Bridging the Accountability Gap: Applying assed-based and citizen-led development in Emfuleni, South Africa

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Table of Contents

Abstract

This research project aims to gain an understanding of how to institutionalise the Asset-Based and Citizen-Led Development (ABCD) approach as an innovative means of promoting active citizen engagement along with local-level social accountability in Emfuleni Local Municipality, Gauteng Province in South Africa. Building on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA)'s work in three wards of Emfuleni, the research tested the assumption that an ABCD approach offers a structural and transformative process by fostering a more participatory, inclusive, responsive, and equitable local government planning process. Four research methods were applied at various stages of the research project, namely: WhatsApp group discussions; ABCD orientation workshops; multi-stakeholder dialogues and the Community Scorecard (CSC) method.

Despite many challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and lack of full commitment of some officials, it is evident that an ABCD approach can bridge the public participation divide between citizens and the local government to improve service delivery in Emfuleni. To reach government with a more direct engagement strategy, the research team introduced an ABCD-informed Community Scorecard (CSC) method to create a space for constructive dialogue, engagement, and accountability between Emfuleni communities and local municipal officials around the quality of participation in the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) processes. A joint action plan and a nominated steering team consisting of local citizens and Emfuleni Local Municipality officials were established to monitor and push for the implementation of the process.

Acknowledgments

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Preface

By Johan Lilja, Secretary General, Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy

The mandate of the Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD) is to contribute to poverty reduction by promoting local democracy. In order to fulfil this mandate, we promote and encourage decentralised cooperation through our municipal partnership programme; capacity-building through our international training programmes; and investing in relevant research and creating important research networks. ICLD documents and publishes key lessons learned from our ongoing activities, initiates and funds relevant research, engages in scholarly networks, connects relevant researchers with practitioners, and organises conferences and workshops. We also maintain a publications series. '*Bridging the Accountability Gap: Applying Asset-Based and Citizen-Led Development in Emfuleni, South Africa*' is the 25th report to be published in ICLD's Research Reports series. This is a result from the research project that was financed by ICLD.

This report presents empirical research conducted during the pandemic, 2020-2021, in Emfuleni, South Africa. The research team talked to a wide variety of stakeholders, including community members, councillors, officials, local NGOs, and students to better understand the effects of the so-called Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach.

The case of Emfuleni, as a locality facing vast challenges to meet its service delivery mandate, is far from unique in contemporary South Africa. For me, that is why we need more of this type of research: We both need to understand *why* local governments fail to deliver and *how* the situation can be improved. It is refreshing to see that this research project is especially focusing the solutions and ways to improve the democratic deficit that permeate many local governments.

This research report concludes that the ABCD approach promotes citizens willingness to "work with the municipality" and refrain from being "passive participants and mere observers" of local decision-making. It shows that the approach promotes citizen participation and improves accountability. This is an important result which deserves to be disseminated and spread to other local governments, potentially from other country-contexts.

As a final remark, I believe that for us to fight poverty and reach the ambitious goals set out by Agenda 2030, change must be anchored at the local level through the involvement of all citizens by means of transparency, participation, and accountability. I hope that this research will contribute to inspire and inform local policymakers to continue the important, and at the same time challenging, work in making the world a better place for all.

Visby, Sweden, April 2023

Johan Lilja
Secretary General, ICLD

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

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RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Introduction

The transformation of South African (SA) local government was purportedly meant to close the inequality gap in terms of access to efficient and quality basic services to the poor and marginalized communities, as endorsed in various legislative and policy documents (Malemane & Nel-Sanders, 2021). Local government is deemed as an ideal and relevant local level structure to provide equitable and accessible basic services to all citizens (Meyer & Meyer, 2016). However, basic services provided to all citizens remain poor and inaccessible, failing to meet the set transformative legislative and policy guidelines (Mbandlwa & Mishi, 2020).

Numerous factors affecting local government's capacity to deliver basic services have been reported, such as socio-political instability and lack of public participation (Mbandlwa & Mishi, 2020). Such factors include lack of leadership skills, top-down approaches, and non-responsiveness of leaders (Malemane & Nel-Sanders, 2019), as well as lack of monitoring and evaluation in planning and implementation of services (Kanyane, 2014). Furthermore, lack of trust, corruption, misuse of funds and poor coordination of services (Msenge & Nzewi, 2020) have had a significant effect on delivery. These challenges have sparked violent protests by citizens in demand for quality and efficient basic service delivery, which point to lack of public participation in local government and lack of mechanisms for citizens to hold local government accountable (Malemane & Nel-Sanders, 2019; Meyer & Meyer, 2016; Msenge & Nzewi, 2021; Shava & Mubangizi, 2019).

Studies conducted in the area show that Emfuleni municipality is ranked lower in terms of the Municipal Productivity Index[1] as compared with the Midvaal municipality, although both municipalities are in the Sedibeng District Municipality in south Johannesburg (Meyer & Meyer, 2016). Findings from Mukwevho and Mtapuri's (2014) study show service delivery challenges on the side of the municipality and the community such as lack of accountability, shifting blame, lack of monitoring and evaluation, lack of skills, poor relationships, and lack of feedback. As a result, service delivery collapsed, with the consequence being that

Emfuleni was put under administration.
In a context where the local municipality is under administration and where there is a lack of accountability, feedback and skills, lack of monitoring and evaluation and poor relationships (Mukwevho & Mtapuri, 2014), multi-stakeholder dialogues are important to create a platform for engagement between local politicians and government officials, community members and local partners. This project therefore focuses on integrated development planning processes as a mechanism to promote public participation in service delivery and in development planning processes to ensure provision of responsive, equitable and quality basic services (Meyer & Meyer, 2016; Mukwevho & Mtapuri, 2014).

All local governments are required to engage with citizens, strengthen and support community leadership and build sustainable relationships with the communities they serve (Municipality Systems Act, 2000). It is evident that through ABCD local government authorities strengthen the relationships with the people they serve, encourage cross community collaboration, build local capacity, support emerging community leaders to explore how power is shared and active citizenship is encouraged (Brooks, Miller & Dunscombe, 2021). ABCD is a globally adopted approach that recognises and builds on the strengths, gifts, talents and resources of individuals and communities to create strong, inclusive, and sustainable communities (Nel, Louw, Schenck and Skhosana, 2021; Nel, 2018).

Drawing on the ABCD literature, Kretzmann, and McKnight in Agdal, Midtgård and Meidell (2019) are of the view that local development can be successful when there is more focus on people's strengths and capacities, rather than focusing on the deficits and needs. We drew on the ABCD approach because it uses participatory strategies that enable inclusion and provide opportunities for people to discover their potential (Agdal, Midtgård & Meidell, 2019). Taking an active role to increase communication and understanding the needs and opportunities within municipality provides a platform for strong foundations and

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1 Price Water Coopers (2011-2022) defines Municipal Performance Index is a detailed benchmarking tool that measures performance in SA local government across more than 1,000 data points spread across the three major area: socio-economic, service delivery and governance.

greater economic prosperity, liveability, and creativity (Brooks, Miller & Dunscombe, 2021). It is within this background that this project explored how the ABCD approach can be applied to promote social accountability and inclusive governance, through citizens' active participation in local government's Integrated Development Planning processes.

Aims and objectives

The research project aims to gain an understanding of how the ABCD approach can be used to promote active participation of citizens in the integrated development processes in Emfuleni Local government. The main research question was: How can the ABCD approach enable citizen participation in integrated development and planning processes in Emfuleni local government?

Research Design and Methodology

The project used qualitative research methods (Singer et al., 2020) within a participatory action research (PAR) design (Sendall et al., 2018). The cyclical processes of PAR, namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, were applied with the aim of ensuring that participants are at the centre of the research cycle as much as possible, and that all stakeholders generated the data necessary to inform their own planning and accountability requirements (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon, 2014).

The ABCD approach formed the conceptual framework of the study. This framework places emphasis on people's strengths, capacities, skills, and knowledge, as well as on the social connections between individuals and within communities as the key assets for successful community-driven development. The ABCD approach uses tools and methods that can be used to promote citizen participation, inclusive governance and social accountability in public planning and decision-making (Fourie, 2020) and focuses on the achievements and successes of the past rather than

the deficiencies, needs and challenges (Ho, Labrecque, Batonon, Salsi & Ratnayake, 2015).

