

**ENHANCING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT  
PLANNING IN A SOUTH AFRICAN RURAL-BASED LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

**By**

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## Abstract

This study aimed to develop a strategic framework to enhance the public's participation in the integrated development planning (IDP) process within South Africa's local government. It was assumed that perceptions and extent of public participation in integrated development planning differed due to distance from the service centre. The exploratory sequentially mixed-methods approach, including surveys and interviews with key stakeholders in Wards 4, 10 and 18 of Thulamela Local Municipality, was adopted. Selection of the study areas took into account distance from the main municipal service centre in Thohoyandou. Ward 18 was most proximal followed by Ward 10 and then Ward 4. Significant patterns and statistical insights regarding community engagement were revealed. Overall, public participation in IDP processes was low, with notable variations across the three wards. For instance, residents of Ward 10 demonstrated higher engagement in situational analysis and project formulation, while those in Ward 4 exhibited greater involvement in monitoring and evaluation ( $P < 0.05$ ). Further analysis identified enablers of participation, particularly in Ward 18, where residents reported the highest levels of inner resolve and perceived citizen skills necessary for engagement. However, they also expressed concerns about lower accountability from municipal leaders, despite feeling well-informed ( $P < 0.05$ ). In contrast, Ward 10 residents felt more empowered in decision-making processes, suggesting that their input was effectively implemented. The study also highlighted significant barriers to public participation, particularly in Ward 10, where residents faced challenges such as a lack of skills and timely information dissemination ( $P < 0.05$ ). Logistical issues, including transportation difficulties, were more pronounced in this ward, negatively impacting participation rates. To address these challenges, residents across various wards suggested strategies such as utilizing media and community leaders to boost engagement. Ward 10 emphasized the potential of public media, while Ward 18 focused on developing community leadership, recognizing the importance of workshops and collaborations with educational institutions to enhance citizen involvement. The statistical significance of these results ( $P < 0.05$ ) underscores the need for targeted interventions that address the specific barriers and enablers of public participation identified in the study. This highlights the importance of tailoring strategies to the unique contexts of different wards, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of IDP processes and achieving greater community engagement.

The implications of these findings extend to rural development and citizen science. Effective public participation is essential for empowering local communities, as evidenced by the higher engagement levels in specific wards. When residents feel their input is valued, they are more likely to take ownership of development initiatives, which is crucial for fostering sustainable rural development that aligns with community needs and aspirations. In addition, the study contributes to citizen science by illustrating how community involvement in local governance can lead to more informed decision-making processes. By actively engaging citizens in the IDP process, municipalities can harness local knowledge and insights, which are invaluable for addressing complex social and environmental issues. The proposed framework for enhancing public participation serves as a practical guide for integrating citizen science principles into local governance, emphasizing collaboration between stakeholders and structured engagement processes. Through aligning its findings with Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, the research enriches theoretical discussions on citizen engagement, providing empirical evidence that can inform future studies in citizen science.

Overall, the study's results are pivotal for advancing both rural development and citizen science. They highlight the importance of empowering communities through active participation, identifying barriers to engagement and proposing tailored strategies that enhance local governance and service delivery.

**Keywords:** Public participation, Integrated Development Planning, Community engagement, Barriers to public participation, Rural development, Citizen science

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
ABSTRACT .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	xi
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS .....	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 BACKGROUND.....	1
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM .....	4
1.4 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .....	5
1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND ASSOCIATED QUESTIONS .....	5
1.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS OF THE STUDY.....	6
1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS.....	8
1.8 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS.....	9
1.9 SUMMARY .....	10
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	11
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	11
2.2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING .....	12
2.3 INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION .....	16
2.3.1 Public participation in China .....	16
2.3.2 Public participation in Germany .....	17
2.3.3 Public participation in Latin America .....	17
2.3.4 Public Participation in Brazil (Port Alegre).....	18
2.3.5 Public participation in Mexico City .....	19
2.4 PERSPECTIVES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SOME PARTS OF AFRICA 20	
2.4.1 Public participation in Ghana.....	20
2.4.3 Public participation in Zimbabwe .....	21
2.5 THE SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.....	22

2.5.1	Public participation in South Africa: City of Cape Town .....	22
2.5.2	Public participation in the Vhembe District Municipality .....	23
2.6	LEGISLATIONS RELEVANT TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SOUTH AFRICA 24	
2.7	MECHANISMS TO ENHANCE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SOUTH AFRICA 27	
2.7.2	Traditional leaders and public participation.....	27
2.7.3	Councillors.....	28
2.7.4	Non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations.....	28
2.7.5	Imbizos and Tshivhidzo (public meetings) .....	28
2.7.6	Integrated Development Planning .....	29
2.8	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING ..	29
2.8.1	Public participation in IDP phases .....	30
2.9	FACTORS LIMITING PARTICIPATION IN INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING.....	31
2.10	BENEFITS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING.....	32
2.11	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES .....	32
2.12	SUMMARY .....	34
	CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	35
3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	35
3.2	DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY AREA .....	35
3.3	RESEARCH DESIGN.....	37
3.4	POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES .....	38
3.5	DATA COLLECTION METHODS, TOOLS, AND TECHNIQUES .....	39
3.5.1	Focus group discussions.....	40
3.5.2	Questionnaire survey.....	40
3.6	DATA ANALYSIS METHODS, TOOLS, AND TECHNIQUES .....	41
3.6.1	Qualitative data analysis .....	41
3.6.2	Trustworthiness of the study .....	42
3.6.2.1	Credibility .....	42
3.6.2.2	Transferability.....	42

3.6.2.3 Confirmability.....	43
3.6.2.4 Dependability.....	43
3.6.3 Quantitative data analysis.....	43
3.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY .....	44
3.7.1 Validity.....	44
3.7.2 Reliability.....	44
3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.9 SUMMARY.....	45
CHAPTER FOUR: DESCRIPTION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS OBTAINED DURING THE EXPLORATORY PHASE OF THE STUDY.....	46
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	46
4.2 MAJOR THEMES ON INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING .....	46
4.2.1 Theme 1: Low public knowledge.....	47
4.2.2 Theme 2: Enablers of public participation .....	49
4.2.3 Theme 3: Barriers to public participation .....	49
4.2.4 Theme 4: Intervention strategies to enhance public participation .....	52
4.3 DISCUSSION.....	53
4.4 SUMMARY.....	55
CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE QUANTITATIVE PHASE OF THE STUDY.....	57
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	57
5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY RESIDENTS.....	57
5.3 LEVEL OF RESIDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN IDP PROCESSES.....	59
5.4 ENABLERS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN IDP PROCESSES .....	61
5.5 BARRIERS TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN IDP PROCESSES.....	64
5.6 STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN IDP .....	66
5.7 SUMMARY.....	69
CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION .....	70
6.1 INTRODUCTION.....	70
6.2 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY.....	70
6.3 THE STUDY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE .....	71
6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	71

6.5	CONCLUSION .....	74
6.6	RECOMMENDATIONS .....	74
6.6.1	Research gaps.....	74
6.6.2	Policy and practice .....	75
	REFERENCE LIST.....	76
	APPENDICES .....	88

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Phases of Integrated Development Planning process .....	5
Table 2.1: Typologies of public participation.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> 3
Table 2.2: Public participation in Integrated Development Planning phases.....	24
Table 2.3: Major Features of Integrated Development Planning .....	29
Table 2.4: Problems associated with direct public participation .....	30
Table 4.1: Emerging themes on Integrated Development Planning in Thulamela .....	46
Table 4.2: Summary of key results drawn from the exploratory study .....	55
Table 5.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents .....	58
Table 5.2: Comparison of perception of extent to which residents participate in IDP .....	60
Table 5.3: Comparison of perception of enablers of public participation among Wards in Thulamela Local Municipality .....	62
Table 5.4: Comparison of perception of barriers to public participation among Wards in Thulamela Local Municipality .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 5.5: Comparison of perceived effective interventions for enhancing public participation in IDP.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> 7
Table 6.1: Strategic framework for enhancing public participation in IDP process .....	74

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework .....	7
Figure 2.1: Burke's (1968) five strategies of citizen participation .....	33
Figure 3.1: Map of Limpopo Province showing the location of Thulamela Local Municipality .....	37
Figure 3.2: Exploratory sequential mixed research design .....	38
Figure 3.3: The sampling process followed in this study .....	39
Figure 4.1: Network diagram showing enablers of public participation .....	50

## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Focus group discussion guide .....	88
Appendix 2: Survey questionnaire.....	91
Appendix 3: Request to conduct research.....	97
Appendix 4: Permission to conduct research .....	99
Appendix 5: Informed consent forms.....	100

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
AU	African Union
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CDW	Community Development Workers
CS	Communication Strategy
DPLG	Department of Provincial and Local Government
EISA	Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in South Africa
EXCO	Executive Committee
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GA	Grand Apartheid
HIV/AIDS	Human immune deficiency virus/ Acquired immune deficiency syndrome.
HRCNC	Human Rights Coalition of North Carolina
IDP Rep	Integrated Development Planning Representative Forum
IDP	Integrated Development Planning
IRD	Institute for Rural Development
KM	Kilometre
LED	Local Economy Development
LIM	Limpopo
MCP	Municipal Community Partnership
MP	Member of Parliament
MS	Microsoft Team
MTN	Mobile Telephone Network (South African Cellular Service provider)
MTTV	Madzivhanani Tshidongololwe Tshithuthuni Village
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PPP	Public Participation Programme
PR	Proportional Representative
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SANCO	South African Civic Organisation
SD	Social Democrats
SDP	Strategic Development Plan

SENT	South East New Territories
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
STATS SA	Statistics South Africa
TB	Tuberculosis
TLM	Thulamela Local Municipality
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nation Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNISA	University of South Africa
USA	United States of America
VDM	Vhembe District Municipality
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

In South Africa, a variety of policy and legislative frameworks foster an atmosphere where citizens can be actively involved in identifying, prioritising, and resolving development issues that concern them. The laws requiring municipal governments in South Africa to foster community participation in governance are firmly rooted in the country's Constitution of 1996. These legal frameworks, as highlighted in various studies, emphasise the crucial role of community involvement in decision-making processes within local municipalities (Hicks & Buccus, 2007; COGTA, 2021). Participation by the public in municipal affairs plays a crucial role in collective decision-making within democratic systems (Fox & Meyer, 1995; COGTA, 2021). This study investigated improving public engagement in integrated development planning by creating a framework to promote public involvement, thus enhancing the efficacy of the planning process. This was done through providing the review of literature for both local and international studies in Chapter two, that address public participation in various countries in the world. Chapter two was followed by chapter three, which provided the methodologies that were adopted in the execution of the study. The methodology chapter outlines the design of the research, the population of the study, and how the data was collected and analysed. The fourth chapter presented and discussed the study findings concerning the qualitative strand. Chapter five presented and discussed the data collected through the quantitative strand of the study. This study is concluded with Chapter six where the findings are summarised, conclusions made, and recommendations are given.

