

A Systematic Review of Empirical Studies on Integrated Development Planning as an Apparatus for Strengthening Community Involvement in South Africa

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to systematically review empirical studies conducted on integrated development planning (IDP) as an apparatus for strengthening community involvement in South African municipalities. This study was conducted due to an increasing lack of community involvement in municipal affairs. Many scholars indicate that the coronavirus (COVID-19) has presented many challenges in the local sphere of government, and one of the challenges is poor community participation. The IDP is an important mechanism for strengthening community involvement. By doing so, communities can determine their most desired needs and aspirations. To realise the objective of this study, which was to systematically review empirical studies on IDP as an apparatus for strengthening community involvement in South African municipalities, the author has deployed a qualitative research approach in the form of a systematic review. Secondary data has been retrieved from different databases, such as Google Scholar, Sabinet, Scopus, and Google, using keywords for this study. A total of seventy (70) studies were sampled and systematically reviewed. However, only thirty-eight (38) were relevant and cited in this study. Three different theories have been deployed in this study: democratic decision-making, new public management, and the ladder of citizen participation. It is found that there is an increased lack of community involvement in the IDP process due to obsolete mechanisms, unethical conduct, and poor understanding of the design and implementation of the IDP by local government practitioners. Thus, this study recommends that municipalities always adhere to different pieces of legislation governing local government when designing and implementing the IDP process.

Keywords: Community, Community Involvement, Decision-making, E-participation, Integrated Development Planning, Municipalities

1. Introduction

The provision of services in South Africa was predicated on racial segregation during the apartheid period up to 1994. The emergence of a new democratic government in 1994 allowed for transformation to reduce the injustice and inadequacy related to service delivery (Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022a). The government introduced new public policies to ensure that the local government plays a meaningful development role to benefit all citizens of all races and previously disadvantaged and marginalized groups (Mashamaite & Madzivhandila, 2014; Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022a). The South African government has done a lot to promote community involvement in the development planning process. For instance, the government introduced the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) in 1996 to strengthen community voice or involvement and ultimately lessen service delivery backlogs. According to Asha and Makalela (2020), "integrated development planning" is viewed as a procedure

by which municipalities create five-year strategic development plans. An IDP aims to reach decisions on issues like municipal budgets, land management, the promotion of local economic development, and institutional transformation in a consultative, systematic, and strategic manner. It is one of the key tools for local government to deal with its new developmental role. Community involvement, on the other hand, is defined by the World Health Organization (2002) as individuals actively taking part in analysis, decision-making, planning, program implementation, and activities. Makalela (2017) opines that strengthening community involvement throughout the planning and implementation process is critical for the IDP to be more trustworthy and resilient. However, even after the introduction of different policies, service delivery challenges persist as a result of poor community involvement in the IDP process, primarily in local municipalities.

A study by Mathebula (2018), in the Mopani District Municipality, revealed that the IDD process is not

properly, efficiently, and effectively applied to provide the services envisioned. Mnguni (2018), and Asha and Makalela (2020) concur with Mathebula's study, indicating that this is a result of poor understanding of the IDP process by local government officials and political office-bearers. This poor understanding has contributed to service delivery protests among communities. Mamokhere and Meyer (2022a) further assert that in South African municipalities, protests against the lack of community participation in the socio-economic development process and poor service delivery have become fashionable. The motivation for conducting this study was based on the increased lack of community involvement in municipal affairs. For instance, in 2020-2021, many scholars have stressed the growing poor or lack of community in the IDP process due to the unprecedented impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Some municipalities were able to ensure that there is an annual review of the IDP by consulting with communities through a different electronic platform known as "e-participation". Thus, this systematic study is certainly not a new contribution to the focus area. Many systematic studies have been undertaken on integrated development planning and community participation in South Africa. However, this systematic review study would be beneficial to both local government practitioners and policymakers in the academic arena. Consequently, it will add to the knowledge base of the municipality and possibly integrate development planning in different provinces. Based on the introduction provided, the research question that forms the foundation of this research is: Why is the IDP process used as an apparatus for strengthening community involvement in South African municipalities? Equally, this study aims to systematically review empirical studies conducted on the integrated development plan as an apparatus for strengthening community involvement in South Africa.