The PAR approach enabled the team to conduct field-work with a diverse group of participants that included Emfuleni citizens and municipality officials including community development workers; politicians (councillors, Office of the Speakers) and students from the Vaal University Technology (VUT) in various stages of the research process. Because of the flexible nature of the research design, the community of Waterdal which emerged through collaboration with the NGO partner (Plan Act) was also included in the last phases of the research process. The organisation's focus is mainly on areas of integrated human settlements and participatory governance, social facilitation, capacity development, research and advocacy, and networking.

The research project was carried out by a research team which comprised of stakeholders from the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), Emfuleni Local Municipality officials, doctoral students and researchers from the Department of Social Work and Community Development at the University of Johannesburg.

Data gathering methods and activities

We conducted our fieldwork between August 2020 and March 2022. The methods and activities are described below. The sequence of the research methods according to timelines are summarised in table below.

RESEARCH REPORT │ BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
│ CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

DATE	SEQUENCE OF PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH METHODS
AUG TO SEPT 2020	01/08/20 to 30/09/20 WhatsApp Group Discussions
NOV 2020	20 – 22/11/20 Participatory Data Analysis
	27/11/20 WhatsApp Group Discussion Feedback to ELM Officials
	28/11/20 WhatsApp Group Discussion Feedback to Bophelong Community
FEB 2021	18-19/02/21 Orientation of Community Development Workers (CDWs) on the ABCD approach and application of ABCD principles in project implementation and support
JUNE 2021	30/06/21 1st Virtual Orientation session of ELM officials on dialogues
JULY 2021	07/07/21 2nd Virtual Orientation session of ELM officials on dialogues
AUG 2021	06/08/21 3rd Face to Face ELM officials' orientation and preparation for dialogues
	12/08/21 Orientation of ELM officials on the ABCD Approach
	26/08/21 Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue with ELM Official, Bophelong Community and Vaal University of Technology
DEC 2021	08/12/21 ELM Officials - ABCD Orientation
MARCH 2022	10/03/22 Community Scorecard Orientation – ELM officials, Bophelong & Waterdal Communities, Research Team, Coady Institute
	11/03/22 Community Scorecard Training – ELM officials, Bophelong & Waterdal Communities, Research Team, Coady Institute
	14/03/22 ABCD-CSC Dialogue Facilitation – Bophelong Community
	15/03/22 ABCD-CSC Dialogue Facilitation – Waterdal Community: Morning and ELM Officials: Afternoon
	16/03/22 ABCD-CSC Interface Dialogue with all stakeholders and development of the Joint Action Plan
	17/03/22 Reflective Analysis– Research Team

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

The WhatsApp focus group discussions

We used WhatsApp mobile communication technology which enables individual and group conversations via images, text, voice notes and videos (Singer et al., 2020) to collect data. Literature has shown that this mobile technology has been used in public health research and during the Covid-19 pandemic and is deemed as a cost-effective way of collecting data with a diverse group of participants and provides space for inclusive discussions (Neo, Lim, Tan & Ee Ong, 2022). While our research project examines social accountability and inclusive governance, it was crucial, as a first step, to examine the impact of Covid-19 on the lives of citizens. The objective was to understand how participants used their capacities and strengths to deal with the unexpected life-threatening challenges posed by the Covid -19 pandemic at individual, family, community, ward, and local government level.

Three facilitators from the research team facilitated the WhatsApp group discussions with 21 participants between August and September 2020 (six in Ward 6; eight in Ward 7 and six in Ward 23). Participants who had the WhatsApp application in their mobile phones and who were willing to be included in the group discussions were invited to take part and were also supported with data. At the end of each group discussion, facilitators engaged participants in reflective sessions on their (participants') responses that relate to citizen participation at the ward and local level in Emfuleni. This was important to align the analysis of the data with the main aim of the study.

The ABCD orientation workshops

As explained above under the research design and methodology, the Asset-Based and Citizen-Led Development (ABCD) approach formed the conceptual framework of the study. This framework places emphasis on people's strengths, capacities, skills, and knowledge, as well as on the social connections between individuals and within communities as the key assets for successful community-driven development. According to Lloyd and Randle

(2020), using the ABCD approach in local government planning-processes can ideally promote public participation, and create enabling environments for collaborative partnerships and promote transparency.

Eight ABCD workshops were held with different stakeholders in different phases of the project between August 2020 and December 2021 in Emfuleni. Prior to conducting the ABCD workshops, we introduced the research project to different stakeholders to gain support. A total of 43 Emfuleni officials (20 males and 23 females) and 49 community members (35 females and 14 males) from Bophelong and Waterdal were orientated on the ABCD approach.

During workshops, we did not only document the content of workshop discussions, but we also made observations of participants' interactions and took pictures of observed events and captured stories from participants in group discussion and interactive feedback sessions. The findings from the workshops also fed into the dialogues where questions were developed to explore further how citizen participation and the ABCD approach can be promoted in the integrated development planning and decision-making processes in Emfuleni local government. We also provided an opportunity to get reflective feedback from participants at the end of the workshops and this provided an opportunity for collaborative interpretation and understanding of the phenomenon. A facilitation workshop guide was developed and included the following questions:

i. What is your understanding of the ABCD approach?
ii. What are the key roles of citizens in an effective local government system?
iii. What are the existing platforms for public participation in Emfuleni local municipality?
iv. How effective are the platforms in promoting active citizen participation?
v. How can the ABCD approach enhance the effectiveness of the platforms you have mentioned?

Additionally, the ABCD orientation workshops included a presentation on the Leaky bucket tool[2] to enable

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2   In this ABCD workshop context, the leaky bucket represents Emfuleni local municipality. It consists of inflows of money into the municipality, households and other institutions located within the local municipality. The holes in the Emfuleni bucket represent the leakages of money out of the local municipality that affect the local economic development.

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

participants to understand the importance of analysing their local community economy in Emfuleni. The leaky bucket is an educational community economic analysis tool that consists of a bucket into which resources flow that has holes of different sizes, showing the amount of the resources flowing out and helping the community to identify ways and means of managing the outflows to circulate the resources in the community to grow the local economy (Cunningham, 2011).

The participatory multi-stakeholder dialogues

Three non-threatening dialogues were facilitated by the research team between July and August 2021 to engage citizens and Emfuleni officials openly to discuss the challenges affecting inclusive citizen participation which emerged from WhatsApp group findings and face- to- face workshops. These dialogues were important to foster productive conversations and engagement through a facilitated process (Crankshaw, Kriel, Milford et al. 2019) to gain an in-depth understanding of the problem and solutions thereof from both citizens and Emfuleni officials. The facilitated interactive multi-stakeholder dialogues explored social accountability and inclusive citizen participation in integrated development planning and decision-making processes.

Social accountability is defined as a strategy that is beyond voting that involves a range of actions and strategies used by government, civil society, media, and other societal actors that facilitate the process to hold the government accountable (Malena and McNeil in the World Bank, 2010, p. 1). Within the context of this project, social accountability is deemed as a strategy through which public officials are expected to work according to the democratically and transformed public policies to render equitable services to the local citizens (Manamela, 2021). The questions that were asked to explore how citizen participation and social accountability in this context were as follows:

    i. How is the municipality promoting public participation in local governance Integrated development planning and decision-making processes?

ii. How effective are the integrated development planning forums and ward committees for citizen participation in Emfuleni?
iii. What are the challenges to promoting citizen participation in planning and decision-making processes at community and municipal level?
iv. What actions have been taken to address the challenges mentioned?
v. What strengths and opportunities exist to strengthen public participation in planning and decision-making processes at community and municipal levels?
vi. How can these strengths and opportunities be accessed to promote citizen participation in planning and decision-making processes at community and municipal levels?

The participatory ABCD–informed Community Scorecard (CSC) dialogues

The research team together with participants agreed that a more direct engagement strategy was required between the citizens and Emfuleni officials. The ABCD-informed community scorecard was introduced and was used to engage citizens and Emfuleni officials in dialogue regarding public participation in the IDP process, and to co-design and propose priority actions for improvement. The community scorecard is a social accountability tool that is grounded in a rights-based approach to building accountability between citizens/service users and providers as per established standards, rights, and entitlements (Sanchez-Betancourt & Vivier, 2019). Integrated development planning in South Africa is a process through which municipalities, together with their community members, compile collaboratively strategic plans for municipalities (CARE, 2013).