## 1.2 Background

Public participation assists the government to understand its citizens' needs. It also enables the participating public to have a greater sense of ownership of the many initiatives being implemented by the government. Muluk *et al.* (2020) noted that participation by the public is unequivocally important element during local development planning and management. It promotes the empowerment of local people by enhancing their contribution in key decision-making-processes that encompass planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the development initiatives (Makombe & Mautjana, 2014).

The local government, being in proximity to the population, actively involves them in the development and governance affairs of their area for their benefit. Arnstein (1969) pointed out that the people participating in governance are the foundation of any democracy. Slaev *et al.*

(2019) also maintained that democracy is a key component that promotes government responsiveness to citizens' needs and which promotes the legitimatisation of decisions made and governance in institutions. Public participation enables greater involvement of various stakeholders in decision-making processes of local governments, including formulating and implementing policies (Dubravka & Sunana, 2018). Thus, the administration of the municipal government is obligated by policy to promote engaged public participation.

Promoting public participation enhances local government's ability to provide citizens with essential services. In this regard, Dubravka and Sunčana (2018) argues that public participation may lead to improved service-delivery that meet the citizens' aspirations. It also provides opportunities to hold to account those in the administration of local affairs. Public participation is additionally linked to quality service improvements and infrastructural development plans (Muluk *et al.*, 2020). Everatt *et al.* (2010) argues that the public's participation in planning development initiatives helps to extend the residents' control thereby advancing validity in longer-term planning and strengthening development initiatives. Public involvement in local development developmental affairs is encouraged by South Africa's democratic government, particularly in the IDP.

South Africa's post-1994 governments have constantly promoted participatory development at the municipal level. Planning for integrated development remains the key strategy used to accomplish participatory local development and resource management of local areas. The IDP, a tactical plan spanning five years, aims to oversee local government management and leadership, ensuring they fulfil developmental duties and meet constitutional mandates effectively (Adonis & Van der Walt, 2017). The process encourages a united and hands-on method where numerous segments and affected people are legally consulted (Cash & Swatuk, 2011). Furthermore, the IDP functions as a synchronising and synergistic lawful tool for civic scheduling in South Africa that covers state and regional domains of government (Dlamini & Reddy, 2018).

The active involvement of local residents, municipal councillors, and pertinent stakeholders is vital throughout the preparation, execution, and evaluation stages of the IDP. In South Africa, the planning process involves five stages (Robinson, 2012; the *Municipal System Act 32 of 2000*). Stage 1 entails analysing the existing situation. This includes the compilation of existing data, analysing the context and agreeing on priority issues. Following this stage is strategising, which involves adopting a vision and objectives, and formulating appropriate operational strategies. The next stages entail formulating project proposals and integrating or compiling integrated development programmes. Lastly, there is the approval stage in which stakeholders

are invited to submit comments, which are then incorporated before a Municipal Council adopts the integrated plan (Republic of South Africa: RSA, 2000).

Local municipalities in South Africa formulate and implement integrated-development plans to comply with various legislative and policy provisions governing them and the IDP as stated above. Participation of local communities and relevant stakeholders in the improvement and carrying out of combined development strategies is critical because it instils a sense of ownership in them. Moreover, it informs all the municipal's planning and development agendas and promote all stakeholders to work in unison towards the same goals.

Despite the imperatives of the IDP as indicated above, available literature shows that there are flaws in public participation. Asha and Makalela (2020) contend that despite legal mandates within local government frameworks, community participation remains deficient due to capacity constraints, dysfunctional Ward Committees, exclusionary practices, absence of ownership, and inactive engagement of voluntary groups. Everatt *et al.* (2010) carried out interviews involving local government officials and grassroots community representatives. The scholars pointed out that public participation in IDP was substandard, describing it as at best consultative, legitimising or rubber stamping. They further argue that this situation exists because of the general apathy of community and organisations within the community, like faith-based institutions, cooperatives and burial societies. Additionally, weak commitment and, inadequate skills and crucial resources were also found to be among the causes of low community participation in the business of municipalities. It is crucial to recognise that merely involving people in current political or developmental processes is not sufficient unless it catalyses transformation and redistributes power in decision-making.

Considerable literature on the municipal management affairs in South Africa reveals that poor community involvement in combined planning still persists. The massive service delivery protests that worsen each year are attributed to poor public participation in IDP, mainly as a result of power struggles or political interference (Naidoo & Ramphal, 2018). Given this situation, it is unsurprising that municipal plans fail to reflect the needs and aspirations of residents. (Mathebula *et al.*, 2016). The problem is more distinct in rural settings where socio-economic conditions are poor (Mashamaite & Madzivhandila, 2014). These scholars further argue that deficiency in public confidence and indifference, deficit in community liability, and non-representativeness are the major factors hindering meaningful community participation. Dlamini and Reddy (2018) observe that, overall, the government has recognised the inconsistent nature of consultative and participatory processes within local governance. Furthermore, the IDP has faced criticism for its authoritative top-down approach and absence

of community involvement, factors that could escalate large-scale service delivery protests among local communities.

### 1.3 Statement of Problem

Although South Africa's legislative framework mandates public participation in IDP processes, it is rarely implemented as specified. Over the years, it has remained low, unsustainable and unsatisfactory. During public participation in IDP, stakeholders, including the public, are not actively engaged when prioritising the needs of the beneficiary community. Munzhedzi (2020) indicated that substandard public participation, uneven access to integrated development planning processes, and inequality remain issues of major concern in local governance. Consequently, there is an ongoing debate among scholars and practitioners on the implementation gap regarding public participation (Everatt *et al.*, 2010, Dubravka *et al.*, 2018; Muluk *et al.*, 2020).

The majority of researchers examining public participation in local government have typically concentrated on aspects related to service delivery (Mofolo, 2016; Naidoo & Ramphal, 2018; Meschede & Mainka, 2020; Msenge & Nzewi, 2021). Literature on public involvement in IDP, especially in rural local municipalities, remains scanty (Hofisi, 2014; Sibanda & Lues, 2019). This situation is attributed to a wide range of factors, which were highlighted by other researchers in the past (Puren *et al.*, 2013; Mamabolo *et al.*, 2017; Naidoo & Ramphal, 2018; Gumede & Nzama, 2020), which include, inter-alia, low education of community participants, insufficient confidence to confront municipal officials, information and awareness challenges as well as limited financial resources. It is evident from the literature that there is scope for locating-specific investigations that might help generate strategic interventions that are appropriate.

This study was carried out in three wards of the Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM), Vhembe District, in the Limpopo Province. Successive annual reports of the local municipality reveal that the TLM has encouraged extensive engagement of its residents and other stakeholders during the IDP processes. However, ineffective communication, widespread service delivery protests, apathy of community members regarding involvement in development work, and weak feedback mechanisms have hindered public involvement in the municipal affairs (Mutoti, 2019). Given the above context, the current study was conducted to investigate the factors affecting public involvement and the level of participation, with the aim of developing an appropriate strategic framework.

## 1.4 Rationale and Significance of the Study

The current study generated knowledge relating to public participation in local development affairs. It also contributes insights into methods for enhancing the current framework for public involvement in integrated development planning. As shown in the background to the study, there is still inadequate published literature that questions the extent of connectedness of public participation with IDP, especially in grassroots communities within rurally based local municipalities. The study's practical implications include increasing awareness among Thulamela Local Municipality officials and residents about the deficiencies in its integrated development planning (IDP) processes. The study reveals how the residents feel about being side lined by the municipality in its IDP processes given that the programme is meant to benefit them. The study findings would be tabled during the Mayoral Committee meetings to deliberate on how the residents' participation in IDP processes could be enhanced. Also key here would be the municipal authorities visiting all the wards in the TLM to provide feedback on how they plan to involve residents in IDP processes and implementation. In addition, the study would benefit the IDP beneficiaries in that its findings would encourage the municipal authorities to revise the way they have been addressing IDP issues in view of the residents' complaints as contained in the study.

## 1.5 Research Objectives and Associated Questions

The main objective of the current study was to explore how to enhance the efficacy of public participation in IDP by developing a framework for fostering public participation. Specific objectives and research questions of the study focusing on integrated development planning are presented in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1:** Research objectives and associated questions.

Objectives	Study questions
a) To assess the level of public involvement in integrated development planning	a. What is the level of public knowledge on integrated development planning? b. To what extent is the public involved in the integrated development planning?
b) To determine the barriers to public participation	What are the barriers to public participation?
c) To determine the factors that enable public participation	a) What enables of public participation? b) What are the necessary interventions to promote public participation?
d) To suggest a strategic framework for enhancing public participation	What are the key features or components of a strategic framework that can augment public involvement in integrated development planning?

## 1.6 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Conceptual frameworks are concepts whose definitions are relevant to intellectual works and current philosophy which are applied in scholarship (De Vos *et al.*, 2014). These are concepts applicable to the subject and speak to the wider spheres of information being measured. The theoretical framework is described as an instantaneous of ideas and philosophies that are advanced using earlier verified and available information (Kivunja, 2018).

This study is guided by theories of participatory development and the ladder of participation. The theory of participatory development underscores the significance of empowering individuals by involving them in decision-making processes related to development projects, aiming to enhance their quality of life. This approach, rooted in the belief that active participation leads to empowerment, self-reliance, and sustainable transformation, aligns with the principles of participatory democracy and sustainable development (Conyers & Hills, 1990).