2. Theoretical Framework

Asha and Makalela (2020) indicate that integrated development planning is understood as a process through which municipalities prepare strategic development plans for five years. An IDP is one of the key instruments for local government to cope with its new developmental role and seeks to arrive at decisions on issues such as municipal budgets, land management, the promotion of local economic development, and institutional transformation in

a consultative, systematic, and strategic manner. While community involvement, according to the World Health Organization (2002), is seen as the active participation of people in the analysis, decision-making, planning, and program implementation, as well as the activities. Thus, the study adopted the Democratic Decision-Making Theory, better explained by Enwereji and Uwizeyimana (2020) to understand the correlation between IDP and community participation as defined above. Enwereji and Uwizeyimana (2020), in their study, indicate that the community participation process is considered indispensable as it improves the relationships between the communities and the government in the decision-making processes. The study implies that community participation is a legal requirement. In the South African context, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, section 152 makes provision for community involvement in municipal policy-making and decision-making. The requirements of the Democratic Decision-Making Theory are consistent with constitutional requirements and the growing secondary literature (Enwereji *et al.*, 2020; Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022a). Therefore, this theory is deemed relevant for this study based on its theoretical grounds. The theory emphasises the need for a leadership style that will allow community members to participate in the decision-making process (Holman, 2010). Bhatti *et al.* (2012) see democratic leadership, also known as participative leadership or shared leadership, "as a type of leadership style in which group members take a more participative role in the decision-making process". As such, Quick and Bryson (2016) affirmed that in democracies, community members are seen to be significant stakeholders in that they can participate neither indirectly nor directly via elected representatives in the formation, adoption, and application of the laws and policies such as IDP and service delivery that affect them. Community participation, therefore, is a major part of the government-public connection in democracies. However, according to Enwereji and Uwizeyimana (2020), Democratic Decision-Making Theory "is the opposite of an autocratic leadership style where leadership happily dictates the shape of management".

Ulrich and Wenzel (2017) state that in the Democratic Decision-Making Theory, leaders agree to equity, equality, fairness and transparency in the process of management. Although the democratic decision-making style seems frank, the process is

considered intricate, as it can be challenging to bring groups of people from different backgrounds together and make them agree on a single matter. The democratic leadership style is complex, but the researcher further argues the pros (advantages) and cons (disadvantages). The advantages may include a transparent process that is perceived to be fair, while the disadvantages may include communities being vulnerable to political campaigning and a lack of ownership in implementing decisions. McCallister (2019) indicates that "the process entailed in the democratic decision-making style comprises assessing situations and evolving options, meetings' scheduling for agreement, assigning an advocate for each option, holding reasonable discussions with delegates on each option, and voting for options or agreeing on each concept raised". Similarly, Quick and Bryson (2016) also affirm that stakeholders, including government agencies, political leaders, non-profit organisations, and business organisations, interact to formulate or implement public policies (IDP) and programs through community participation. Quick and Bryson (2016) further indicate that community participation in many instances could be "limited to discrete acts (e.g. a town hall meeting or citizen survey) or described by a set of practices (e.g. arranging public hearings or other types of consultation processes), participation more generally is the process of engagement in governance".