The purpose of the ABCD adapted community scorecard tool was to create a dialogue environment where the citizens and officials can engage in a participatory and constructive manner to find joint solutions and priority actions address challenges of promoting active citizenship participation and decision making in the integrated development planning processes in Emfuleni. IDP is a coordinating, synergistic legal instrument for municipalities and has been a key strategy for the evolution and

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

development of the post-1994 local government dispensation (Moeti, 2016). The CSC dialogues were conducted over three days Waterdal between 14-16 March 2022 with two community groups (one from Bophelong and one from Waterdal), and with a group of officials of the Emfuleni Local Municipality. Embedding the ABCD principles in the CSC process meant recognising that alongside rights and entitlements, citizens had responsibilities and assets to contribute to the co-creation of public services (and in this study, of public planning) (Ho, Labrecque, Batonon, Salsi & Ratnayake (2015). The ABCD approach was purposefully applied during all the steps of the process.

Data Collection and Analysis Methods

The above-mentioned dialogue and reflective data gathering methods were used to triangulate the data in different phases of the project. In the process, notes from participants' stories were captured, and pictures of observed events were taken with participants' consent. All data from these sources were incorporated in the data analysis process to support the findings and to enhance the reliability of the study findings. Saturation of data were reached in using the different methods over three years (Fusch, Fush & Ness, 2018).

The data was thematically analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2006) through a participatory process. The analysis process comprised of a diverse team which included researchers and stakeholders with different skills and orientations. The purpose was to gain an in-depth understanding of the problem by analysing and interpreting the data from different lenses (Fusch, Fush & Ness, 2018).

The process provided an opportunity for a thorough, and careful data analysis process to ensure rigour (Liebenberg, Jamal & Ikeda, 2020). Consensus was reached on the findings from each phase of the project by all research team members. Similarly, we presented the findings of the data from various phases of the research process to participants and key stakeholders to verify the findings (Denzin 1989, in Fush, Fusch & Ness, 2018, p. 20).

Data management

Data management is an important aspect in research that encompass human subjects' protection, confidentiality, data storage and record keeping, data ownership, and data sharing. In this project, these ethical principles were adhered to by storing the data in secure computer files with backups to prevent its loss and to ensure confidentiality, privacy, protection, and respect. It was only made available to the research team and was stored in an organized and accurate form for possible re-use in the future (Antonio, Schick-Makaroff, Doiron, Sheilds, White & Molzahn, 2020).

Community Preparations

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Research Findings

The findings are presented according to the data gathering methods used in the study that included WhatsApp group discussions, ABCD orientation workshops and multi-stakeholder and the ABCD-informed CSC dialogues.

Findings from the WhatsApp group discussions

The main question that was asked in the WhatsApp group discussions that aligns with the research aim was on how Covid -19 affected participants at the community, ward, and local level. The analysis of the WhatsApp group discussion data showed the lack of participation of ward committees in the integrated development planning and decision-making making processes. According to Mamokhere and Meyer (2022), poor public participation in integrated development processes affects service delivery in local municipalities and this is partly due to corruption and mismanagement. This was evident from the WhatsApp group responses especially from some participants who held positions as ward committees. Their response show that they have not been actively involved in executing their roles and that these were and restricted to advisory roles.

Our role as ward committees, as presented at our workshops, we are advisors- but in terms of projects [Integrated development planning), we are not so much involved

The findings further show that corruption affects the integrated development processes, and the result thereof is that services are not delivered to citizens.

Emfuleni Local Municipality is not implementing what they say because of the current affairs [corruption and that Emfuleni Local Municipality is under administration] of the municipality...'

Noting from the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), a ward committee is regarded as the statutory structure that is recognised by the municipal council as its consultative body and communication channel on matters affecting the ward, including, but not limited to:

i. representing the community on the compilation and implementation of the Integrated Development Plan.
ii. ensuring constructive and harmonious interaction between the municipality and the community.
iii. attending to all matters that affect and benefit the community.
iv. acting in the best interest of the community, and
v. ensuring active participation of the community in the municipality's budgetary process.

Findings from the ABCD orientation workshops

The findings from the workshops group discussions were analysed and interpreted using an ABCD lens. Participants shared stories on their self-initiated projects that they were already doing to address their local challenges that were already existing prior to the Covid-19 and lockdown regulations and were worsened by the pandemic. From the stories we heard, we are of the view that the success of the ABCD approach was as a result of prior orientation of some of the citizens who were already driving their self-driven projects and that some unsustainable projects were due to lack of support and lack of knowledge on the ABCD approach. Participants reported that some projects were unsustainable due to empty promises and lack of support for their projects by Emfuleni local government and from lack of knowledge about ABCD approach by some community members who probably may have been working in this project.

On analysis and interpretation of the participants stories within the ABCD lens, we were of the view that some of them who may have had prior knowledge of the ABCD approach became aware of the economic opportunities and worked collectively to use their talents to drive their self-initiated project.

Some youth grouped themselves ... and started making masks and sold them. Some realised

RESEARCH REPORT │ BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

that they have a talent to sew...the lady in our street who is sewing to help her to make masks and made about 100 to 150 and the business is flourishing, and the lady is teaching them to sew school uniforms and not just masks.... they have realized that they have greater talent, and the business is growing

In the same breath, participants shared a story on how they worked collectively to mobilize themselves and come up with solutions to address the challenges that they faced due to lack of resources from Emfuleni local government to render basic services for refuse collection.

> `We approached the Emfuleni to assist with a truck to pick up the garbage where we drop it – it was also a challenge because the truck collected for a while but stopped and we do not know why. So, we were faced with a problem of what to do with the garbage – the place where it is dropped for collection is full in the township. We collect garbage every Monday and Friday supported by the R5 contributions from the community. We had to contribute again to rent a truck to collect the garbage. We are cleaning the dumping site, but we do not have enough material to use and the tools to work. Where there are households that cannot contribute because of their financial situation, they are covered by those who can afford.*

Participants reflections on the ABCD orientation workshops

At the end each session, facilitators provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on the key lessons that they learned from the workshop. The reflective responses show some positive views about the ABCD approach and some suggestions on how to motivate and show others that the ABCD can enable them to address their local challenges.

The ABCD approach will improve the knowledge and

skills and change the mindset of officials and communities.

Promoting awareness that people should use what they have in order to change their own circumstances and that they must not be dependent on government, they must use their skills and assets is an eye opener.

The approach can work through collaboration and effective engagement of communities in community-based plans.

Sharing positive stories where ABCD was implemented successfully to motivate others.

There needs to be a shift on using the 'language' that puts emphasis on peoples 'needs' to a language that puts emphasis on people as assets.

Findings from the multi-stakeholder dialogues

The participatory multi-stakeholder dialogues focussed on how public participation is promoted in the integrated development planning and decision-making processes and the effectiveness thereof in promoting public participation. The findings show a range of challenges to public participation and perspectives about its effectiveness, as well as the actions taken to address the challenges mentioned.

Public participation in integrated development planning processes

Public participation processes require active involvement of local citizens in the planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and decision-making processes of a public policy, programme or project that affects them (Andre et al. 2016 in Malemane & Nel-Sanders, 2019). Additionally, meaningful public participation is a crucial ingredient of democratization, local governance, and sustainable development (Sibanda & Lues, 2021), factors which are echoed in the UNDPs Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Dube, Mnguni & Tschudin, 2021).

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Participants were asked about how the municipality is promoting public participation in local governance integrated development planning and decision-making processes. The multi-stakeholder dialogue findings show some barriers to public participation- such as lack of communication and involvement in the planning and decision-making processes, empty promises made by officials, unavailability of officials and irregular meetings held by officials.

'…The Emfuleni does not communicate with the community, and they are making their own decisions. They call us only when they need something from us but when we need them, they are not available. They just come with empty promises - they do not deliver adequate services to the community….

On the other hand, some participants stated that public participation is promoted through ward committees, and they felt that their voices were heard.

We are participating through the ward councillor meetings. Whatever was concluded in the meeting, the ward councillor must write it in her report and take it to the municipality.

In terms of Emfuleni responses, public participation in integrated development planning is promoted, to a certain extent, via stakeholder and community involvement, election of councillors and ward committees. The findings further show that it is through these mechanisms that the citizens are informed about the integrated develop planning and the budget and where the citizens are expected to give a *wish list* of the things they need. Additionally, ward councillors[3] are expected to provide a written report to inform IPDs which, from participants' responses, may not have been validated by the citizens.