Development aims to uplift people's quality of life across economic, social, political, cultural, and environmental realms to combat issues like poverty, inequality, and unemployment. Conversely, participation involves public involvement in decision-making throughout development stages. This engagement spans planning, execution, and assessment of initiatives. The right to development, recognised globally, emphasises individuals' and communities' entitlement to contribute to and benefit from multifaceted progress. However, challenges persist in defining and implementing this right effectively, with debates on obligations, aid provision, and potential impacts on civil and political rights (Ghazala, Mansuri, & Rao, 2012).

This study also employs Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation, developed in the USA to delineate different levels of power in urban planning. It outlines eight gradations, ranging from tokenism to non-participation and citizen power, highlighting how power dynamics influence participation as those in power manipulate the citizenries. As argued by Gershman (2013) and Mapuva and Muyengwa-Mapuva (2015), decisions are typically formulated at the top and then conveyed to citizens. This level of participation has two rungs. Planners rely on their opinions and are convinced that their suggested plans are preeminent. Participation essentially seeks to secure citizens' support through publicity (Miroshnikova, 2014).

Tokenism represents the second level of participation, where the government merely informs citizens of its intentions or plans without genuinely seeking public opinion (Mapuva &

Muyengwa-Mapuva, 2015). However, informing and consulting citizens form the basis of democratic and participatory decision making.

Haruta and Bianca (2010) highlighted that while disadvantaged groups can engage in policy-making, power tends to concentrate among a select few and elites. They emphasised the significance of information as the primary means to legitimise participation. However, the lack of two-way information exchange and feedback mechanisms represents a critical flaw in the process (Mishnikova, 2014; Haruta & Bianca, 2010). Additionally, unequal participation among interest groups diminishes the perceived legitimacy of decision-making processes for citizens, especially when policies favour over-represented groups (Rasmussen & Reher, 2023). Furthermore, Hou's study emphasises the importance of addressing the needs of vulnerable groups in public policy formulation to ensure their voices are heard and their interests are considered (Hou, 2019).

Citizen power, as the highest level of participation, involves citizens actively engaging in decision-making processes that directly impact policy formulation and implementation (Tritter & McCallum, 2006; Mapuya & Muyengwa-Mapuya, 2015). This level of involvement is crucial in addressing issues in deteriorated community fabrics, where policies such as facilitating land merging, defining incentives, and providing service facilities significantly increase citizen participation in reconstruction efforts (Özçürümez & Hamer, 2020). Furthermore, citizen participation plays a vital role in disaster reconstruction processes, where local governments organise residents to ensure representation and policy legitimacy, especially during emergency phases (Ver, 2015). This participation is possible where legislation is in place, which give grassroot communities the opportunity to contribute to or influence the decision-making processes. Overall, citizen power is essential for fostering public acceptance of policies, enhancing agency effectiveness, and improving the image of governing bodies. The active involvement of the public in decision-making processes not only enhances the quality of decisions but also minimises conflicts among stakeholders and boosts public participation in Integrated Development Planning (Blair, 2018; Protik et al., 2018; Radtke et al., 2018). Arnstein (1969) highlighted the significance of power structures in society and their impact on decision-making authority. The study at hand aims to explore how local government officials and policymakers can effectively engage citizens to promote constructive participation in decision-making processes.

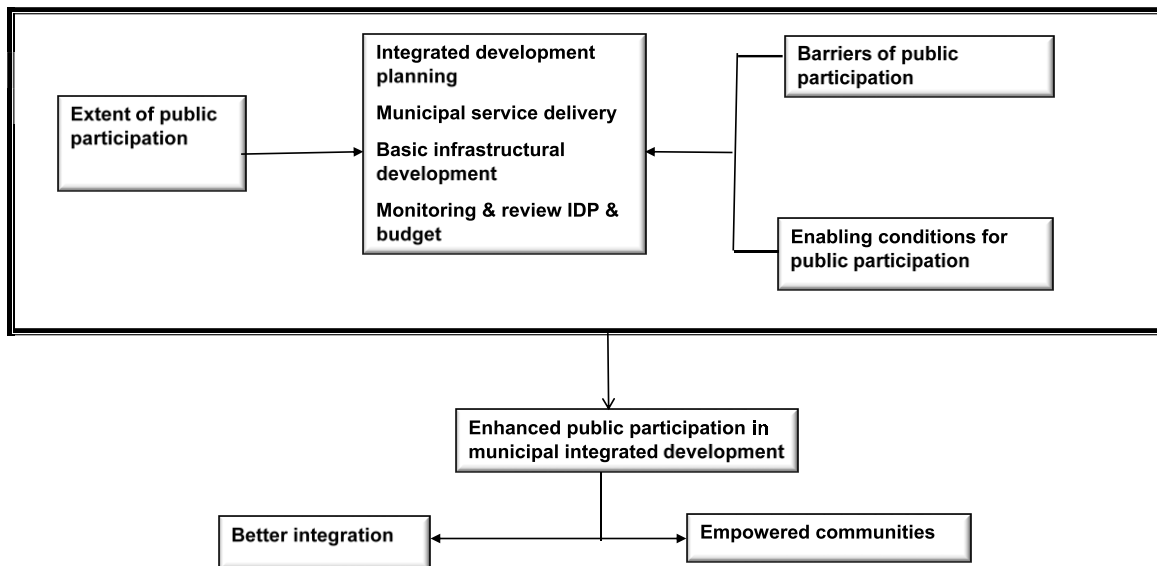


Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework for enhancing public participation in integrated development planning

This study utilised various concepts and theories to conceptualise the depth of public participation in IDP, with the aim to develop a suitable strategic framework. The concepts and their relationship are depicted in Figure 1.1 above. The level of public participation, along with the barriers and facilitators, significantly influences the efficacy of local government operations, particularly concerning the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and its execution (Fokane, 2008). This impact extends to various aspects of local governance, such as service delivery, infrastructure development, monitoring, evaluation, and budgeting processes (Mamokhere, 2022). Challenges like insufficient community involvement, lack of transparency, and inadequate accountability hinder the successful design and implementation of the participative IDP process. To enhance performance, local governments must prioritize active public engagement, transparency, and accountability in their operations. Additionally, fostering innovative institutional skills and addressing socioeconomic barriers are crucial for improving service delivery and overall governance effectiveness.

## 1.7 Operational Definitions and Key Terms and Concepts

The essential terms and ideas vital to this study are defined as follows:

**Public participation:** Fox and Meyer (1995) defined public participation as the engagement of local communities in various administrative decision-making processes, such as setting service standards, budget prioritisation, and evaluating infrastructure projects, so as to align

government initiatives with community needs, foster community support, and enhance social cohesion.

**Integrated Development Planning:** In their seminal work, Dlamini and Reddy (2018) articulated the concept of IDP as a dynamic legal tool that harmonises municipal planning across South Africa, with its influence permeating the national and provincial corridors of governance. This powerful instrument not only coordinates, but also synergises the planning efforts across different levels of government.

**Development:** Abuiyada (2018) portrays development as an intricate process towards the attainment of ambitious objectives. These include the eradication of poverty, the generation of employment opportunities, the diminution of social inequality, and the assurance of human rights. This is accomplished through a multifaceted strategy that encompasses the equitable distribution of growth, a focus on fulfilling basic needs, and the promotion of comprehensive rural development. This perspective underscores the transformative power of development in reshaping society.

**Local Government:** Venter (1998) describes local government as the tier of government in close proximity to its constituents, which is actively engaged in delivering a diverse array of services that have a profound impact on the daily lives of the residents within its jurisdiction. This sphere of government, therefore, plays a pivotal role in shaping the lived experiences of its community.

## 1.8 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is composed of six chapters structured in the following:

Chapter 1 primarily introduces the study and provides the study's background. The research problem, questions, and objectives are also outlined under this chapter.

Chapter 2 provides a detailed review of related literature to the study regarding public participation in IDP.

Chapter 3 describes and provides justifications for the choice of research designs and methods adopted in gathering and analysing data. Furthermore, the area of the study, population, and the techniques used for sampling are also covered.

Chapter 4 presents the data collected and the results of the analysis as well as findings obtained. This chapter includes a detailed analysis of the data, where the researcher interprets the results, identifying patterns, relationships, or trends that emerged from the data.

Chapter 5 provides the detailed descriptions and discussions of findings and how they related to the research objectives. In this part of the study, the researcher discusses the implications of the results, how they relate to the hypotheses or research questions, and how they fit within the broader context of existing literature or theories.

Chapter six provides a summary of key findings, conclusions, and recommendations drawn from the results of this study. It also highlights the limitation of the study and areas for future research.

### **1.9 Summary**

This chapter serves as an introduction to the study, presenting crucial elements such as the background of the study, the statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, significance, key concept definitions, and the study structure. These components highlight the study's necessity and objectives, providing readers with an overview of its progression. The subsequent chapter delves into the reviewed literature, explaining its role in shaping the study's foundation.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the background of the study while this part of the research reviews literature in detail related to the study under consideration. The concept of "participation" in public governance and development has evolved over time, originating in the 1930s with the idea that increased involvement leads to greater productivity (Sy & Irawan, 2022). It has since become integral to decision-making processes in industrialised societies and development administration, emphasizing active community engagement for holistic improvement (Nyaranga, Hao & Hongo, 2022). This approach advocates for not only economic advancement but also enhancements at social, cultural, political, and psychological levels (Yasoori, Ramezannezhad & Shayan, 2016). Encouraging participatory and localized development strategies, such as involving citizens and communities in planning and management, is seen as crucial for sustainable progress in areas like the Vhembe Rural District (Mohammad & Farjana, 2018). By promoting public participation, these approaches aim to empower local stakeholders and enhance the effectiveness of development initiatives that address the plight of the local populace. Therefore, more participatory and localised approaches to development are encouraged through promoting citizens and communities in participatory development planning and management.

Public participation plays a crucial role in governance and development, aiming to enhance transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in decision-making processes. It involves mechanisms like informing, engaging, consulting, collaborating, and empowering citizens, aligning with the South African government's commitment to equality as per the country's constitution (Ally, 2012). However, challenges exist, such as limitations on who can participate, predefined issue scopes, and expectations on outcomes and participant behaviour (van Bekhoven, 2016). Despite these challenges, public participation is recognised as a fundamental principle in international environmental law, influencing decision-making and promoting democratic oversight. Efforts to strengthen public participation include establishing independent institutions to oversee the process, ensuring meaningful citizen engagement in policy formulation and governance activities.