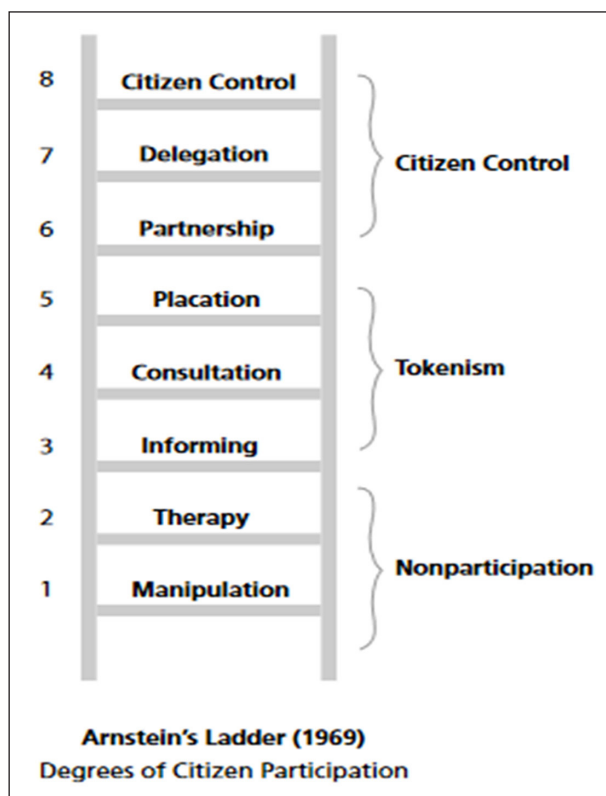
The study also adopted the theory of New Public Management (NPM) as a lens better explained and promoted by Munzhedzi (2020), who indicates that NPM is a dominant paradigm in the public administration field of study. The goal of NPM as a theory is to systematically reform traditional public administration to improve a capable and effective government operation. The NPM theory, according to Islam (2015), has been on a mission to transform the old or traditional public administration. The theory aims to reform public administration and ensure innovative ways to reduce service delivery backlogs. The theory aims to reduce the service delivery backlogs by adapting to decentralising responsibilities, encouraging public participatory planning, and reform or modernisation (Maserumule, 2009). The NPM aspect is consistent with the constitution and democratic decision-making theory, promoting participatory governance. Furthermore, Munzhedzi (2021) indicates that community participation in municipal affairs is imperative for the NPM approach, facilitating participatory planning over democratic mechanisms and structures.

Having said that, the study finally adopted Arnstein Sherry's ladder of citizen participation theory, which he pioneered in 1969. Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation theory talks about community participation in the planning process in the United States. "The ladder of citizen participation is one of the most widely referenced and influential models in the field of democratic public participation. This theory describes how empowered public institutions and officials deny power to citizens and how levels of citizen agency, control, and power can be increased" (Arnstein, 1971). Arnstein (1971), in his or her study, further argues that community participation is a democratic process and to be classified as community involvement genuinely, it needs the redistribution of power. Similarly, in Mnguni (2018), Mamokhere and Meyer (2022a), community participation implies the involvement of communities in policy-decision-making activities. This also involves the identification of services' needs, budget prioritisation and preparation of the IDP.

Eight (8) steps constitute the ladder of citizen participation theory. These steps guide whoever is in power when imperative decisions are made. Thus, formulating effective approaches to involve communities has become important. The ladder of citizen participation developed by Arnstein (1971) includes the following eight steps namely citizen control, delegation, partnerships, placation, consultation, informing, therapy, and manipulation. The steps by Arnstein (1971) are relevant in this study based on their ground and contributions to encouraging active community participation. Therefore, The South African municipalities should use these steps as recognised by Arnstein's theory of citizen participation. The steps stipulated by the ladder of citizen participation theory ensure that community participation is achieved and encouraged as expected by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Municipal Systems Act and Municipal Structures Act. The citizen participation ladder theory is presented ascending from "manipulation, Therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegation and citizen control". Figure 1 on the next page shows the ladder of the citizen participation model.

By analysing the steps of Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation, the author argues that communities should control the planning processes (IDP), thereby identifying service priorities. Giving communities a say in planning processes could lead to the successful implementation of local government

Figure 1: Ladder of Citizen Participation



Source: S. Arnstein, 1969

programs like IDP. Equally, as much as community participation is a legitimate mandate, it should be maintained and not just be done for compliance as per step three (3) of the model above. Step 3, which is informing, indicates that "informing is the most significant first step to legitimate community participation. However, the emphasis is on a one-way flow of information too frequently. There is no channel for feedback and no power for negotiation". It can be argued that step three (3) undermines community participation because the municipalities often do not provide feedback to communities on municipal affairs. The municipalities are undermining the constitutional mandate to provide adequate feedback to communities. Rowe and Frewer (2005) indicate that there are "various methods that can be used to provide feedback to communities on the activities of the municipal council and municipalities in general. Municipalities can use media announcements, public notices, ward committees, and ward meetings to provide feedback to communities". The municipality should avoid manipulation (Step 1) of communities, a non-participation. Community participation should not be viewed as a compliance measure but rather as a means of achieving

desired results by encouraging interactive and consultative participation (Kgobe & Mamokhere, 2021; Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022a).

All the theories adopted in this study fit well based on their grounded arguments and contribution to the existing and growing body of knowledge. All the theories adopted urge the responsible authorities and agencies to facilitate active community participation in the planning processes.