'There are ward committee members with different government portfolios who work hand in hand with the councillor – (there are ten portfolios). Ward committees are elected by the municipality to assist the councillors to collect data through ward profiling

and the councillor works through the ward committee to communicate with the community. The ward councillor calls a public meeting to give the community feedback about what is happening in the community. In public meetings, people are informed about the integrated development planning which cannot happen without the contribution by the community – that is why there is a "wish list" where the communities must outline all what is happening'.

Participants further highlighted some opportunities that they can leverage to improve communication and to build good working relationships.

If we get enough resources, we can promote public participation in our community. There must be a line of communication with Emfuleni so that we can be able to help where they need help, and they [Emfuleni] must stop making empty promises to the community so that we can build a better and strong relationship with our Emfuleni'… improve communication by utilizing our media houses such as Radio station, print pamphlets with information to be shared.

Effectiveness of integrated development planning forums and ward committees for public participation

Bophelong Community Meeting

In terms of how effective the integrated development planning forums and ward committees for public participation are, findings show that these are in fact not effec-

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3 Ward councillors are not municipal employees. They are citizens who are elected by citizens in a specific geographically defined ward within the municipality and are mandated as elected representatives to make sure that concerns related the people in their wards are represented on council in a transparent and accountable way (Peoples Assembly, 2021)

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

tive. Findings suggest that ward committees do not execute their roles to enable active participation of citizens in integrated development planning forums and this may be due to focusing more on receiving stipends which is a way through which execution of their roles is judged by municipal officials - as stated by municipal officials during dialogues.

> *We have effective ward committees- through monthly meetings and they take minutes which they submit to the office of the speaker before they get their stipends...*

Community participants' supporting responses on effectiveness to promote public participation in integrated development planning, are as follows:

> *'...The integrated develop planning forums and Ward Committees are not effective at all... as a result, there is no development. We do not even know our ward committees. They (Emfuleni) are calling meetings twice a year to tell us about the budget...'*

From the Emfuleni participants' response, there is some acknowledgement that citizen participation in integrated develop plannings is not effective. Whilst the "*wish lists*" are deemed as a potentially valuable approach to effective citizen participation, it appears there could be insufficient understanding within Emfuleni on the importance of citizens' voice in these processes, and that a top-down approach is a barrier to participation.

> *We have effective ward committees- through monthly meetings and they take minutes which they submit to the office of the speaker before they get their stipends....In other areas we know the integrated development planning is not happening, and communities complain that the integrated development planning has been imposed on them. the integrated development planning process must inform the Community Based Plans (CBP) which then informs the integrated development planning process....'....before the integrated development planning process, councillors are called to the office to confirm the projects that are in the integrated devel-*

> *opment planning document. Thereafter, the officials then combine the whole information, and the councillors are called to come and confirm before they go to the public.*

Additionally, the response from officials shows some shifting of responsibility towards citizens and perhaps to ward councillors because officials deem their role to facilitation of the integrated development planning process.

> *If the community does not know about the integrated development planning meetings, they should not blame the municipality, but the Emfuleni is just facilitating the process as directed by the ward councillors.*

While officials' responses were about 'blame', community participants response suggest that there could have been a change of mindset from blame to coming up with suggestions that can spark working relationships between citizens and officials to address service delivery challenges

> *If we can get enough resources, we can promote our community. We can start communicating with other community members for them to join us in the cleaning of our dumping site to ensure that we live in a clean community'.*

Findings from the ABCD-informed Community Scorecards (CSC) dialogues

The development of the ABCD informed community scorecard guide was based on the principles of the ABCD approach which is a conceptual framework on which this study is based. The main objective was to explore how the ABCD informed community scorecard can enable inclusive citizen participation, accountable partnerships and collective responsibility between the citizens and Emfuleni officials in local government integrated development planning and decision-making processes. After the orientation and training of facilitators on the ABCD-informed CSC process, the three stakeholder ABCD informed community scorecard dialogues were facilitated between 14 – 16 March 2022 with Bophelong and Waterdal community groups and Emfuleni officials.

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Participants understanding of the integrated development planning

The ABCD-informed CSC dialogues were facilitated by six community members and six members of the research team who were all trained by Julien Landry on 10- 11 March 2022. In all dialogues, facilitation began by exploring the participants understanding of the integrated development planning and the criteria for an ideal integrated development planning in Emfuleni. The reason behind this was that lack of citizen participation in integrated development planning and decision-making processes was the main common theme that emerged in all phases. The findings show the overlaps and different understandings of the integrated develop planning process by the three groups.

Bophelong participants understanding of integrated development planning

- *Integrated development planning its where councillors and mayors call all wards for a meeting to discuss the plans for the community and explain the budget (and not to be told about the budget which they did not take part in creating).*
- *Integrated development planning is supposed to work with people and hear them out.*
- *Integrated development planning should be an integrated conversation between municipality and the community with the councillor being the bridge between the two.*
- *Communities are supposed to identify issues which should be conveyed by the councillor to the municipality for action to be taken.*

Waterdal participants understanding of integrated development planning

- *Integrated development planning should bring the community and government together*
- *The integrated development planning should enhance community engagement and participation so that the government does not make decisions for the community without the community.*
- *The integrated development planning is a programme between the government and the community.*
- *The Integrated development planning is supposed to engage the government and the community to make sure that they both engage each other.*
- *The integrated development planning works when the community and the municipality work together to make a difference.*
- *Integrated development planning gains meaning through unity between the community and municipality.*

Emfuleni officials understanding of integrated development planning

- *The municipality needs to develop the plan for the new year and present the plan to the community; it is a five-year plan, involving public participation, gathering views every two years.*
- *Integrated development planning needs public consultation meetings to validate what has been approved and the communities' priorities are drawn during*
- *the integrated development planning process.*
- *The ward councillors submit "wish lists" from the community to the integrated development planning.*

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

The participants understanding of the integrated development plan in Emfuleni show some similarities in terms of consultation, and active engagement. The Bophelong highlighted key points relating to transparency of budget, development plans and information and inclusion of citizen voices while Waterdal highlighted unity and relationships. What is important to note is that the 'Wish list' was only mentioned by the municipality official group, and this has been noted in feedback sessions from municipality group in dialogues and workshops. This may therefore be a barrier to promoting active participation in integrated development planning in Emfuleni.

Criteria for an ideal integrated development planning in Emfuleni

The criteria for an ideal integrated development planning for Emfuleni articulated by the three groups, overlapped and complemented one another. All groups noted that the municipality and citizens must be engaged, should work cooperatively and be transparent in all the steps of the integrated development planning, which includes the budgeting processes. In addition, clear objectives and time frames are needed in the processes. The capacity-building of community members and the Emfuleni officials was highlighted in the discussions as important criteria for an ideal integrated development planning for Emfuleni. Officials referred to their own commitment to the integrated development planning as an aspect that needs attention, further noting that the integrated development planning will only be successful when the officials work in a conducive environment.

The findings show the overlaps and different understandings of the integrated develop planning process by the three groups. It is evident from the dialogue sessions that public participation and social accountability is lacking in the integrated development planning processes. Reasons behind this as stated by community participants are that they are only called to be informed about what has already been decided upon and to be asked to give 'wish lists' by the officials. According to Section 79 and 80 of the Municipal Structures Act 32 of 2000 in South Africa, municipalities are required to promote public participation and to ensure social

accountability in the integrated development planning processes (Shava & Mubangizi, 2019) and provide equitable services to the local citizens (Manamela, 2021).

As findings from the ABCD orientation workshops and dialogues show, citizens and municipal officials became aware of the importance of good working relationships and working collectively in partnerships with citizens and with other local stakeholders to draw their strengths and resources to promote public participation in integrated development planning process and to share positive stories of successful ABCD community driven projects. While these points cannot be reached overnight, the prevailing challenges cannot be ignored. However, the points raised by participants about an ideal integrated development planning and decision-making process can be used as starting point to address current challenges.

After the dialogue session, the facilitators engaged participants in a brief reflection on what they learned from this process and how they may apply what they learned in the future. Thereafter, 5-6 volunteers were invited to come and attend the interface meeting (Wednesday March 16) and one spokesperson among them to represent their group and explain their work.