Through IDP processes, the government aims to enhance public participation at all government levels. However, many local governments, like the Tzaneen Local Municipality

(TLM) in Limpopo Province, struggle to achieve this goal. This chapter delves on literature review of various studies related to public participation within the IDP process, situating the current study within existing knowledge. It delves into global, regional, and South African perspectives on public involvement in development. The review concludes by summarising key issues hindering effective public participation in the IDP process, emphasising the need for improvement in this crucial aspect of governance.

## **2.2 Public Participation in Development Planning:**

The development approach centred on people underscores prioritisation the needs and concerns of individuals in the community. It assumes the view that development should focus on the empowerment of local people through enhancing human wellbeing, equality, self-reliance, participation, and sustainability. This suggests that development ought to focus on human progress, making community or public participation a vital component of sustainable development (Koehler, 2015).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, unanimously adopted by all United Nations member states in September 2015, represents a significant milestone in international sustainability politics. This agenda introduces a comprehensive and complex form of goal integration, distinct from traditional environmental policy integration, emphasising a holistic approach to sustainability governance (Carpentier & Braun, 2020). It outlines 17 goals aimed at transforming the planet into a sustainable place by 2030, encompassing economic, social, and environmental dimensions (UN, 2019). The Agenda not only sets ambitious targets but also guides the UN's efforts over the next 15 years towards achieving sustainable economic, social, and environmental development globally (Cardesa-Salzmann & Pigrau Solé, (2017). Moreover, it highlights the crucial role of local actors, particularly cities, in implementing and realising the goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda

A people-centred approach emphasises the need for all stakeholders and local people to participate in achieving more inclusive and sustainable human development. This suggests that citizen and community development participation is on the international agenda, that is, everyone from community development practitioners to policymakers agrees on the importance of consulting the public at grassroots levels to warrant the involvement and engagement of communities in the development initiative processes (Buccus *et al.*, 2010). In contemporary times, globally, there is a widespread call from both individuals and institutions for the inclusion in local government and municipal decision-making processes. Consequently, the development planning process has shifted towards prioritizing people.

Development planning has transitioned from a rigid blueprint approach to a more flexible and adaptive social learning processes. The traditional blueprint method outlines predetermined actions for development programs, while the contemporary learning approach allows administrators to adjust to evolving circumstances and incorporate local feedback (Borgeest, 2023; von Schonfeld, Tan, Wiekens & Janseen-Jansen, 2020). Research emphasises that social learning involves mutual knowledge exchange, combining grassroots social insights with external expertise to foster a collaborative partnership between change agents and project beneficiaries in community planning (Wood, 2005). This shift signifies a move towards participatory and inclusive planning, where stakeholders engage in a dynamic process of shared learning and shared decision-making, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of development initiatives (Moyo & Madlopha, 2016).

Active public participation plays a crucial role in fostering effective social learning and empowering communities. Eversole (2015) highlights that public participation is instrumental in upholding the principles of good governance and human rights. Theron (2009) further emphasizes that public participation is a fundamental aspect of good governance, enhancing government efficiency by directly involving affected individuals, especially the marginalised. By addressing disparities, enabling equal participation in decisions that impact their well-being becomes feasible. This inclusive approach not only ensures fair representation but also leads to more informed and equitable outcomes, ultimately contributing to the overall betterment of society (Sy & Irawan, 2022; Pollo, 2012).

Public participation encompasses various typologies, with scholars like Arnstein (1969), Oakly and Marsden (1984), and Pretty et al. (1994) offering diverse models. These typologies range from strong, bottom-up approaches to weak, top-down methods, serving as benchmarks for evaluating participatory decision-making and planning processes. Understanding public participation typologies is crucial in development planning as they provide a framework for comprehending the diverse levels and types of public engagement in decision-making processes (Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022).

Table 2.1 illustrates various typologies of public participation, as synthesized by the researcher. These typologies, depicted in slightly differing models, levels, and conceptualizations, are pivotal for gauging the depth and effectiveness of public involvement in development planning. Firstly, Arnstein (1969) characterised public participation as a partnership wherein all stakeholders possess equal power to impact final decisions. Secondly, Oakly and Marsden

(1991) similarly advocated for authentic public participation, emphasising the necessity for stakeholders to influence decision-making direction.

Thirdly, Pretty et al. (1994) advocated for this democratic form of public participation, labelling it "interactive participation." In a democratic society such as South Africa, it would be reasonable to anticipate that public policy-making processes would embody these principles of public involvement in municipal IDP processes. Additionally, Davids et al. (2005) acknowledged the existence of varying levels of public participation, including informing, consulting, and empowering participants. These levels denote the extent and quality of community engagement in decision-making processes, particularly in identifying local needs and priorities to enhance living standards through development programs and projects.

**Table 2.1:** Typologies of public participation.

<b>Oakley &amp; Marsden (1991)'s modes of public participation</b>	<b>Pretty et al. (1994)'s conceptions of public participation</b>	<b>Arnstein (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation</b>
<i>Authentic public participation:</i> An active process by which the public influences the direction and execution of decisions.	<i>Self-mobilization:</i> A bottom-up approach where people take initiatives independent of external institutions.	<i>Public control:</i> The public has the degree of power necessary to govern a programme or institution without the influence of the politician.
	<i>Interactive participation:</i> People participate in joint analysis. Participation is a right, not just a means to achieve project goals.	<i>Delegated power:</i> The public acquires the dominant decision-making authority over a particular programme
<i>Incremental mode:</i> Organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations for groups excluded from such control.	<i>Functional participation:</i> People participate in a group context to meet predetermined objectives related to the programme / project.	<i>Partnership:</i> Power becomes distributed through negotiations between the public and those in power.
	<i>Participation for material incentives:</i> People participate by providing resources in return for food and cash.	<i>Placation:</i> Few handpicked members of the public are appointed in committees while tokenism is still the motivation for the powerful.
<i>Manipulative mode:</i> Public involvement in decision-making processes, implementing programmes / projects, evaluation and sharing the benefits.	<i>Participation by consultation:</i> Professionals consult the people and define the problems and solutions and modify this in the light of public's responses. This process does not include any share in decision-making by the public.	<i>Consultation:</i> The public is free to give opinions on the relevant issues, but the powerful offer no insurance that these opinions will be considered.
	<i>Participation in information giving:</i> People participate by answering questions posed in questionnaires or telephone interviews.	<i>Informing:</i> Top-down flow of information in which the public is informed of their rights, responsibilities and opinions.
<i>Anti-participatory mode:</i> Considered a voluntary contribution by the public to a programme / project, but public is not expected to take part in shaping it.	<i>Passive participation:</i> People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened.	<i>Therapy:</i> The public's attitudes are shaped to conform to those in power.
	<i>Nonparticipation:</i> The public decides not to take part in any activities regarding public issues.	<i>Manipulation:</i> The public is part of powerless committees and the notion of public participation is a public relations vehicle for the powerful.

**Sources:** Arnstein (1969); Oakley and Marsden (1991); Pretty *et al.* (1994)

Local government authorities must recognise the significance of public participation in all stages of development planning, implementation, and progress monitoring. The participation process ensures that all participants' interests are communicated and their needs addressed, involving them in defining their involvement and informing them of the impact of their contributions (Munyinda & Habasonda, 2013). It equips participants with necessary information for meaningful engagement. Burke (1981) argued that public participation should enhance the planning process by facilitating information exchange between the public and planners, enriching the database and garnering community support for planning initiatives aimed at addressing specific needs. Furthermore, public participation fosters active involvement of individuals or groups in shaping public policy (Goosen, 2015).

### **2.3 International Perspective on Public Participation**

Globally, countries have endorsed establishing structures that would promote the execution of public participation in making plans and management of development efforts to improve the standard of people's lives. As such, a decentralised development approach is among the key strategies implemented by many countries to boost the practice of public participation in local developmental affairs that might affect them directly or indirectly. Marzuki (2015) argued that proper public participation is important towards sustainable development given that the planned development would be structured according to the stakeholders' demands and needs, which include the benefits for future generations. We now look at how the practices of public participation are implemented in different countries.

#### **2.3.1 Public Participation in China**

Public participation in China has evolved into a crucial tool for addressing governance concerns and public dissatisfaction over the past decade (Gao & Teets, 2023; Han, Kou & Jiao, 2022). Studies indicate that public participation has become ingrained in Chinese society, acting as a catalyst for local economic and political advancements. It has shown to reduce regional carbon emissions and intensity, particularly in regions with higher income and a focus on tertiary industries (Sun, Zhu & Chan, 2016; Liu, Wang, Xia & Ni, 2018). Furthermore, public involvement has been linked to improved air quality by curbing adverse local government interventions, especially with central government support (Sun et al., 2018). This shift towards increased public engagement signifies a significant transformation in governance dynamics, emphasizing the growing influence of citizens in shaping policies and driving societal progress.

### **2.3.2 Public Participation in Germany**

Public participation in Germany serves as a significant benchmark due to the country's reputation as a leader among Western nations in this aspect. Drazkiewicz, Challies, and Newig (2015) along with Kalandides (2018) laid the foundation for this evaluation. They examined Berkin's perspective on participatory urban development in Germany, highlighting the country's emphasis on proper urban planning participation. Berkin (1990) argued that German planning law places a high value on effective public involvement in urban planning processes. Any deviation or failure to adhere to these standards could lead to the nullification of planning outcomes, underscoring the critical role of public participation in ensuring the legitimacy and success of urban development initiatives.