3. Empirical Literature Review

Every responsible national, provincial and local government sphere is supposed to develop inclusive development plans regularly to improve residents' social, economic, and political well-being. According to Chukwu (2020:56), developing a comprehensive and consultative development plan is a critical challenge across the world. In Nigeria, development planning has been hampered by a lack of coordination, execution, and management of policies since 1958. Naidoo and Ramphal (2018:82) indicate that the municipalities closest to the people worldwide are struggling to fulfil their duty to deliver basic

services that satisfy communities' aspirations and needs. As a result, municipalities are at the forefront of every government's development plan as they are mandated to develop integrated development plans that represent national imperatives. In South Africa, the national, provincial, and municipal governments collaborate to implement their powers and functions as required by the Intergovernmental Relations Frameworks Act (Act 13 of 2005). Besides that, there are existing pieces of legislation that govern development planning. However, challenges hamper the effective implementation of those plans, such as poor community participation and appropriate mechanisms.

Many empirical studies have been conducted globally and in South Africa to understand the correlation between the Integrated Development Planning process and community involvement. According to the study conducted by Zwane (2020:97) titled, "Community participation in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of the Umzumbe Local Municipality", it is found that the Umzumbe Local Municipality is not committed to the IDP. From the respondent's perspective, "a total of fifty-five per cent (55%) of the respondents chose an option of "No" and felt that there is no commitment by the Municipality. While 45% believe the municipality demonstrates a commitment to identifying IDP issues through public participation". According to Zwane (2020:98), it is clear that communities in Umzumbe Local Municipality believe their municipalities are unconcerned about IDP issues. The results show that there is a lack of participation among communities and the municipality. Qualitatively, Zwane (2020) takes a different view from the IDP Manager, who indicates that "communities were constantly engaged in IDP related matters during the public participation gatherings by inviting inputs and ensuring that these were forwarded to the relevant units of the Umzumbe Local Municipality for consideration during the IDP planning processes". Therefore, from the IDP Manager's perspective, the municipality is committed to the IDP. To understand the extent of community participation in the IDP process, a study by Themba *et al.* (2020) from Mbombela Local Municipality found that "the residents of Matsulu were not engaged, at all times, in municipal matters, particularly when it came to policy and decision-making. The findings show that 87% of the respondents (community members) were not fully involved in the processes of decision and policy-making of the municipality. In comparison, 13% of the respondents indicated that they were involved

in policy and decision-making of the Mbombela Local Municipality. The majority of the respondents (87%) clearly stated that the municipality called the community meetings but that those meetings were limited and their opinions were requested and welcomed. Instead, the municipality had already made a decision. Consequently, the municipality consulted the community after taking decisions and making policies alone". These findings do not comply with the ladder of citizen participation theory by Arnstein (1969), emphasising that consultation should not be a one-way flow; the municipalities should provide feedback on decisions taken.

On the other hand, in his study, Dyum (2020:51), in an attempt to understand the meeting attendance level or manner in the IDP, found that meetings are attended by "a very small number of people". Therefore, it can be affirmed that there is a lack of interest or knowledge of community participation processes (Dyum, 2020). However, it can be argued that a lack of interest or participation occurs because communities have little knowledge of these meetings, and the municipalities are not even educating the communities. Based on the study conducted by Ndou (2019) titled, "Challenges militating against community participation in the Integrated Development Plan Process in Thulamela Local Municipality", it was found that "76% of the respondents agreed that community members are actively participating in the IDP process. This is an indication that community members of Thulamela Local Municipality actively participate in the IDP process. 19% of the respondents agree that active community participation in the IDP process plays an important role in the improvement of basic service delivery" (Ndou 2019). In contrast, Malatji (2019), in his study, indicates that "the majority of the participants in Tickyline village under Tzaneen Municipal area do not participate in development projects because some meetings are held during odd times, particularly during the initial phases of the projects." According to Malatji's (2019) research, the challenges of participation are influenced by officials who make decisions on behalf of communities and believe that communities are less capable of making independent and fruitful decisions about their projects. According to the study conducted by Masuku and Molepo (2020:450), they attempt to understand the benefits of community participation in the IDP. Empirically, "community members indicated that taking part in municipal development initiatives creates unity among them because they have a

