓ District Municipalities consist of 3-6 local municipalities to form one district

Whom you will vote for...

✓ A political party to represent you in your Municipal Council(s) on a proportional representation (PR) basis;

✓ Ward candidate of your choice (either independent or party candidate).

The ballot papers for municipal elections have different colours and depend on the municipality in which you live and are registered to vote. The different types of ballot papers are:

METROPOLITAN COUNCILS (2 ballot papers)

■ *One ballot for the Metropolitan Council, PR Ballot. Here you vote for a political party. Yellow Ballot*

■ *One ballot for the Ward Candidates. Here you vote for a person to represent your ward. White Ballot.*

LOCAL AND DISTRICT COUNCILS (3 ballot papers)

■ *One ballot paper for the Local Council, PR Ballot. Here you vote for a political party. Yellow Ballot.*

■ *One ballot paper for the Ward Candidate. Here you vote for a person to represent your ward. White Ballot*

■ *One ballot paper for the District Council. You vote for a political party to represent you on the District Council. Green Ballot*
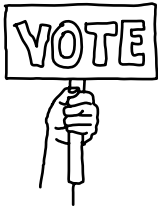
Who can stand as a candidate?*

According to the Constitution:

☑ Candidates must live in the municipal area and be citizens who are entitled to vote in the area. (A ward candidate does not need to live in the ward where they stand, but they must live in the municipality.)

☑ Candidates may not have been declared unrehabilitated insolvent or of unsound mind by a court order.

☑ Candidates may not be people working for the council or employees of another government department who have been excluded by national legislation from standing.

☑ Any elected public representatives serving in another council or other level of government may not stand. (MPs, MPLs and councillors in other municipalities)

☑ Anyone sentenced to more than 12 months in prison after the end of 1996 may not stand.

The other laws and regulations that apply to candidates are:

■ *Councillors must be on the voters roll in the municipality where they live*

■ *PR candidates must be nominated by a registered party*

■ *Ward candidates can be nominated by a registered party or, if independent, by 50 registered voters living in the ward*

■ *No one may stand as an independent in a ward and on a PR list for a party.*

■ *If a party candidate is both a PR and ward candidate and wins in the ward, they must take up the ward seat.*

■ *A deposit should be paid by parties and independent ward candidates and will be lost if they fail to gain a certain percentage of votes. There are no provisions for candidates to be disqualified because of arrears*

* Some of the content of this section was extracted from the ETU elections toolbox
https://www.etu.org.za/toolbox/docs/localgov/local.html

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE
between a Proportional Representative and a Ward Councillor?*

A ward councillor represents a specific ward on the municipal council and is elected in local government elections through the first past the post system. They can represent a political party, be independent or represent a local association. People in that ward directly vote for them.

A PR councillor represents a political party on the municipal council and is elected through the system of proportional representation.

ALLOCATION OF LOCAL AND METRO COUNCIL SEATS*

The Constitution says that the council must reflect the overall proportionality of all votes cast, leading to a complicated method of allocating seats. The method for doing this is set out in the Municipal Structures Act:

- *A quota of votes needed to gain a seat is calculated by adding the total number of votes cast in that election for PR and party ward candidates and dividing it by the number of seats on the council.*

- *All votes cast for a party on the PR ballot and for that party's candidates on ward ballots are added together.*

- *Each party's total is then divided by the quota to see how many seats they are entitled to.*

- *The number of ward seats already won by that party is then subtracted from the total number of seats allocated to the party.*

- *The remainder of seats the party is entitled to are then allocated to the same number of people on the party's PR list.*

Councils are made up of 50% ward councillors and 50% PR councillors. Each voter votes for a political party on a Proportional Representation Ballot. Parties are allocated seats according to the percentage of votes received in the area as a whole. Proportional Representation Councillors are drawn from a party list. Each voter also votes for a ward councillor. Half of the council comprises the PR councillor, and the other half comprises the directly elected ward councillors.

* Taken from ETU toolbox, source: https://www.etu.org.za/toolbox/docs/localgov/local.html

Chapter

8

THE AGENDA OF THE AGENDAS

The inclusion of youth in their communities' decision-making processes and structures will contribute to their well-being and nation-building, and youthful vibrancy. South African youth (15-34 years old) comprise 35.1% of the population – the largest demographic in the country. Young people represent an important resource for the country's development, provided they are empowered and engaged meaningfully. However, despite much progress since 1994 in addressing pressing socio-economic issues facing South Africa, the country continues to be beset by interminable challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Given their status in society, young people then bear the biggest brunt of this dreadful reality.