Bophelong participants reflections on the ABCD informed community score dialogue process

- *Without communication, we will never understand each other as the government and the community.*
- *Whenever there are meetings like this, it must be my responsibility to attend.*
- *Unity is strength.*
- *I have learned that there is no municipality without the community and no community without municipality.*
- *Such meetings bring knowledge and mindset change for a better future.*
- *The dialogue meetings are important to refresh the mind and to bring in a better understanding of the concepts we do not understand.*

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

- *This is important to bring the community and municipality together.*
- *I am shocked that we have rated the municipality so low as there have been a good number of people attending the integrated development meetings. This shows me that the approach we have been using is not effective.*
- *My thinking before these dialogues was that the municipality should work alone but now, I understand that this is a relationship.*
- *I never personally used to attend IDP meetings as I always thought that its government people who are going to lie to us. However, I now understand that I should change my mindset to a positive one, to create this relationship between us as the community and the municipality.*

The Waterdal participants reflections on the ABCD informed community score dialogue process

- *I did not know what IDP is, but after this workshop. I now understand it and how it will represent us going forward.*
- *I did not know that I need to know the budget for my community.*
- *I thought that the counsellor should work alone, but I now know that there needs to be a ward committee and the municipality must engage the community.*
- *I now know that the counsellor should communicate with the community.*
- *I only knew IDP as an abbreviation, but now I understand it better.*
- *I did not know about Ward Committee elections but now that I am aware, I will participate.*
- *Waterdal is always neglected and not included, but I am glad that we are finally being included in such programmes.*
- *The community needs to be involved with the ward committee and the municipality.*

The Emfuleni officials reflections on the ABCD informed community score dialogue process

- *I have learned that there are a lot of things that are not being done correctly by the municipality which are always ignored.*
- *Lack of information sharing within departments and to community is a problem.*
- *There is a need for pre-planning.*
- *Importance of transparency and better communication.*
- *No idea on what Emfuleni is doing.*
- *Access to information is difficult.*
- *We are not supposed to be selfish to share information.*
- *Departments are supposed to have inter-departmental mechanisms to share information.*

Findings from the Interface CSC dialogue

After the three dialogue sessions, twenty-six participants who took part in the single CSC dialogues were elected from each group and were invited to attend the interface meeting on 16 March 2022 where one representative from each group presented their CSC dialogue findings and their five priority actions to promote participation in integrated development planning processes to the interface group. After all presentations were done, the interface meeting was facilitated by Julien and Sadi to enable the group to jointly consolidate the priority actions and identify important priority actions to be addressed and to develop a joint action plan and elect a steering group. The top five priority actions were then transferred onto a Joint Action Plan (see table below). The facilitators invited a representative from each dialogue meeting to present their findings to the overall group. The idea here was to understand how and why the priority actions were identified.

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

BOPHELONG	WATERDAL	EMFULENI
Establish clear communication channel between community and municipality	Ward committees to engage with IDP on budget allocations and provide feedback to the community	Staff properly trained for their roles/jobs
Attitude change on both community and municipality sides	Community representatives to engage with ward committee members	Improve internal communication (at municipality)
Communities trained so they can access opportunities/employment with inclusion criteria	Ward committees to facilitate CBP process	Ensure staff commitment to IDP meetings
Training on customer service/communication skills for front-line staff	Community awareness programs on IDP	Encourage communication directly with staff involved
Facilitate community members access to municipality and de-politicize participation opportunities	Council to announce the election of ward committees and the process involved	Leadership that offers opportunities for staff recognition and support

The five priority actions from each group were then consolidated into one list. The support team then handed out the DOTS for the voting round where they voted for the top four priority actions amongst the consolidated lists.

BOPHELONG GROUP	WATERDAL GROUP	EMFULENI GROUP
Training and capacity building of ward committee members and the community	Ensuring effective service delivery through integrated develop planning process through participatory monitoring	Engagement of communities and stakeholders throughout the integrated development planning process
Building good working relationships between the community and municipality	Training and capacity building community/citizen	ransparency in the decisions about the projects, action plans and resources
Promoting community involvement in all phases of integrated development planning	Training and capacity building of ward committee	Setting clear objectives and feasible timeframes
Integrated development planning to address people's needs.	Establishment of Ward committees	Creating a conducive environment in municipality

Thereafter, facilitators engaged participants to develop a plan of action through which these priorities will be addressed and to set time frames and roles.

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

	Priority action	Who will lead this action?	Types of actions to be taken and who will support the actions	By when?
1.	Ward committees engage communities on Community based plans (CBP) and budget processes to inform IDP and provide feedback	Ward committees	Municipality • Training of ward committees • Resources • Monitoring Community • Participate actively • Monitoring and evaluation (participatory) • Share information • Support ward committee members	Ongoing process
2.	Community awareness programs on IDP	Municipality Ward committee	Community • Participate actively in all steps • Demand IDP awareness • Mobilisation of community development workers	22 March 2022
3.	Establish clear communication channels between community and municipality, including ward committees in election process	Municipality • Ensure everybody is aware and registered with IEC Ward committee • Use different media channels	Include private sector input • Radios • Newspapers • Community development workers Ward committee • Use different media channels • Arrange quarterly public meetings • Heads of portfolios to form subcommittees according to extension	Ongoing process
4.	Training of staff and communities on roles, attitude change, and communication.	Municipality • Skills audit and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) reviewed, relevant and respond to current context and accredited	NGOS, Private sector Ward committees Heads of portfolio departments Community development workers	Ongoing process

After developing the action plan, the facilitators then invited volunteers to form a joint follow-up committee in Bophelong and Waterdal. The role of the committee is to support and monitor the implementation of the agreed action plan, meeting regularly to evaluate progress and overcome implementation obstacles, and report on progress in implementing the action plan. These plans seem feasible to implement despite the fact that the municipality is under administration.

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Interface Meeting

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The research project aim was to gain an understanding on how to institutionalise the ABCD approach as an innovative means of promoting active citizen engagement in integrated development planning processes to enable local-level social accountability. The findings from the WhatsApp group discussions, the ABCD orientation workshops, and the stakeholder dialogues show a lack of public participation in IDP processes due to a top-down approach from the Emfuleni Local Municipality. For example, integrated development plans (IDPs) are presented to the citizens for validation purposes only and through gathering "wish lists" of citizens' needs as a form of citizen engagement. In the dialogue sessions, Emfuleni officials stated that public participation is inhibited by factors such as some officials withholding information that should be communicated to citizens, poor working relationships and lack of trust amongst officials in the municipality and between officials and citizens. These findings are consistent with Binh and Giai (2021) study in Vietnam that investigated citizen participation in local governance. The authors further highlight the challenges to citizen participation in local governance is a global one. They recommend that promoting citizen participation in local governance need managers who are strategist and not technical staff and need interactive skills such as communication and facilitation. Although Emfuleni officials acknowledged the existence of these challenges for active citizen participation in integrated development planning processes, a need for participatory monitoring and evaluation thereof, is needed. However, the CSC method contributed constructively to the dialogue of Emfuleni officials and citizens and the development of a collaborative work plan.

The findings show that citizens and local officials that took took part in the WhatsApp group discussions, the ABCD orientation workshops, the multi-stakeholder dialogues, and the ABCD-informed CSC dialogues, became aware of the importance of working collaboratively within an ABCD framework to enable citizen participation in the integrated development plans. Participants saw the value of looking through a positive, asset and strengths-based lens rather than looking through a negative lens, blaming and accusing each other. The findings from the reflective responses after each dialogue session show that citizens and officials of Emfuleni became aware of the importance of active participation from both sides in the integrated development planning processes and the roles that they should play in the processes. From these reflections, participants became aware of transparency in planning and decision making that should be carried out according to the municipal rules and regulations and that information should be freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. Furthermore, transparency was deemed as an enabling factor for constructive engagement in dialogue and for building trust and successful collaboration to achieve the municipal mandate of promoting conducive environment for citizen participation in integrated development planning processes in Emfuleni.

The participatory action methods of the research project provided opportunities for the citizens and officials to collectively work towards finding solutions to address their local challenges with the assets they have. However, challenges do exist in implementing the joint action plan developed by the citizens and municipality officials during the ABCD-informed CSC interface meetings. Due to the partnership between the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) in this project, the ABCD approach has been used as a guide in designing the content for the induction program of ward committees. The Emfuleni Local Municipality office and CoGTA are currently motivating other units of the Emfuleni municipality to use the ABCD approach to promote participatory engagement with communities. It is envisaged that the ABCD-informed CSC steering team, local community structures and CoGTA will take action to ensure the buy-in and support of the developed action plan, by the newly elected Emfuleni officials. This can be an important step since evidence show that

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

there is growing interest in both the Global South and the Global North to pay special attention on mechanisms that can enable citizens to 'move from being simply "users or choosers" of public services policies made by others to "makers and shapers" of policies themselves' (Gaventa, 2004, p. 17).