common interest". Another community member, during a focus group discussion, expressed her view as follows: "When we are discussing issues that are of great concern to the majority of the community, we also agree on how to address them, that unites us, and we become one. So, the more we talk about our development issues as a community, the more united we become." The findings above are similar to those of Eversole (2012), who stated that "communities indicated that when they participate in municipal affairs, they stand a better chance of making suggestions towards IDP, and this fosters a sense of shared purpose, ownership, and responsibility". However, the findings of the study conducted by Masuku *et al.* (2020) do not confer with the findings of the study conducted by Malatji (2019), who indicated that there is no unity among the key role players at Ticklyline village under Tzaneen Municipality. His study indicated 'no unison' among the community members, traditional leaders, and other community representatives. Malatji (2019) further revealed that communities are often silent and poorly represented as the IDP does not represent communities' needs and aspirations.

Similarly, Mbelengwa (2016) acknowledges in a study conducted in the Alexandra community under the jurisdiction of the City of Joburg Municipality that community participation in the IDP process is ineffective and meaningful to either the communities or municipal officials. Mbelengwa (2016:67) revealed that communities are ignorant about participating in budgeting issues and the IDP process because they perceive their participation as useless. After all, the municipality does not prioritize their needs and aspirations. In the same study, it is found that lack of training and knowledge about the IDP process and budget are also crucial challenges, which make many community members ignorant and reluctant to participate in municipal affairs. When the participants were asked about their knowledge of the IDP, one of the participants indicated that "I do not know about these IDPs. How do I even tell other people about things I am not sure of?" (Mbelengwa, 2016:55).

It is further empirically found that communities' opinions in the preparation and implementation of the IDP process, especially at the initial phase and identification phase, are generally not valued, and communities often isolate themselves from effective participation. Equally so, it is revealed by Mbelengwa (2016:67) that "consultation is not

adequate and it is done wrongly". In this regard, it can be affirmed that there is a feeling of dissatisfaction about the lack of consultation and involvement in policy and decision-making. In line with the above findings, the participants from the Alexandra community empirically indicated that "municipal officials do not consult us as the community when it comes to the decision-making in the IDP; they make their own decisions without us". While other participants indicated that "the municipality is so corrupt, they do not consult when it comes to major decisions, and they award contracts and tenders to their comrades for almost all the projects in our community". These findings concur with the study findings conducted by Ndou in 2019, which indicated that communities are not actively involved in the IDP process. The above findings by Mbelengwa (2016) and Ndou (2019) also complement the findings by Asha *et al.* (2020), who revealed poor community participation as one of the challenges that hamper the effective implementation of the IDP process, while the empirical findings in Mathebula (2018) are comparable to those in the previous studies. The study went to great lengths to determine if municipal officials from various departments are familiar with and comprehend the IDP as a management tool. The participants indicated that "I know the IDP as a document that comes through my department for clearance every year, and the information is the same as the previous year". Thus, from the findings, it cannot be confidently opined that some municipal officials have a general understanding and knowledge of the IDP. Naidoo *et al.* (2018) revealed that some grassroots challenges hinder effective community participation in municipal affairs. The study conducted at Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality in South Africa revealed that the municipality does not conform to the public participation processes and the *Batho Pele* principles when implementing the IDP process. The public participation process and the *Batho Pele* principles require communities to be informed, consulted, involved, collaborative and empowered. These requirements for the public participation process are also in line with what the ladder of citizen participation theory advocates. In the study conducted by Mamokhere and Meyer (2022b), titled "a review of mechanisms used to improve community participation in the integrated development planning process in South Africa: an empirical review" it is found that lack of community involvement is a result of poor or obsolete mechanisms which are not relevant in the era of COVID-19 pandemic such as public meetings. From

the empirical studies conducted, it can be affirmed that community participation in the IDP process in some municipalities is encouraged in line with legislative frameworks while, in other municipalities, communities are still not actively involved in municipal businesses.

4. Research Methods and Designs

This study adopted a qualitative research design in the form of a systematic review. The author used this design to review existing literature in the fields of IDP and community participation. Thus, a systematic review involves a critical and reproducible summary of the results of the available publications on a particular topic or clinical question, according to Linares-Espinós *et al.* (2018). Tawfik *et al.* (2019) concur that a systematic review is defined as a review using a systematic method to summarize evidence on questions with a detailed and comprehensive plan of study. Furthermore, despite the increasing guidelines for effectively conducting a systematic review, the basic steps started by framing a question and then identified relevant work, which consists of criteria development and searching for relevant articles using keywords such as integrated development planning and community participation or involvement, appraised the quality of included studies, summarised the evidence and interpreted the results. The motivation for adopting a systematic review in this study was based on the fact that an unsystematic narrative review tends to be descriptive, in which the authors frequently select articles based on their point of view, which leads to its poor quality (Tawfik *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, a systematic review was deemed significant as it promoted the quality of the results.