Given the aforementioned, there is a need for a collective and better understanding of what youth participation involves and how it can be implemented to ensure that young people are actively and meaningfully contributing towards finding lasting solutions to society's challenges. A number of global, regional and national policy frameworks have been developed to strengthen youth participation in the affairs of their communities. In order to understand the impact of meaningful youth participation, we must consider the need to assess the outcomes of global, national and regional policy frameworks in line with youth needs.

EXPLORING THE FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS
FOR MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Organisations, institutions and/or governments need to have policies to have clear guidelines in terms of decision-making. Policies play a crucial role in influencing how the challenges of young people are addressed. In 2012, South Africa adopted the National Development Plan as a framework to facilitate the country's developmental agenda. Three years later, in 2015, South Africa and 192 other countries from across the globe adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the Sustainable Development Summit. At the continental level, South Africa is also a signatory to Agenda 2063, which seeks to provide a framework for the continent's development.

These frameworks are intended to provide a clear roadmap towards job creation, eliminating poverty, reducing inequality, and growing an inclusive economy among societies. Thus, the effective implementation of the stated frameworks is crucial to addressing youth development issues in general and a sense of alienation among youth. *"Policy development is about changing lives and dealing with the worst suffering that the youth experience due to not getting a job, either as unskilled, skilled or with tertiary education as well as other socio-economic issues"*, RSA Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Honourable Maite Nkoana-Mashabane.

CENTERING THE YOUTH AGENDA:
UNDERSTANDING YOUTH ISSUES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The National Youth Policy states that "*having a relatively young population can be advantageous provided most working-age individuals are gainfully employed and thriving*". (National Youth Policy, 2021). Young people are disproportionately affected by unemployment in South Africa because the demand for labour is highest for skilled employees. Equally, high levels of unemployment among the youth often lead to an increased sense of exclusion and frustration with negative impacts on physical and mental health, which creates a vicious cycle (De Lannoy, Graham, Patel & Leibbrandt, 2018). In particular, the socio-economic status of young people in South Africa largely affects their education and employment prospects. One of the major contributors to poverty, inequality, and unemployment among the youth in South Africa is low educational attainment and skills.

Over and above this, limited access to technology and the internet hinders young people from competing in the increasingly digitised modern economy. Furthermore, the burden of disease among youth is high, with tuberculosis (TB) and HIV emerging

as the leading causes of death among all youth in the country and violence and traffic accidents for young men. Young people have the agency and capacity to find lasting solutions to these and other challenges facing communities across the country.

In South Africa, completing any post-schooling qualification significantly improves prospects in labour market participation, economic inclusion and poverty reduction, while intermediary skills reduce income inequalities. However, formal education and training systems often do not reach marginalised youth or cater to young women, rural or indigenous youth, or youth with physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities, leaving them without the skills needed to realize their potential or aspirations. This calls attention to the importance of leaving no youth behind and finding new and innovative ways to provide all youth with the hard and soft skills and training necessary for today's labour market. Quality education includes a comprehensive pedagogical curriculum complemented by vocational, formal, informal, and non-formal education opportunities and skills development. As an essential element in eradicating poverty and hunger, quality education should embrace the diversity of youth livelihoods and, in so doing, address gender inequalities and the needs of marginalized and vulnerable youth.

Gender-based violence is a significant impediment to the education of girls and young women, as it affects education attendance and attainment and undermines overall health and well-being at all levels of development. Children with disabilities have a lower probability of entering and staying in education than those without disabilities. Among youth living with disabilities, dropout and illiteracy rates are disproportionately high, and relatively few progress to upper secondary and tertiary education. Children and youth with mental and intellectual impairments are especially disadvantaged.

Many social determinants inform the high disease burden among young people in South Africa. These social determinants include various intersecting issues such as inadequate water and sanitation, a suboptimal food environment, high alcohol and substance abuse levels, and inadequate health-system response.

What is the
AGENDA OF AGENDAS?