Germany has a long history of experimenting with citizen involvement in urban development, including gentle urban renewal initiatives since the 1980s. Kalandides (2018) discusses Berlin's current public participatory mechanisms, stemming from the 2016 Coalition Agreement signed by three political parties, primarily led by the Social Democrats (SD). This agreement laid the foundation for a new government emphasizing participation principles. Berlin's participatory governance, as highlighted by Kalandides (2018), focuses on the institutional framework and the recognition of participation as a fundamental right in the public sphere. The city's approach reflects a commitment to enhancing citizen engagement and decision-making processes in urban development projects, aligning with the broader trend of promoting participatory practices in Germany's urban planning

Drazkiewicz et al. (2015) conducted a study on public participation in policymaking in Germany, emphasising its impact on decision quality and implementation management in the environmental sector. They highlighted the significance of public involvement in breaking deadlocks and enhancing implementation conditions in most cases. The authors stressed that the success of participation hinges on various aspects within a broader framework. This aligns with the findings of other research on participatory experiences in Germany, emphasising the positive outcomes of public engagement in governance compared to other Western countries (Kuempers, Hahn & von Koppen, 2022; Sierra & Ott, 2022). The study underscores the effectiveness of public participation in Germany's policymaking processes, showcasing its potential for successful outcomes and improved governance practices

### **2.3.3 Public Participation in Latin America**

Studies in Latin America show that education plays a crucial role in shaping citizens' political engagement (Booth & Seligson, 2009; Morena & Moseley, 2011; Boulding, 2014). Educated

individuals are more likely to be politically active, connected to civil society organizations, and engaged in public participation (Boulding, 2014). Furthermore, civic knowledge is highlighted as a key factor in influencing support for democratic ideals and mitigating authoritarian tendencies among the youth (Morena & Moseley, 2011). Gender segmentation in civic participation is also observed, with women actively participating in community organizations, emphasizing the importance of differentiating between types and intensity of civic engagement (Garcia-Cabrero, Sandoval-Hernandez & Martinez, 2017). Despite the prevalence of affluent politicians in Latin American democracies, recent evidence challenges the conventional wisdom that legislators' social class does not significantly impact their attitudes and behaviour, suggesting a potential re-evaluation of the existing scholarly consensus (Dalton, Van Sickle & Weldon, 2010).

Public participation varies across Latin American countries. In Peru, participatory institutions like the Regional Coordination Councils and participatory budgets have been established since 2002, aiming to engage new voices in decision-making, although the impact on organizations remains limited (Booth & Seligson, 2009). Argentina faces challenges in popular participation in public services, with sporadic public meetings attracting only a small fraction of users, hindering effective engagement (Silva, 2009, Bellinger & Acre, 2011). Ecuador's public participation landscape is not directly addressed in the provided contexts. However, the study on Chinese cities highlights the positive impact of public participation on reducing regional carbon emissions and intensity, emphasizing its importance in environmental governance (Zhang, Yang & Li, 2023). This contrasts with Uruguay and Costa Rica, where public participation levels are reportedly low, suggesting disparities in participatory practices across different Latin American nations.

#### **2.3.4 Public Participation in Brazil (Port Alegre)**

In Port Alegre, Brazil, public participation in the budgeting process extended to include communities. This involvement stemmed from an innovative reform program designed to address profound inequality within the city. The initiative aimed to enhance residents' living standards by implementing participatory budgeting (Paradza et al., 2010). Initially, participatory budgeting was rolled out in the city's poorer and more marginalized neighbourhoods. These areas, characterised by grassroots neighbourhood movements, advocated for improved service quality and sought greater autonomy over local initiatives (Paradza et al., 2010).

Port Alegre structured its participatory budgeting into five themes: urban planning covering sanitation, city planning, housing, and the environment; traffic management and public transport; health and social welfare; education, culture, and creation; and economic development and taxation (Menegat, 2002). Paradza et al. (2010) underscored the role of district thematic assemblies in budget creation, emphasising community engagement.

Port Alegre's participatory budgeting model reflects a collaborative dynamic between government expertise and community priorities (Heller, 2001). This synergy aligns with Silverman's (2013) principle of effective governance. Moreover, transparency stands out as another hallmark of this approach, as citizens have full visibility into district budgets and can influence fund allocation toward vital projects. This system empowers communities to address pressing needs. The Port Alegre model underscores the significance of:

- The division of thematic areas highlights the diverse roles of local government, crucial for public awareness.
- Assemblies or districts serve as vital platforms for government-community engagement.
- The interaction between these entities enhances government accountability. Port Alegre's transparent development process, driven by public involvement, ensures accountability and informed decision-making.

### **2.3.5 Public Participation in Mexico City**

In 1998, Mexico City implemented the Citizen Participation Law, establishing neighbourhood committees as key forums for structured dialogue and citizen engagement with the government (Paradza et al., 2010). These committees acted as primary channels for formalized participation on the local level. Their role was to bridge the gap between residents and authorities, serving as conduits to convey community needs to district officials and disseminate information about governmental initiatives relevant to local residents (Calisto Friant, 2019).

Neighbourhood committees play a pivotal role in engaging communities on budgetary matters. Howard and Flores (2013) highlighted the introduction of a budgetary component to Mexico City's participatory agenda since 2000. The concept aimed to empower citizens, enhance transparency, and solidify a left-wing administration (Howard & Flores, 2013).

However, local authorities in Mexico City exploited this loophole in citizen participation management, using it to shape and regulate community priorities, ostensibly in the name of promoting public engagement.

Many countries, including Germany, China, and various Latin American nations, prioritise and actively engage in public participation to bolster democracy and service provision. Some regional and local governments often look to countries like Germany and Brazil as benchmarks for their service delivery initiatives.

## **2.4 Perspectives of Public Participation in Some Parts of Africa**

This section presents regional perspectives in Africa. Three countries were selected for this study, and these are Ghana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. These were selected because of their assumed vibrant public participation initiatives or lack thereof.

### **2.4.1 Public Participation in Ghana**

Public participation stands as a cornerstone of any nation, providing invaluable insights into the needs of its people. Ghana, which returned to constitutional rule in 1992, has maintained a robust democratic governance system akin to the United States. Its political landscape is characterised by stability, openness, and democracy, emphasising accountability, good governance principles, respect for human rights, and adherence to the rule of law (Towah, 2019).

Ghana's ongoing decentralization process is well-documented (Taabazuing, 2010; Crawford, 2004; Ayee, 1994), with its legal foundation outlined in the 1992 Constitution. Chapter 20 of the Constitution, titled "Decentralization and Local Government," mandates the transfer of functions, powers, and resources from the central government to local units. Various legal provisions support popular participation in decision-making, promote good governance at the local level, and enhance overall government efficiency and effectiveness.

### **2.4.2 Public Participation in Zambia**

Zambia's governance is defined by its constitution, which outlines the rights and responsibilities of both the state and its citizens. The Constitution of the Republic of Zambia (Cap 1 of 1996) enshrines fundamental rights, including those pertaining to public engagement in national affairs. However, the constitution does not of explicit mention of the

right to participate in public affairs which creates a gap, casting a shadow over the current state of public involvement in Zambia (Cheeseman & Sishuwa, 2021). The legal framework affecting public participation includes the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Act of 2009, which regulates NGO activities, establishes oversight bodies, and aims to enhance their transparency and accountability (Cheng, Liu, Wang, Cui & Li, 2021).

Article 21 of Zambia's Constitution protects the right to assembly and association without hindrance, allowing individuals to freely form or join political parties, trade unions, or associations for their interests' protection (Sinkala, 2022). Thus, elections serve as a key avenue for Zambians to engage in public affairs. Since the reintroduction of multiparty democracy in 1991, the country has held tripartite elections regularly, including presidential elections, alongside parliamentary elections. However, concerns persist regarding the extent to which these elections truly reflect the will of the voters (Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, 2012)

### **2.4.3 Public Participation in Zimbabwe**

In many modern democratic nations, public participation and collaborative governance have become institutionalised components of governance systems. Recognising the inefficacy of decision-making processes without public input, these systems aim to involve citizens in administrative processes (Berner, Amos, & Morse, 2011). By including representatives from diverse groups and interests, fostering public participation, and embracing network governance, social capital is built, and dialogues are created, leading citizens to feel valued and engaged in decision-making processes (Mapuva, 2020).

The Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe (CoZ) provides a platform for citizens to participate effectively in local-level politics and economics (Mapuva, 2020; Mapfumo, 2019). Section 194 (e) mandates the state to promptly address people's needs and promote public involvement in policymaking (CoZ, 2013). Section 13 ensures that Zimbabwean citizens participate in the formulation and execution of development plans and programs affecting them, with provisions for local communities to determine development priorities in their areas (CoZ, 2013). The constitution also emphasises the full participation of disadvantaged women and youth across Zimbabwean society, while Section 264 (a) underscores public participation by local authorities and councils as integral to devolving power (CoZ, 2013).

However, there's limited engagement between city planners and residents of Harare, hindering grassroots communities' contributions to local governance (Quick & Feldman, 2011). Consequently, public participation and collaborative governance offer valuable frameworks for analysing how Harare's municipal authorities utilise or neglect public participation strategies to enhance service delivery (Mapuva, 2020; Chigwenya & Ndiweni, 2021). There's been insufficient effort to involve the public in crafting and implementing informal sector policies, with public participation in Zimbabwe primarily consisting of one-way communication between citizens and local authorities (Chigwenya & Ndiweni, 2021). Moreover, current public participation strategies in Harare are often manipulative, lacking genuine engagement (Mapfumo & Mutereko, 2020), exacerbated by the polarised political landscape shaped by the ruling ZANU (PF) party.

In contrast, while public participation is enshrined in the constitutions and enacted in laws of selected countries like Zimbabwe, Ghana, and Zambia, its actual practice is inadequate and /or lacking. Zimbabwe lacks effective public participation due to political polarisation (Masvaura, 2022), while Ghana has decentralised but not fully implemented it (Asante & Debrah, 2019), and Zambia has prioritised but not effectively executed it (Zulu, Michelo, Msoni, Hurting, Byskov & Blystad, 2014). These discrepancies suggests a gap between intention and implementation, often stemming from community ignorance or political hurdles inhibiting meaningful participation. Therefore, there's a pressing need for evidence-based policymaking in Zimbabwe to foster genuine public participation across all sectors.

## **2.5 The South African Perspective of Public Participation**

This section deals with situational analysis in South Africa, distilling how South Africans regard and react towards public participation in relation to service delivery context. The section covers selected Local Municipalities around South Africa.

### **2.5.1 Public Participation in South Africa: City of Cape Town**

Drawing inspiration from the participatory practices of Port Alegre in Brazil, the City of Cape Town has integrated elements of participatory budgeting into its public engagement processes. Kambala (2012) highlights that successful participatory processes can foster

innovative and collectively endorsed solutions to intricate social challenges. By collaborating with government structures to pursue common goals, projects are more likely to succeed. Cape Town has adopted thematic areas similar to Port Alegre, covering services, economic development, transport, housing, health, disaster management, environment, sport, recreation, and social development (Pieterse, 2010).