Evidence of studies globally and locally showed the importance of participation of residents on local government level and specifically on the integrated development planning processes (Meyer, 2014; Malemane, & Nel-Sanders, 2021; Meyer & Meyer, 2016), but no studies were done on the ABCD-informed CSC method within context of the integrated development planning processes. This study is thus the first in this field. However, ABCD has been integrated on local government level in practice but no studies are found in this regard, except Brooks et al. (2021).

Conclusion

Based on the discussion of the findings from all phases of the project, it can be concluded that through the orientation of the ABCD approach, citizens are eager to work with the municipality and are not satisfied to be passive participants and mere observers in the integrated development planning (IDP) processes, as the IDPs have a great impact on their lives. The ABCD-informed CSC interface meeting enabled citizens and Emfuleni officials to realize the importance of the citizens' voices and roles in the integrated development planning (IDP) processes to promote social accountability. The ABCD approach alone cannot achieve social accountability, but when integrated with municipal public participation methods, it can promote awareness of the different range of assets that can be leveraged to meet the Emfuleni mandate of improved quality of basic services. However, political changes from the local municipal elections in October 2021 presented some setbacks because of the delays in the induction of the newly elected officials.

The rebuilding of relationships and the buy-in and support of the ABCD-informed CSC outcomes with new politicians, is therefore needed. We are of the view that our local project stakeholders who have been part of the process and the ABCD champions such as Mr Pulu from the Emfuleni Local Municipality, Ms Mahlase, a ward councillor and Mr Conrad Jardine, director of Public Participation from CoGTA will continue to build social support for public participation and social accountability using the ABCD approach. In addition, the plan that has been created by the officials in collaboration with citizens could be done while the municipality faces financial constraints.

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Recommendations

The integration of the ABCD lens into integrated development planning processes to promote public participation, has been demonstrated as a relevant and appropriate approach. This approach aims to empower citizens and Emfuleni officials jointly to leverage their assets in order to achieve the well-being of citizens through provision of quality basic services. Additionally, through the collaborative partnerships between CoGTA and Emfuleni Local municipality, the champions (Mr Conrad Jardine and Mr Pulu) have worked with two members of the research team (Ms Mfalatsane (Sadi) Motsuenyane and Dr Mpoe Keikelame) to conduct orientation workshops on the ABCD approach across the twelve municipalities, some local NGOs and Faith Based Organizations in Gauteng. The following actions are recommended:

- Creating political and administrative leadership awareness about the potential of the ABCD approach to promote inclusive democracy and strengthen social accountability to obtain strong leadership support to embed the approach in local government planning and service delivery systems.
- Consideration and support for citizen-driven solutions and innovations.
- Develop and support a technical and financial support model to incentivise and encourage citizen-driven and innovative solutions to address local challenges, promote people-centred partnerships and strengthen social accountability.
- Supporting the use of the ABCD informed Community Scorecard to promote public participation and accountability.
- Support the piloting of the ABCD informed Community Scorecard as a citizen-driven approach for the community to hold local government and itself accountable for service delivery and responsible utilization of services and co-produce solutions and joint action plans for service delivery improvement.
- Citizens using ABCD should showcase their successful self-driven asset-based community initiatives projects, and those in which they leveraged support from external stakeholders and from the local municipality. Consequently, citizens should share the lessons that they learned, which led to the success of projects, those that inhibited the process, and how the barriers were addressed.
- There is a need to use more local ABCD champions like Mr Pulu, Ms Mahlase and Mr Conrad Jardine to build social support for public participation and social accountability using an ABCD lens.
- The newly elected Emfuleni officials should be trained in the ABCD approach, and the developed CSC practice guide must be piloted for relevance, applicability and buy-in and support thereof from key local stakeholders such the Emfuleni Local Municipality officials, CoGTA and local community structures through an inclusive participatory process.
- Documentation of the stories of change is needed; the information therein can be used to lobby for integration of the ABCD approach to advance Emfuleni's mandate.

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

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RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

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RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Appendix A: CSC Findings of the Four Meetings

Bophelong CSC Community Dialogue Facilitation

Date: 14 March 2022
Time: 10-12h00
Venue: The Business Hub, Bophelong
Facilitator: Mfalatsane Sadi Motsuenyane
Co-Facilitator: Johannah Keikelame
Facilitation support team: Mpho Sekhotho, Sibusiso Maseko, Kedibone Mahlase
Dialogue support team: Tembinkosi Pulu, Hanna Nel, Conrad Jardine, Julien Landry, Simon Hove and Palesa Mashao

Proceedings:

Gaining Participants' Understanding of the IDP

This session started with the facilitators asking the participants what they know about IDP and how they think it works. After participants have explained the IDP, the facilitators gave a brief explanation to fill in the gaps on the IDP. Thereafter, the facilitators presented the key statements drawn from the municipal system act on the IDP and public participation. The facilitator then explained that the statement will be used to gather participants' views, priorities, and ideas for the IDP process.
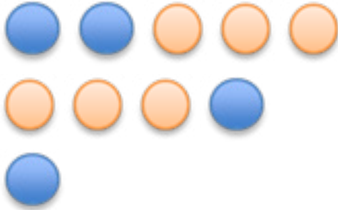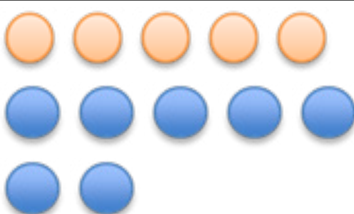
What is IDP?

- It's where our councillors and mayors call all wards to come together and have a meeting to talk about the plans for the community and explain the budget.
- IDP is where we are called as the community to be told about the budget which we did not take part in creating.
- From my own understanding, IDP is supposed to work with the community and hear them out. For instance, there is a sewage pipe that has burst a long time ago. Had they asked us as the community, we would have told them about the pipe that needs to be fixed.
- There should be an integrated conversation between municipality and the community with the councillor being the bridge between the two.
- Our issues are supposed to be identified by the community, taken to the municipality by the councillor and then the municipality gives us feedback on how they can help us on the issues.

Generating a list of 8-19 characteristics of an ideal IDP-process

The support team first handed out to each participant 2 DOTS for the voting round. The facilitators then guided the group to generate a list of 8-10 characteristics of an ideal IDP process in Emfuleni by asking them "What are the characteristics of an ideal IDP process in Emfuleni?". From the list of characteristics given, the facilitator guided the group to identify the two most important ones using 2 dots provided, with the colours representing different genders. The facilitator then counted the score to select the top FOUR voted that will be transferred to the scorecard.

RESEARCH REPORT │ BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

What are the characteristics of an ideal IDP-process in Bophelong?

CHARACTERISTICS	SCORE	TOTAL SCORE
Respect, cooperation & confidence in the community		10
Training and capacity building of ward committee members and the community		4
Good working relationships between the community and municipality		3
The community should know their ward committees' members their portfolios		5
Community involvement in all steps of IDP		3
The youth need to be involved in this process		3
They should publicise their meetings everywhere, even on social media to reach the rest of the community		12
IDP to address people's needs		2

Scoring indicators onto a scorecard

The support team handed out to each participant 4 DOTS for the second voting round. The facilitators there-after wrote the top FOUR prioritised criteria for the ideal IDP process in the scorecard and guided the group to assess each one using a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good) using 1 DOT per criteria. At the end of the voting, the facilitators and group calculated the median (central point) of the score for each criterion and jotted it down on the scorecard.

CRITERIA	VERY GOOD	GOOD	OK	POOR	VERY POOR
Training and capacity building of ward committee members and the community					
Good working relationships between the community and municipality					
Community involvement in all steps of IDP					
IDP to address people's needs					

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Explaining the reasons for scores and proposing actions for improvement

- The support team handed out to each participant 2 DOTS for the third voting round. The facilitators asked group members to explain high/low scores, citing specific strengths, weaknesses, and proposed actions for improvement.
- For each criterion, facilitators ensured that the strengths, weaknesses, and proposed actions for improvement are discussed by the group before moving on to the next criterion.
- The facilitators then invited participants to prioritise top 4 actions for improvement using the 2 DOTS to vote.
- Thereafter, facilitators explained to the group that their priority actions will be discussed in more depth during the interface meeting to be held between ELM officials and ELM community members on 16 March 2022 in Bophelong.