In other words, a comprehensive analysis and synthesis were performed on the previously published research on IDP and community involvement in South Africa. The procedure comprises the review of information gleaned from the internet, books, and journal articles. Different databases were used to collect secondary data, such as Google, Google Scholar, Sabinet, and Scopus. Also, NVivo software was used for the review of the literature. NVivo was used in this study because it is good software to use when conducting a literature review. The system allows you to manage your sources, identify themes, and helps you make connections between sources. In conclusion, the systematic review method was used to attempt to answer the research question,

which was aimed at drawing a more trustworthy result from which a conclusion could be derived. The next section focuses on the theoretical framework which intends to support the grounds and the argument of this study. The theoretical framework also assisted the author in arriving at a trustworthy conclusion.

5. Results and Discussion

There is a lack of community involvement in the Umzumbe Local Municipality's Integrated Development Plan (IDP). The majority of respondents (55%) who selected "No" believed that the municipality had not made any commitments. 45% of respondents think that the municipality shows a commitment to identifying IDP issues through public involvement. According to Ndou (2019) research, 76% of participants believed that community people actively participate in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process. 19% of respondents concur that increasing community engagement in the IDP process is crucial for enhancing the provision of fundamental services. It can be argued that a lack of participation occurs because communities have little knowledge of the IDP meetings in their areas. According to study by Malatji (2019), there is no cooperation among important stakeholders in Tickyline Village, which is part of Tzaneen Municipality. Communities frequently remain mute and have poor representation since the IDP does not reflect their needs and goals. Officials that make choices on behalf of communities have an impact on participation challenges. According to Mbelengwa (2016:67), community involvement in the IDP process is unproductive and has no significance for either the communities or city officials of the City of Joburg.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study systematically reviewed empirical studies conducted on the IDP process as an apparatus for strengthening community involvement in South African municipalities. Involvement of community participation in the IDP process and municipal affairs is a legal requirement in terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) and Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998). The study concludes by recognising and acknowledging a gap between the IDP and community participation. Therefore, more studies should be conducted to close the gap and educate the public,

local government practitioners and scholars on the importance of improved community participation in the IDP process. They also study emphasised how difficult it is to design and implement the IDP process. A consultation process should be promoted to support the meaningful design and execution of the IDP process. A consultative approach necessitates the active participation of several important stakeholders at numerous levels of analysis and decision-making. The IDP process must guarantee that all stakeholders are included when and where needed. Based on the findings of this study, the study recommends the following:

- The study recommends that municipalities always adhere to different pieces of legislation governing local government when designing and implementing the IDP process. For instance, the Municipal Systems Act (2000) and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) require municipalities to actively involve stakeholders in the planning process to provide municipal services sustainably and satisfactorily.
- It is found that there is low participation of stakeholders. Thus, municipalities should acclimate to the new era or risk being left behind to ensure community participation in the IDP process. Municipalities should acclimatise to the emergency of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and COVID-19 pandemics, which have changed how things used to be done.
- The municipalities should provide the roadshow to promote effective, timely participation and understanding of the whole consultation and approval process of the IDP. The roadshow should also educate different stakeholders on municipal functions such as the IDP.
- South African municipalities should design mechanisms that make it easier for marginalised and previously disadvantaged people to participate in municipal planning and decision-making processes freely and without prejudice. Because most of the respondents in this study stated that they were not adequately encouraged to engage in the IDP process due to obsolete "outdated" mechanisms, it would be beneficial to all the stakeholders if the municipalities adopt e-participation while taking note of the old and previously disadvantaged people without access to technological tools or mechanisms. Electronic

participation (E-participation) should be adopted by using a variety of electronic media, including radio and television shows, emails, the Internet, Zoom video conferences, social media sites like Facebook, and group discussions on WhatsApp should be used to improve community participation during and post-COVID-19.

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