In mirroring Port Alegre's approach, Cape Town has established sub-councils to facilitate community connection and resident participation in local government decision-making. The city boasts 24 sub-councils for its Metropolitan Municipality, tasked with encouraging resident involvement, monitoring service delivery, addressing complaints, overseeing ward allocation spending, and approving business licenses (Oghenetega, 2018; Zimba, 2012). These sub-councils broaden community engagement beyond the integrated development process, with ward council members serving as chairs, enhancing transparency and accountability among government officials.

The incorporation of participatory budgeting elements from Port Alegre has enabled Cape Town to actively involve communities and foster a culture of development dialogue. The Gauteng Provincial Legislature (2018) underscores the constitutional obligation to ensure citizen awareness of programs, activities, and policies impacting their lives, emphasising the fundamental role of local government development (Coetzee, 1989) who emphasised that development is for people. Nkomo (2012) further stresses the importance of public servants recognising their partnership with the public.

South Africa, as a multi-party democratic nation, enshrines human rights in its constitution. Despite its representative democratic framework, the South African Constitution and related legislation complement elected officials' power with forms of public participation (Buccus et al., 2007; Scott, 2009). Entering its second decade of freedom, South Africa prioritizes strengthening democracy and enhancing the quality of life for all citizens (ANC, 2017).

## **2.5.2 Public Participation in the Vhembe District Municipality**

Public participation in the Vhembe District Municipality (VDM) is facilitated by the communication strategy, aimed at enhancing involvement in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) (Dieng et al., 2023). The VDM, a category B Municipality established in 2000, comprises four local municipalities namely, Thulamela, Makhado, Musina, and Collins Chabane. Studies in the Vhembe District have highlighted challenges in community participation in municipal affairs, emphasizing the need for active involvement to improve service delivery, democracy, and accountability (Mamokhere & Meyer, 2023). Additionally, research in the area has

identified distinct patterns of malaria incidence, emphasising the importance of local targeting for disease control and elimination efforts (Dieng et al., 2023). The findings underscore the significance of understanding local dynamics and engaging communities effectively to address various issues, including public health and governance, within the Vhembe District.

Good governance entails effective management of public affairs and resources, while public participation in the Village Development Model (VDM) involves community consultation in decision-making processes. The VDM emphasises accountability, responsiveness, transparency, and clean governance through public involvement (Rahmatullah & Rahmatullah, 2021). The district has implemented a communication strategy to enhance democracy and meet legal obligations, focusing on educating, raising awareness, and promoting policies. The Public Participation Programme (PPP) serves as a vital platform for participatory democracy within the municipality, facilitating engagement and collaboration between the government and the community (Budiawan & Nuryati, 2022). This approach aligns with the principles of good governance and reinforces the importance of inclusive decision-making processes in local governance[ (Pietersz, 2018).

The Vhembe District ensures community participation through various platforms like the IDP Representative Forum, IDP and budget public consultative meetings, and engagements with Traditional Leaders, following the approved IDP framework (Tshitangoni & Francis, 2015). These engagements provide opportunities for communities to contribute to the IDP and service delivery processes. Quarterly meetings of the IDP Representative Forum and Imbizos facilitate regular input from the communities (Mamokhere, 2023). Additionally, Ward Committees and stakeholders receive annual training on IDP and planning processes, enhancing their understanding and involvement (Refstie, 2008). The annual development of schedules for public participation events like IDP and Imbizos ensures a structured approach to community engagement and input gathering (Fokane, 2008).

## **2.6 Legislation Relevant to Public Participation in South Africa**

Legislation plays a crucial role in guiding various aspects of society, requiring universal compliance. It establishes frameworks promoting public engagement across governmental levels. In South Africa, key legal structures supporting and fostering public participation include the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000, the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, Act 117 of 1998, the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003, and the Local Government: Municipal Property Rates Act, 2004. While governmental policy documents advocate for public involvement in local governance, these specific laws are

essential for effective public participation in decision-making processes (Ledwaba, 2021; Sentime, 2014; Storm & Coetzee, 2018).

**Table 2.2:** Major Features of Integrated Development Planning.

<b>Legislation/Framework</b>	<b>Major features</b>
1. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 106 of 1996.	In terms of the functions of local, provincial and national governments, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states, in Section 152 (1) (e), that the objectives of local government are to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government. The constitutional requirement for public participation indicates that public participation must be development oriented, responding to people's needs and encouraging the public to participate in the integrated development planning process.
2. The White Paper on Local Government of 1998.	The White Paper on Local Government, Gazette No. 18739 of 1998, The White Paper also indicates that it is important for Municipalities to find ways of structuring public participation rather than to impose services on the community. It also provides the Municipalities with the possibility to develop structures that will ensure meaningful participation and interaction of Councillors and voters participating in the policy process, as well as consumers and service users which are the members of the community.
3. The Local Government Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998.	Section 72 (3) of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 makes provision for the Ward Committee to enhance participatory democracy in local government. Section 74 of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 deals with the functions and powers of Ward Committees. Section 81 of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 states that Traditional Leaders observe a system of customary law in the area of a Municipality and residents may participate through their leaders, identified in terms of sub-section (2) of the Act in the proceedings of the Council of that Municipality
4. The Local Government Municipality Systems Act 32 of 2000.	Section 16 (1) of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 requires that all Municipalities develop the culture of community participation and a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance. The main purpose is to encourage and create conditions for the local community to participate in the affairs of the Municipality, including their participation in all the stages of integrated development planning processes such as analysis, strategies, project planning, integration, approval, implementation and monitoring.  Section 16 (1) of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000. The Municipality should build the capacity of the local communities to enable them to participate in its affairs, while Councillors and municipal staff foster community participation.
5. Local Government Municipal Property Rates Act 6 of 2004.	Community to participation in accordance with Chapter 4 of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000. The draft rates policy must be available at the Municipality head office, satellite offices and libraries for public inspection during office hours and if the Municipality has an official website, the draft rates policy should be there as well. According to the Local Government Property Rates Act 6 of 2004, the Municipality must invite the local community to submit comments and representations to it within a specified period.

## **2.7 Mechanisms to Enhance Public Participation in South Africa**

### **2.7.1 Ward Committees**

Ward Committees serve as vital conduits, fostering communication between municipal councils and local communities (Van der Waldt (2010). Their pivotal role lies in pinpointing community needs and tailoring municipal programs to fit local contexts. The ward participatory system, advocated by Van der Waldt (2010), enables the formation of Ward Committees, amplifying public engagement. These committees bolster participatory democracy at the local level, providing a platform for communities to articulate their views and requirements to the municipal council. Primarily acting as advisory bodies to Ward Councillors, Ward Committees offer recommendations on ward-related issues to the Municipal Council, Executive Committee, and Executive Mayor. This mechanism ensures that the Ward Participatory System effectively captures the diverse needs and interests prevalent within each ward.

### **2.7.2 Traditional Leaders and Public Participation**

According to Nyalunga (2006), Traditional Leaders wield significant influence in enhancing public participation within communities, serving as integral components of the Councillor Constituency. Sibeko (2007) asserts that municipalities ought to integrate traditional councils as pivotal structures of Traditional Leadership, essential stakeholders in community consultation processes. Traditional Leadership represents a crucial constituency, particularly regarding development and service delivery issues, necessitating their inclusion in integrated development planning processes.

Section 81 of the Local Government Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 underscores the involvement of Traditional Leaders in municipal councils. They must be afforded opportunities to attend and contribute to council meetings (Local Government Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998). Moreover, before making decisions affecting traditional authority areas, municipal councils must allow Traditional Leaders to express their views. Act 106 of 1996, the country's Constitution, provides a framework for recognizing Traditional Leadership in the democratic landscape. Municipalities are mandated to establish mechanisms ensuring the structured and coordinated engagement of the Traditional Leadership house in policy developments, including integrated development planning processes and programs.

### **2.7.3 Councillors**

According to Nyalunga (2006), councillors serve as the primary link between people and local governments, often being the first point of contact for citizens seeking advice and assistance. When individuals approach a councillor with a concern, they expect tangible action in response. It is imperative for councillors to embody the role of people's representatives, transcending political affiliations. Section 13 (a) of Act 106 of 1996, the country's Constitution, defines municipalities' mandate to prioritize community needs and actively engage communities in local governance. Municipal councils are duty-bound to foster community involvement and utilize resources in the best interest of their constituents. As highlighted by Sibeko (2007), councillors are directly elected to serve and represent the people within the municipality, ensuring their interests are effectively advocated for.

### **2.7.4 Non-Governmental Organisations and Community-Based Organisations**

In South Africa, NGOs and CBOs serve as vital watchdogs, contributing significantly to community development and governance structures, thereby bridging the gap between government and citizens. According to Van der Waldt (2011), NGOs are instrumental in fostering sustainable democracy by establishing robust grassroots institutions, facilitating informed public participation in electoral processes. Entities like taxpayers' associations and civic organizations, categorised as CBOs, play pivotal roles in democratizing municipal decision-making and community development, empowering members through skills development initiatives.

Globally, there's a growing emphasis on fostering new forms of interaction among the state, civil society, and the private sector, often through partnerships (Kuhn, 2012). Municipal Community Partnerships (MCPs) represent one such partnership model, varying in complexity based on resource availability, institutional capabilities, and development priorities. In South Africa, government motivation for partnering with civil society organizations stems from recognizing constraints in delivering basic services and development, as highlighted by Kuhn (2012). Embracing the notion of partnerships, South Africa's policies prioritize cost-effective and participatory basic service delivery, aligning with global trends. Nyalunga (2006) underscores the pivotal role of an active civil society as a key agent of public participation, essential for democratic consolidation.

### **2.7.5 Imbizos and Tshivhidzo (Public Meetings)**

Buccus et al. (2007) highlighted the widespread popularity of Izimbizos as platforms facilitating interaction between government officials and community members. Public meetings and gatherings serve as avenues for politicians and officials to engage with the public, discuss

issues, listen to concerns, accept criticism, and address community grievances (Van der Waldt, 2011). These gatherings are crucial mechanisms for providing citizens with information on public management, fostering transparency, and holding municipal officials accountable. However, Van der Waldt (2011) lamented that Izimbizos often devolve into mere public relations exercises, as individuals critical of government decisions are screened, isolated, and silenced, undermining their ability to contribute constructively to discussions on community growth, prosperity, and welfare.