In this section, we will be looking at a number of global, national and regional policies and frameworks developed as clear guidelines for decision-making in addressing society's development needs.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: AGENDA 2030

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of goals and initiatives designed to improve the lives of all people. They were set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by 2030. The SDGs were developed as the future global development framework to succeed the Millennium Development Goals, which ended in 2015. The SDGs offer an opportunity to address the critical issues facing the youth today. It does this directly through the following SDG goals:

SDG1 **NO POVERTY:** end poverty in all its forms everywhere

SDG2 **ZERO HUNGER:** End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

SDG3 **GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING:** ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages

SDG4 **QUALITY EDUCATION:** ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

SDG5 **GENDER EQUALITY:** achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

SDG8 **DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all

SDG10 **REDUCED INEQUALITIES:** reduce inequality within and among countries

SDG16 **PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justices for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

As indicated above, Sustainable Development Goal 4 is about ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all quality education. Given the context of youth development challenges outlined in South Africa, the achievement of this goal is central to expanding the knowledge and skills of young people in order for them to improve their opportunities for decent employment, thereby addressing one of the most pressing socio-economic issues facing the country. Sustainable Development Goal 8 is equally important in this regard as it sets out to promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. Any intervention seeking to address issues facing South Africa's youth today must be aligned with these and other priorities set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_Development_Goals#cite_note-2

AGENDA 2063

Agenda 2063 is the African continent's strategic framework for inclusive and sustainable development. The agenda provides a roadmap of how the continent intends to achieve the vision for "An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena". The goals of Agenda 2063 are to transform the nations of the continent into democratic, peaceful and innovative powerhouses that aim to be global players in the next 50 years. Included in Agenda 2063 are what are known as the Seven Aspirations. These objectives encompass all the goals of Agenda 2063 and are crucial to the agenda's success. The aspirations are as follows:

- A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development

- An integrated continent politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of African Renaissance

- An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law

- A peaceful and secure Africa

- Africa with a strong cultural identity common heritage, values and ethics

- An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by the African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children

- An Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner

https://borgenproject.org/the-seven-aspirations-africas-progress-on-agenda-2063/

THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The National Development Plan was adopted in 2012 as South Africa's long-term vision and essentially provided a broad strategic framework to guide key choices and actions for the country's development. The overarching goal of the National Development Plan is the eradication of poverty and inequality by the year 2030. The plan presents a long-term strategy to increase employment and broaden opportunities through education, vocational training and work experience, public employment programmes, health and nutrition, public transport and access to information. Below are key actions towards achieving the goals of the National Development Plan:

- A social compact to reduce poverty and inequality and raise employment and investment.

- A strategy to address poverty and its impacts by broadening access to employment, strengthening the social wage, improving public transport and raising rural incomes.

- Steps by the state to professionalise the public service, strengthen accountability, improve coordination and prosecute corruption.

- Boost private investment in labour-intensive areas, competitiveness and exports, with adjustments to lower the risk of hiring younger workers.

- An education accountability chain with lines of responsibility from the state to the classroom.

- Phase in national health insurance, focusing on upgrading public health facilities, producing more health professionals and reducing the relative cost of private health care.

- Public infrastructure investment at 10 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), financed through tariffs, public-private partnerships, taxes and loans and focused on transport, energy and water.

- Interventions to ensure environmental sustainability and resilience to future shocks.

- New spatial norms and standards – densifying cities, improving transport, locating jobs where people live, upgrading informal settlements and fixing housing market gaps.

- Reduce crime by strengthening criminal justice and improving community environments.

https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/Executive%20Summary-NDP%202030%20-%20 Our%20future%20-%20make%20it%20work.pdf

THE NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

The National Youth Policy 2020-2030 is a cross-sectoral policy that affects positive youth development outcomes for young people in South Africa. The National Youth Policy has been developed to facilitate the positive, holistic development of young people. The policy identifies the potential inherent in young people as the untapped potential to be harnessed for the public good. The policy further highlights the importance of enhancing the capacity of young people to transform the economy and the country. The policy asserts that South Africa has made gains in promoting access to education and training, as seen in the improving educational attainment outcomes.

However, it is concerning that only about 52% of 24-year-olds in the country have completed Grade 12, which is quite low compared to 70% in most developing countries. As outlined above, access to education and training plays a significant role in empowering youth to meaningfully participate in society. In light of this, more still needs to be done to ensure that young people take their rightful place in communities as active citizens with agency and the capacity to drive meaningful change. Youth are integral to policy planning, design and implementation to ensure that governments are responsive to their needs. Given that youth constitute the majority of the population in South Africa engaging them meaningfully in the drafting, implementation and review of the youth policy can only have positive outcomes for the country's development agenda.