CRITERIA	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
Training and capacity building of ward committee members and the community	Current ward committee election process is open	-No communication -No transparency	-Establish clear communication channel between community and municipality -Attitude change on both sides -Create more opportunities for capacity development - Training of trainers to transfer skills (accreditation)
Good working relationships between the community and municipality	Batho Pele principle exists Municipality employs people	-People not paying for services -Poor communication -Favouritism in working opportunities -Employees not from the community -Corruption -Batho Pele principles not adequately applied -Delays in response	-People must pay for services -Training on communication skills for frontline staff customer service -Communities trained so they can access employment opportunities with inclusion criteria -Facilitate access to municipality for community members -Advertise jobs locally first
Community involvement in all steps of IDP		Communication on IDP limited to certain groups	-De-politicise IDP participation opportunities Disseminate opportunities to participate to the whole community -Community must know rights, responsibility and IDP process -Community participates in the matters -Municipality is accountable for engaging community -Municipality must provide feedback
IDP to address people's needs	Communities know the needs/realities	-Budget not aligned with priorities -Lack of consultation - Community and municipality are diverging	-Community must meet the municipality halfway on implementing IDP -Budget must be aligned with community priorities -Ensure proper consultation, engagement on programs and projects -Community based structure must inform annual plan -Participating monitoring checklist - joint monitoring

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Reflections

Facilitator engaged participants in a brief reflection on what they learned from this process and how they may apply what they learned in the future. Thereafter, 5-6 volunteers were invited to come and attend the Interface meeting (Wednesday March 16) and one spokesperson among them to represent their group and explain their work.

Participants' reflections
-Without communication, we will never understand each other as the government and the community. -Whenever there are meetings like this, it must be my responsibility to attend -Unity is strength -I have learned that there is no municipality without the community and no community without municipality -Such meetings bring knowledge and mindset change for a better future -The dialogue meetings are important to refresh the mind and to bring in a better understanding of the concepts we do not understand -This is important to bring the community and municipality together -I am shocked that we have rated the municipality so low as there have been a good number of people attending the integrated development meetings. This shows me that the approach we have been using is not effective -My thinking before these dialogues was that the municipality should work alone but now, I understand that this is a relationship. -I never personally used to attend IDP meetings as I always thought that its government people who are going to lie to us. However, I now understand that I should change my mindset to a positive one, to create this relationship between us as the community and the municipality

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Waterdal CSC Community Dialogue Facilitation

Date: 15 March 2022
Time: 10-12h00
Venue:
Facilitator: Mfalatsane Sadi Motsuenyane
Co-Facilitator: Johannah Keikelame
Facilitation support team: Nomvula Kubeka, Themba Ningiza, Paul Sambo
Dialogue support team: Tembinkosi Pulu, Hanna Nel, Conrad Jardine, Julien Landry, Simon Hove and Palesa Mashao

Proceedings:

Gaining Participants' Understanding of the IDP

This session started with the facilitators asking the participants what they know about IDP and how they think it works. After participants have explained the IDP, the facilitators gave a brief explanation to fill in the gaps on the IDP. Thereafter, the facilitators presented the key statements drawn from the municipal system act on the IDP and public participation. The facilitator then explained that the statement will be used to gather participants' views, priorities, and ideas for the IDP process.

What is IDP?

- IDP should bring the community and government together
- IDP should bring community engagement and participation so that the government does not make decisions for the community without us
- A programme between the government and the community
- A programme that is supposed to engage the government and the community to make sure that they both engage each other
- When the community and the municipality work together to make a difference
- IDP is unity between the community and municipality

Generating a list of 8-10 characteristics of an ideal IDP-process

The support team first handed out to each participant 2 DOTS for the voting round. The facilitators then guided the group to generate a list of 8-10 characteristics of an ideal IDP process in Emfuleni by asking them "What are the characteristics of an ideal IDP process in Emfuleni?". From the list of characteristics given, the facilitator guided the group to identify the two most important ones using 2 DOTS provided. The facilitator then counted the score to select the top FOUR voted that will be transferred to the scorecard.

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

What are the characteristics of an ideal IDP-process in Emfuleni Waterdal?

CHARACTERISTICS	SCORE	TOTAL SCORE
Ward committees are established	⬤⬤⬤⬤	4
Consensus between the municipality and community regarding service delivery priorities	⬤	1
Engagement between the municipality and community		0
Municipality to be transparent particularly regarding budgeting	⬤⬤⬤⬤⬤	5
Skills transferred to promote sustenance - appropriate skills	⬤⬤	2
Training and capacity building of the community. Well informed community	⬤⬤⬤⬤⬤⬤⬤	7
Community priorities to be considered in the IDP		0
Effective service delivery. E.g, waste management	⬤⬤⬤⬤⬤⬤	9

Community work

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

The top 4 priority actions were then transferred onto a Joint Action Plan.

PRIORITY ACTION	WHO WILL LEAD THIS ACTION?	TYPES OF ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN AND WHO WILL SUPPORT THE ACTIONS	BY WHEN?
WARD COMMITTEES ENGAGE COMMUNITIES ON CBP AND BUDGET PROCESSES TO INFORM IDP AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK	WARD COMMITTEES	MUNICIPALITY -Training of Ward Committees -Resources -Monitoring COMMUNITY -Participate actively -Monitoring and evaluation (participatory) -Share information -Support Ward committee members	On going
COMMUNITY AWARENESS PROGRAMS ON IDP	MUNICIPALITY WARD COMMITTEE	COMMUNITY -Participation (actively) in all steps -Mobilisation -Demand IDP awareness -CWSs	22 March 2022
ESTABLISH CLEAR COMMUNICATION CHANNELS BETWEEN COMMUNITY AND MUNICIPALITY, INCLUDING WC ELECTION PROCESS	MUNICIPALITY -Ensure everybody is aware and registered with IEC WARD COMMITTEE -Use different media channels	Include Private Sector SECTOR -Radios -Newspapers -CDWs WARD COMMITTEE -Use different media channels -Arrange quarterly public meetings -HODs of portfolios to form subcommittees according to extension	On going
TRAINING OF STAFF AND COMMUNITIES ON ROLES, ATTITUDE CHANGE, AND COMMUNICATION.	MUNICIPALITY -Skills audit + RPL -Reviewed -Relevant -Response to current context -Accredited	NGOS Private sector Ward Committees Heads of portfolio departments CDWs	On going

The facilitators then invited volunteers to form a joint follow-up committee in Bophelong and Waterdal. The role of the committee is to support and monitor the implementation of the agreed action plan, meeting regularly to evaluate progress and overcome implementation obstacles, and report on progress in implementing the action plan.

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Scoring indicators onto a scorecard

The support team handed out to each participant 4 DOTS for the second voting round. The facilitators thereafter wrote the top FOUR prioritised criteria for the ideal IDP process in the scorecard and guided the group to assess each one using a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good) using 1 DOT per criteria. At the end of the voting, the facilitators and group calculated the median (central point) of the score for each criterion and jotted it down on the scorecard.

Explaining the reasons for scores and proposing actions for improvement

The support team handed out to each participant 2 DOTS for the third voting round. The facilitators asked group members to explain high/low scores, citing specific strengths, weaknesses, and proposed actions for improvement.

For each criterion, facilitators ensured that the strengths, weaknesses, and proposed actions for improvement are discussed by the group before moving on to the next criterion.
The facilitators then invited participants to prioritise top 4 actions for improvement using the 2 DOTS to vote.

Thereafter, facilitators explained to the group that their priority actions will be discussed in more depth during the interface meeting to be held between ELM officials and ELM community members on 16 March 2022 in Bophelong.

CRITERIA	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY AS A RESULT OF THE IDP PROCESS	Municipality asks communities what they need	Method of involvement results in community priorities not addressed	-Ward committee to facilitate CBP process -Community representatives to engage with WCM
TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR A WELL-INFORMED COMMUNITY/ CITIZENS	There are community members well-informed upon which the municipality can build on their strengths	No training and capacity building	Community awareness programs on IDPs -Community to organise itself to find existing skills to transfer and build on
TRANSPARENCY OF MUNICIPALITY IN THE BUDGETING PROCESS	Ward committee established	No structure for engagement to inform and get feedback from IDP regarding budgeting processes	Ward committee to engage with IDP on budget allocations and provide feedback to the community
WARD COMMITTEES ESTABLISHED	-Ward Committee election process publicised -Ward Committees will be established	-Advertising channels not accessible to all community members -Messages limited to political organisations and cohorts	-Use other advertising methods such as loud hailing, posters, and pictures -Councillors to announce the election of WC and the processes involved

RESEARCH REPORT │ BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Reflections

Facilitator engaged participants in a brief reflection on what they learned from this process and how they may apply what they learned in the future. Thereafter, 5-6 volunteers were invited to come and attend the Interface meeting (Wednesday March 16) and one spokesperson among them to represent their group and explain their work.