### **2.7.6 Integrated Development Planning**

The Constitution of South Africa, Act 106 of 1996, and the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 mandate municipalities to establish effective participatory processes to engage stakeholders. Given the size of many municipalities, direct participation of all community members in planning processes may be impractical. Hence, clear rules and procedures are essential to determine who participates or is consulted and on behalf of whom. The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) encourages the involvement of all stakeholders within municipal areas in its preparation and implementation.

Chapter 5, Section 23 of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 emphasizes the importance of the IDP, requiring municipalities to engage in development-oriented planning to achieve the objectives outlined in Section 152 of the Constitution. Section 29 of the Act outlines the process for drafting the IDP, including consideration, adoption, and adherence to predetermined timelines and mechanisms. Municipalities are obligated to consult the local community on their development needs and facilitate their active participation in drafting the IDP.

### **2.8 Public Participation in Integrated Development Planning**

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 106 of 1996, and the Local Government Municipal System Act, 32 of 2000 mandate municipalities to facilitate the involvement and commitment of stakeholders through effective participatory processes. Given the size of many municipalities, direct public participation of all community members in the planning process may be impractical. Consequently, clear rules and procedures are necessary to determine who participates or is consulted on behalf of others. The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process encourages engagement from all stakeholders residing and conducting businesses within the municipal area.

Chapter 5, Section 23 of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 addresses the IDP, compelling municipalities to engage in development-oriented planning to align with the objectives of local government outlined in Section 152 of the Constitution. Section 29

further specifies that the municipality's drafting process for the IDP, including consideration and adoption, must adhere to a predetermined program, including timelines and appropriate mechanisms. The municipality is required to consult the local community regarding its development needs and enable their active participation in drafting the IDP.

### 2.8.1 Public Participation in IDP Phases

Effective planning involves recognizing that public involvement may not be necessary or suitable at every stage. Different participation methods should be tailored to each stage to minimize costs, prevent participant burnout, and maximize effectiveness. The approach to participation should vary depending on the phase of the planning process, as depicted in Table 2.3 outlining public involvement in IDP phases (TLM, 2017).

**Table 2.3:** Public Participation in Integrated Development Planning.

<b>Planning</b>	<b>Public Participation Mechanisms</b>
<b>Analysis</b>	Invitation to a meeting by Ward Councillor of stakeholders and community.
<b>Strategic</b>	District Municipality invites IDP Representative Forum in a meeting to deal with IDP strategies
<b>Project planning</b>	Municipal Technical Sub-committees and planning department design project proposal for all projects for that financial year.
<b>Integration</b>	All members of IDP Representative Forum are invited to integrate projects according to community priority
<b>Approval</b>	Municipal Council invite stakeholders to a general council that approves IDP and budget simultaneously
<b>Implementation and monitoring</b>	Municipal management and public representatives implement IDP programmes

**Source:** TLM (2017).

The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) unfolds across six distinct phases. First comes the analysis phase, dedicated to pinpointing the needs and issues of the populace, a critical step in crafting targeted solutions (TLM, 2012). Next, the strategies phase sifts through comprehensive data amassed during analysis, deliberating potential remedies to gauge their impact on identified problems (SALGA, nd, 24). Phase three, the projects phase, sees specialists from relevant fields taking the helm, crafting detailed plans while ensuring beneficiaries' voices are heard. Here, a long-term developmental blueprint takes shape, rooted in community input (TLM, 2017). Phase five marks the approval stage, where the IDP undergoes scrutiny and endorsement by both the council and stakeholders during a pivotal general council assembly (TLM, 2017).

## 2.9 Factors Limiting Participation in Integrated Development Planning

Creighton (2005) highlights a prevalent issue in municipal public participation: ensuring that participants truly represent the public they claim to speak for. Failure here undermines the interests of those they supposedly represent. Effective public involvement must encompass a spectrum of community opinions, including those diverging from the mainstream, to ensure genuine representation and inclusivity. Failure to represent all stakeholders, risks rendering the participation process flawed, leading disenfranchised groups to seek alternative avenues for influence, such as legal recourse. Callahan (2007) underscores the myriad challenges inherent in public participation, emphasizing the need for thorough problem identification, articulation, and analysis to pave the way for viable solutions. Van der Waldt (2010) underscores the importance of Municipal Community Partnerships while highlighting the pivotal question of how municipalities should facilitate public engagement. Additional challenges lie in defining the scope of municipal accountability to the community and ensuring that municipal officials truly reflect the needs and aspirations of the communities they serve (Mulaudzi, F.M. & Mulaudzi, N.L. 2019).

**Table 2.4:** Problems associated with direct public participation.

Type of problem	Description
1. Size	Direct public participation must accommodate numerous groups and individuals, yet direct democracy was formulated for small groups, meeting face to face. Nowadays, new technology enables more people to be involved by means of the internet.
2. Excluded groups	In public participation, there are some groups that are found to be disadvantaged such as youth, women, religious minorities and the unemployed who have been systematically excluded from representative democracy.
3. Risk	Complex technologies expose communities to substantial hazards and risks of chemicals, radioactive and biotechnological ones, without their knowledge
4. Technology and expertise	Citizens find it difficult to participate when they lack the knowledge, information and expertise needed to effectively communicate.
5. Time	The decisions are often made quickly without the time necessary for large group deliberations and many citizens lack the time needed to participate in a meaningful way. The criticism levelled against direct public participation is that it takes too much time.
6. The common good	Direct public participation may not reflect the common good as this depends on deliberations. Municipalities, as the structure of government closest to the people, are usually characterised as a site of intense political activities.

**Source:** Callahan (2007).

## 2.10 Benefits of Public Participation in Integrated Development Planning

Cele (2003) underscores the crucial role of public involvement in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process, aligning with Section 152(1) of the Constitution (1996), which champions community participation in local governance. Mulaudzi, F.M., and Mulaudzi, N.L. (2019) stress the obligation of municipalities, via IDP committees and councillors, to actively foster public engagement, especially among marginalised groups lacking organisational power to voice their interests publicly, such as women, children, the disabled, and specific age demographics like youth, orphans, and the elderly. Recognizing the entitlement of all citizens to participate, the National Policy Framework for Public Participation (2007) delineates the myriad benefits, including enhancing community information levels, refining service delivery, fostering a collective vision for development, bolstering municipal accountability, fostering stakeholder collaboration, and promoting public comprehension of development initiatives.

These advantages underscore the municipality's imperative to facilitate robust public participation, essential for fostering cooperative and participatory governance. Van der Waldt (2010) further emphasises that public involvement serves as citizens' introduction to governance, playing a vital role in keeping municipalities attuned to the pulse of their communities. By continuously integrating diverse perspectives, needs, and concerns into policy agendas, public participation fortifies democratic local governance, ensuring that municipal decisions truly reflect the desires and aspirations of residents.

## 2.11 Public Participation Strategies

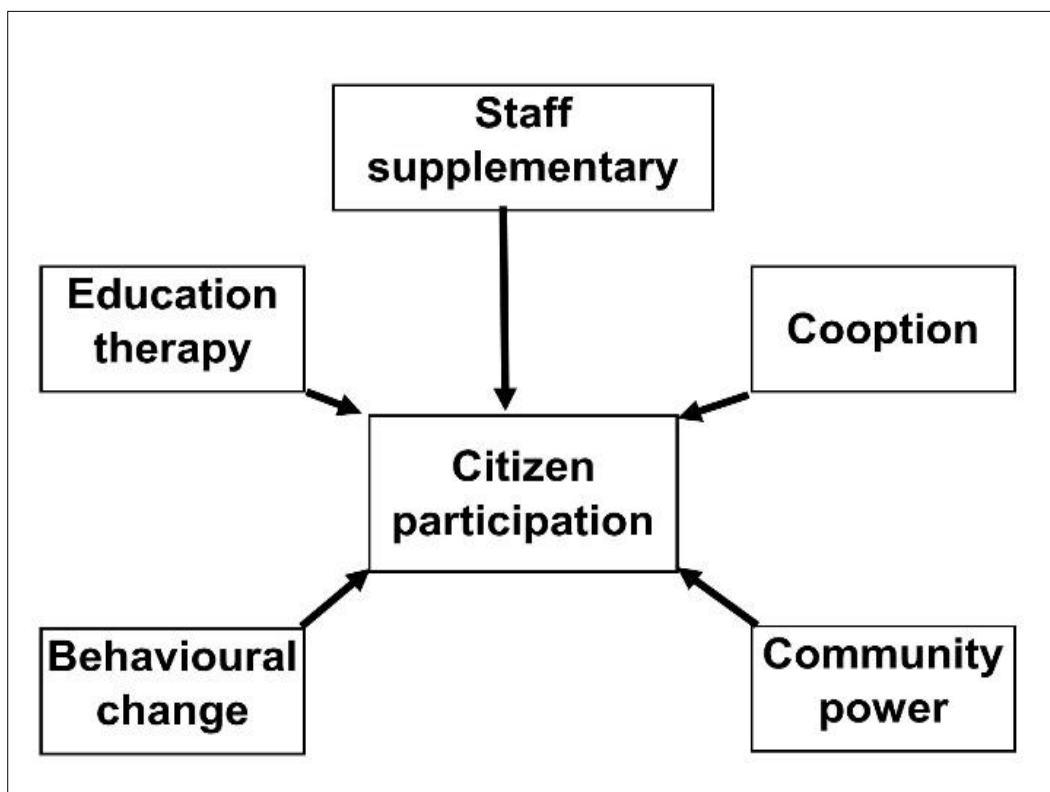
Burke (1968) proposed five distinct citizen participation strategies tailored for city authorities to integrate into their planning processes. Burke contended that while challenges may arise in fostering citizen involvement, adopting a strategy customised to the societal or organisational context can mitigate many dilemmas. These strategies, detailed in Figure 2.1, encompass a spectrum of approaches aimed at optimising citizen engagement.

**Education Therapy:** The emphasis lies on educational initiatives aimed at instilling in citizens and public communities a deep appreciation for cooperation as a potent tool for problem-solving. This involves comprehensive instruction on the workings of democracy, empowering individuals to actively participate in decision-making processes that directly impact their well-being.