The National Youth Policy identifies the following as persistent challenges affecting young people:

- High drop-out rates and low transition from school to work

- Low skills levels and skills mismatch

- Endemic and structural youth unemployment as well as the low entrepreneurial spirit

- Poor physical and mental health outcomes

- Untapped cultural and creative industries

- Eroding social fibre and active citizenry

- Inadequately resourced youth development and poorly coordinated services

The National Youth Policy has these five priority areas

◼ **QUALITY EDUCATION, SKILLS AND SECOND CHANCES**

◼ **ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND JOB CREATION**

◼ **PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION**

◼ **SOCIAL COHESION AND NATION-BUILDING**

◼ **EFFECTIVE AND RESPONSIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MACHINERY**

https://www.gov.za/documents/national-youth-policy-2020-2030-5-mar-2021-0000

THE AFRICAN YOUTH CHARTER

The African Youth Charter provides a strategic framework for youth empowerment and development activities at the continental, regional and national levels across Africa. It addresses key issues affecting youth, including employment, sustainable livelihoods, education, skills development, health, youth participation, national youth policy, peace and security, law enforcement, youth in the Diaspora and youth with disabilities. The Charter provides an avenue for effective youth participation in the development process. It defines youth as people between the ages of 15-35 years. It was developed after research was conducted on the state of the African Youth, commissioned by the African Union Commission. Article 12 of the African Youth Charter states that every state party should develop a comprehensive and coherent national youth policy.

https://au.int/en/treaties/african-youth-charter

INTEGRATED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Integrated Youth Development Strategy provides an all-sector programme of action for youth development. It also enables the state organs to fulfil the legal requirement of factoring in youth development in their planning, and it fosters a uniform approach to youth development. The NYDA, with the support of the Office of the Presidency, is in a position to create the political will and momentum within Government to allow the IYDS to gain the traction required for successful implementation. The opportunity to influence what other Departments are doing in the youth development space must be driven strongly by both the NYDA and the Presidency.

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Integrated Development Plan is used in local municipalities in South Africa to plan future development in their areas. An Integrated Development Plan is a plan for a municipality that gives an overall framework for development (highlighting what is needed and what will be done). It further aims to coordinate the work of local and other spheres of government in a coherent plan to improve the quality of life for all the people living in the municipality. Chapter 7 of the Constitution, as part of the objectives of local government, encourages the involvement of communities in local government matters. In terms of participation in local government affairs, the Integrated Development Plan represents an important platform for young people to shape and address the affairs of their own communities.

https://www.etu.org.za/toolbox/docs/localgov/webidp.html

Notes

"YOUNG PEOPLE NEED TO HAVE A BROADENED AND DEEPENED UNDERSTANDING OF THE AGENDA AND SCOPE OF THE VARIOUS FRAMEWORKS INTENDED TO ADDRESS DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES FACING THEIR COMMUNITIES."

Conclusion

Across the globe, young people continue to grapple with interminable socio-economic challenges, including poverty, unemployment and disease, despite efforts from various public, private and civil society actors to address youth development challenges at various levels of society.

Various global, regional, and national policy frameworks have historically played an important role in informing these efforts to address the challenges facing young people in particular and society in general. The inclusion of youth in the planning, design and execution of these frameworks can empower them to shape their own futures.

With this in mind, young people need to have a broadened and deepened understanding of the agenda and scope of the various frameworks intended to address development challenges facing their communities.

Beyond this, we must strengthen the agency and capacity of young people to play an active role in ensuring that the intended outcomes of these frameworks are achieved.

In addition, coordinated civic education programmes that empower especially young people to participate in democratic spaces and political processes are not sufficient. It is therefore critical to engage young people running up to and following the elections (throughout the electoral cycle).

Young people must register to vote, understand the election process, be able to engage with political parties' election manifestos, and vote for the party and individuals that best represents their interests and concerns.

They also need to have the skills, knowledge and motivation to engage both political and government representatives on their promises post the elections and continuously work specifically with local government actors and structures to collectively address the challenges that they face.

CONCLUSION

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