Participants' reflections
-I did not know what IDP is, but after this workshop. I now understand it and how it will represent us going forward -I did not know that I need to know the budget for my community -I thought that the counsellor should work alone, but I now know that there needs to be a ward committee and the municipality must engage the community -I now know that the counsellor should communicate with the community -I only knew IDP as an abbreviation, but now I understand it better -I did not know about Ward Committee elections but now that I am aware, I will participate -Waterdal is always neglected and not included, but I am glad that we are finally being included in such programmes -The community needs to be involved with the ward committee and the municipality

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Emfuleni Local Municipality Officials CSC Dialogue Facilitation Program

Date: 15 March 2022
Time: 14-16h00
Venue: Emfuleni Local Municipality
Facilitator: Julien Landry
Co-Facilitator: Mfalatsane Sadi Motsuenyane, Johannah Keikelame
Dialogue support team: Tembinkosi Pulu, Hanna Nel, Conrad Jardine, Julien Landry, Simon Hove and Palesa Mashao

Proceedings:

Gaining Participants' Understanding of the IDP

This session started with the facilitators asking the participants what they know about IDP and how they think it works. After participants have explained the IDP, the facilitators gave a brief explanation to fill in the gaps on the IDP. Thereafter, the facilitators presented the key statements drawn from the municipal system act on the IDP and public participation. The facilitator then explained that the statement will be used to gather participants' views, priorities, and ideas for the IDP process.

What is IDP?

- Municipality outlines the plans for the new year - present plan to community
- 5-year plan, involving public participation, gathering views 2 years
- Public consultation meetings to validate what has been approved
- Communities' priorities are drawn
- Councillor submits "wish list" from community to IDP office

Generating a list of 8-10 characteristics of an ideal IDP-process

The support team first handed out to each participant 2 DOTS for the voting round. The facilitators then guided the group to generate a list of 8-10 characteristics of an ideal IDP process in Emfuleni by asking them "What are the characteristics of an ideal IDP process in Emfuleni?". From the list of characteristics given, the facilitator guided the group to identify the two most important ones using 2 DOTS provided. The facilitator then counted the score to select the top FOUR voted that will be transferred to the scorecard.

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

What are the characteristics of an ideal IDP-process in Emfuleni Municipality offices

CHARACTERISTICS	SCORE	TOTAL SCORE
Community is consulted		2
Clear objectives and timeframes		4
Transparency		5
Mayor interacts with community		1
Funds are available for priorities		1
Informed by sound CBP		3
Engagement of communities throughout process		6
Commitment and conducive environment in municipality		4
Institutional capacity		2

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Scoring indicators onto a scorecard

The support team handed out to each participant 4 DOTS for the second voting round. The facilitators thereafter wrote the top FOUR prioritised criteria for the ideal IDP process in the scorecard and guided the group to assess each one using a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good) using 1 DOT per criteria. At the end of the voting, the facilitators and group calculated the median (central point) of the score for each criterion and jotted it down on the scorecard.

CRITERIA	VERY GOOD	GOOD	OK	POOR	VERY POOR
Engagement of communities and stakeholders throughout the process	●●		●●●	●	●
Transparency			●	●●●	●●
Clear objectives and timeframes		●●●	●●	●●●	
Commitment and conductive environment in municipality				●●●●	●●

RESEARCH REPORT │ BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Explaining the reasons for scores and proposing actions for improvement

- The support team handed out to each participant 2 DOTS for the third voting round. The facilitators asked group members to explain high/low scores, citing specific strengths, weaknesses, and proposed actions for improvement.
- For each criterion, facilitators ensured that the strengths, weaknesses, and proposed actions for improvement are discussed by the group before moving on to the next criterion.
- The facilitators then invited participants to prioritise top 4 actions for improvement using the 2 DOTS to vote.
- Thereafter, facilitators explained to the group that their priority actions will be discussed in more depth during the interface meeting to be held between ELM officials and ELM community members on 16 March 2022 in Bophelong.

CRITERIA	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
Engagement of communities and stakeholders throughout the process	-IDP meetings broadcast in a timely manner -Scheduled meetings -Meetings well planned	-Meetings poorly executed or cancelled -Lack of communication -Meeting time inaccessible to most -No teamwork -Poor communication	-Ensure staff commitment to IDP meetings -Improve internal communication -Encourage delegation of responsibilities and communication
Transparency	-Some staff are transparent -Ward committees can be conduit	-Culture of withholding information -Focus on compliance ("tick box")	-Focus on CBP and execution of the same -Focus on quality and not just quantity -Capturing and validation of inputs and priorities
Clear objectives and timeframes	Objectives are clear	-Timeframes not followed -Execution of objectives (Wish list)	-Upholding Batho Pele principles -Ensure proper placement of staff -Staff properly trained for roles
Commitment and conductive environment in municipality		-Micromanagement -Management styles not conducive -Morale is low	-Leadership training -Encourage communication directly with staff involved -Opportunities for staff recognition and support

RESEARCH REPORT │ BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Reflections

Facilitator engaged participants in a brief reflection on what they learned from this process and how they may apply what they learned in the future. Thereafter, 5-6 volunteers were invited to come and attend the Interface meeting (Wednesday March 16) and one spokesperson among them to represent their group and explain their work.

Participants' reflections
-I have learned that there are a lot of things that are not being done correctly by the municipality which are always ignored.
-Lack of information sharing within departments and to community is a problem.
-There is a need for pre-planning.
-Importance of transparency and better communication.
-No idea on what ELM is doing.
-Access to information is difficult.
-We are not supposed to be selfish to share information.
-Departments are supposed to have interdepartmental mechanisms that share information

RESEARCH REPORT | BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

Interface Meeting – CSC Dialogue Facilitation

Date: 16 March 2022
Time: 10-12h00
Venue: Bophelong Library
Facilitator: Julien Landry, Mfalatsane Sadi Motsuenyane
Co-Facilitator: Johannah Keikelame
Dialogue support team: Tembinkosi Pulu, Hanna Nel, Conrad Jardine, Julien Landry, Simon Hove and Palesa Mashao

Proceedings:

The facilitators invited a representative from each dialogue meeting to present their findings to the overall group. The idea here was to understand how and why the 5 priority actions were identified.

BOPHELONG	WATERDAL	ELM
Establish clear communication channel between community and municipality	Ward committees to engage with IDP on budget allocations and provide feedback to the community	Staff properly trained for their roles/ jobs
Attitude change on both community and municipality sides	Community representatives to engage with ward committee members	Improve internal communication (at municipality)
Communities trained so they can access opportunities/employment with inclusion criteria	Ward committees to facilitate CBP process	Ensure staff commitment to IDP meetings
Training on customer service/ communication skills for front-line staff	Community awareness programs on IDP	Encourage communication directly with staff involved
Facilitate community members access to municipality	Council to announce the election of ward committees and the process involved	Leadership that offers opportunities for staff recognition and support
De-politicize participation opportunities		

RESEARCH REPORT │ BRIDGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP: APPLYING ASSET-BASED AND
│ CITIZEN-LED DEVELOPMENT IN EMFULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

NO 25

The 5 priority actions from each group were then consolidated into one list. The support team then handed out DOTS for the voting round where they voted for the top 4 priority actions amongst the consolidated lists.

PRIORITY ACTIONS	SCORE
-Council to announce the election of ward committees and the process involved -Establish clear communication channel between community and municipality	●●○○○○●●●
-Communities trained so they can access opportunities/employment with inclusion criteria	●●●●●○○○
-Facilitate community members access to municipality	●
-De-politicize participation opportunities	●●○
-Ward committees to engage with IDP on budget allocations and provide feedback to the community -Community representatives to engage with ward committee members -Ward committees to facilitate CBP process	●●○○○○○○○ ●●●●
Community awareness programs on IDP	●●●●●○○○○ ○
-Staff properly trained for their roles/jobs -Attitude change on both community and municipality sides -Training on customer service/communication skills for front-line staff	○○○○●●●●
-Improve internal communication (at municipality) -Encourage communication directly with staff involved	
-Ensure staff commitment to IDP meetings	●
-Leadership that offers opportunities for staff recognition and support	●

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