**Behavioural Change:** This approach is implemented through community organisations, founded on two fundamental principles. Firstly, it posits that individuals are often more receptive to influence from their own social circles than from municipal authorities. Secondly, it recognises that people and groups are inclined to oppose decisions imposed upon them, but are more likely to support and uphold decisions and policies they have helped shape. Success hinges on the active engagement and satisfaction of all parties involved in the decision-making process. Furthermore, fostering open communication channels within the group is vital, ensuring stakeholders can freely exchange information and perspectives.

**Staff Supplement Strategy:** This strategy revolves around enlisting dedicated volunteers from the public community to serve as part of the organization's staff. Its aim is to complement the expertise of the planning agency's personnel with the specialized knowledge and insights of individual citizens.

**Co-option:** This strategy is crafted to leverage the power of community by enlisting influential individuals into the organisation and harnessing their capabilities to fulfill the organisation's goals. Maintaining the satisfaction of these individuals is paramount for the organisation's continuity. While akin to co-optation, this strategy operates in a more informal manner.



**Figure 2.1:** Five strategies of citizen participation (Burke, 1968).

## 2.12 Summary

The people-centred approach to development advocates for empowering local communities through active participation and sustainability. Development planning has evolved from traditional blueprints to contemporary learning approaches. This chapter delves into the concept of public participation and its various typologies. Emphasising the importance of meaningful participation to meet legal requirements, the process involves educating, involving, consulting, collaborating, and empowering citizens through different institutional setups.

Globally, countries like China, Germany, and Latin American nations prioritise public engagement to enhance democracy and service delivery. Some regional and local governments, view countries like Germany and Brazil as models for their own service delivery programs. However, experiences from various countries indicate discrepancies between legal frameworks and actual practice. While public participation is enshrined in laws or constitutions, implementation varies. For instance, Zimbabwe lacks public participation altogether, while Ghana has decentralised it, albeit with mixed results. Zambia prioritises public participation in theory but faces challenges in practice, suggesting a gap between intent and execution.

In South Africa, the government is committed to promoting public participation across municipal, provincial, and national levels through Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). However, not all local governments, including TLM in Limpopo province, effectively implement this approach. The subsequent chapter will detail the methodology employed in this study, encompassing research design, data collection and analysis methods, and ethical considerations.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter conducted a thorough review of literature pertinent to the subject of this study, thus situating the research within the existing discourse on the topic. Consequently, this research endeavours to develop a framework aimed at augmenting public participation within the local government Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process. This involves investigating the effectiveness of public engagement, identifying facilitating factors, and delineating barriers to public involvement. The active engagement of stakeholders and communities in developmental endeavours is pivotal for the efficacy and longevity of development initiatives, particularly those concerning infrastructure and service delivery, spearheaded by municipalities. This chapter elucidates the research design and methodologies utilised to formulate the aforementioned framework for promoting participation in the local government IDP process.

Commencing with an overview and justification of the study area selection, the chapter proceeds to expound upon the research design, encompassing the study population and sampling methodologies employed. Detailed descriptions of data collection techniques, including the tools utilised and procedures enacted, are provided. Additionally, the chapter elucidates the methods employed for data analysis, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Ethical considerations integral to the study are also delineated. Ultimately, the chapter culminates with a comprehensive summary, encapsulating the key aspects of the research design and methodology employed in this study.

### 3.2 Description and Location of the Study Area

The research was carried out in the TLM, located in the Province of Limpopo, South Africa. The area covered by TLM is about 2893 936 square kilometres (TLM, 2016). A suitable research site is crucial, as well as essential to select a suitable and feasible study area for carrying out research. The TLM is named after the Vhalembetu Chieftdom of Makahane, known as Thulamela, which was one of the first Venda clans to occupy the land south of the Vhembe (Limpopo) River (TLM, 2016).

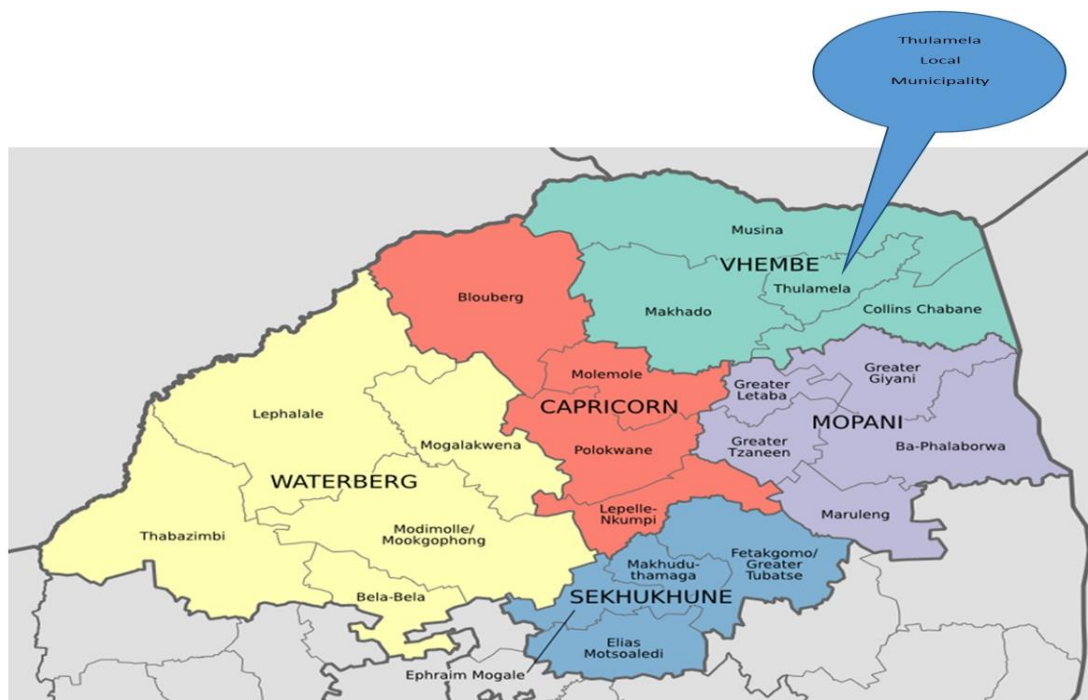
The population of the TLM was 618 462 in 2011, according to the Census conducted then, which has since decreased by 121 225 to 497 237 due to demarcation changes. The municipality has approximately 130 321 families, with about 6.1 members in each household (Statistics South Africa, 2010; Statistics, Community Survey, 2016). The TLM is a category B

Municipality, established in 2000 according to the Local Government Structures Act, No. 117 of 1998 and the Provincial Government Notice No. 307 of 2000 (RSA, 1997).

The Task and Local Municipality (TLM) aims to achieve city status by 2030 through promoting urban regeneration, comprehensive rural development, and Local Economic Development (LED) to enhance the quality of life. This involves revitalizing degraded areas, integrating actions for community well-being, and cooperating with local communities. The municipal council comprises of 81 councillors, with 40 of them representing political parties through proportional representation and the remaining 41 representing the 41 wards in the municipality. There are 410 Ward Committees that serve as platforms for interacting with various interest groups. Their main role is to organise communal meetings to promote public participation in the IDP process (TLM Annual Report, 2020).

A Municipal Situation Analysis conducted towards the development planning process in Thulamela identified several challenges that limit community involvement in the IDP processes. The voice of the voiceless is not heard during public participation since they are not invited to participate. As the former Executive Mayor of the Vhembe District Municipality stated, "One of our core values as the Vhembe District Municipality is our responsiveness through public participation. We note critical issues raised by our communities in the TLM, Musina, Makhado, and LIM 345. This happened during our IDP and budget consultation processes, and we commit ourselves to finding lasting solutions" (Radzilani, 2017). This quote underscores the government's commitment to ensuring that grassroots communities are at the heart of any initiative designed to uplift the residents out of poverty and inequality (Masango, 2009).

This study examined public participation in integrated development planning in three specific wards of the TLM, namely, Ward 4, 10, and 18. Ward 4, is located at the periphery of Thohoyandou town, and consists of 18 rural villages with substandard infrastructure, and most households rely on social grants for support (TLM, 2019). Ward 10 is semi-urban in nature, and is made up of five villages with better road infrastructure and health facilities than Ward 4. Ward 18 covers parts of Thohoyandou town and is more developed than the other two wards. The three wards differ significantly in terms of demographics, socio-economic activities, and economic development, and are considered the focal point of development in the municipality.

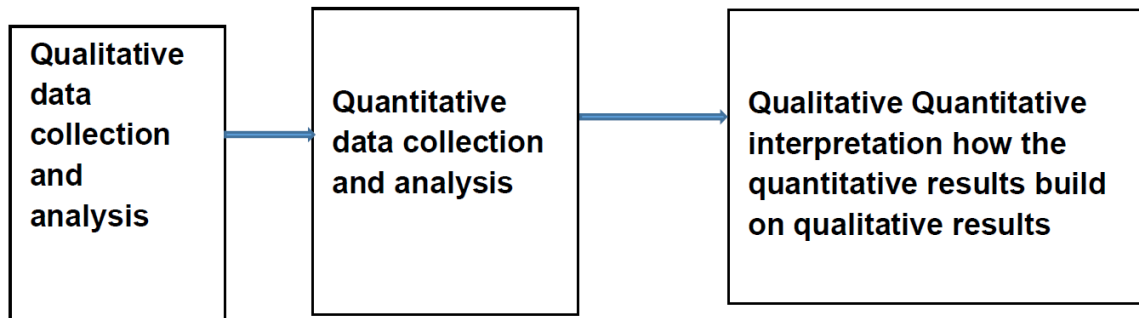


**Figure 3.1:** Map of Limpopo Province showing the location of Thulamela Local Municipality.

**Source:** Google Maps.

### 3.3 Research Design

An essential aspect of a study's coherence lies in selecting an appropriate design and justifying its choice. In this study, a mixed research design was employed, specifically an exploratory sequential mixed method. Mixed research involves integrating qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study to gain a more comprehensive understanding of research problems (Nataliya et al. 2020). The study followed an exploratory sequential mixed research approach, blending qualitative and quantitative elements to enhance the depth of comprehension regarding issues surrounding public participation in the IDP process (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017).



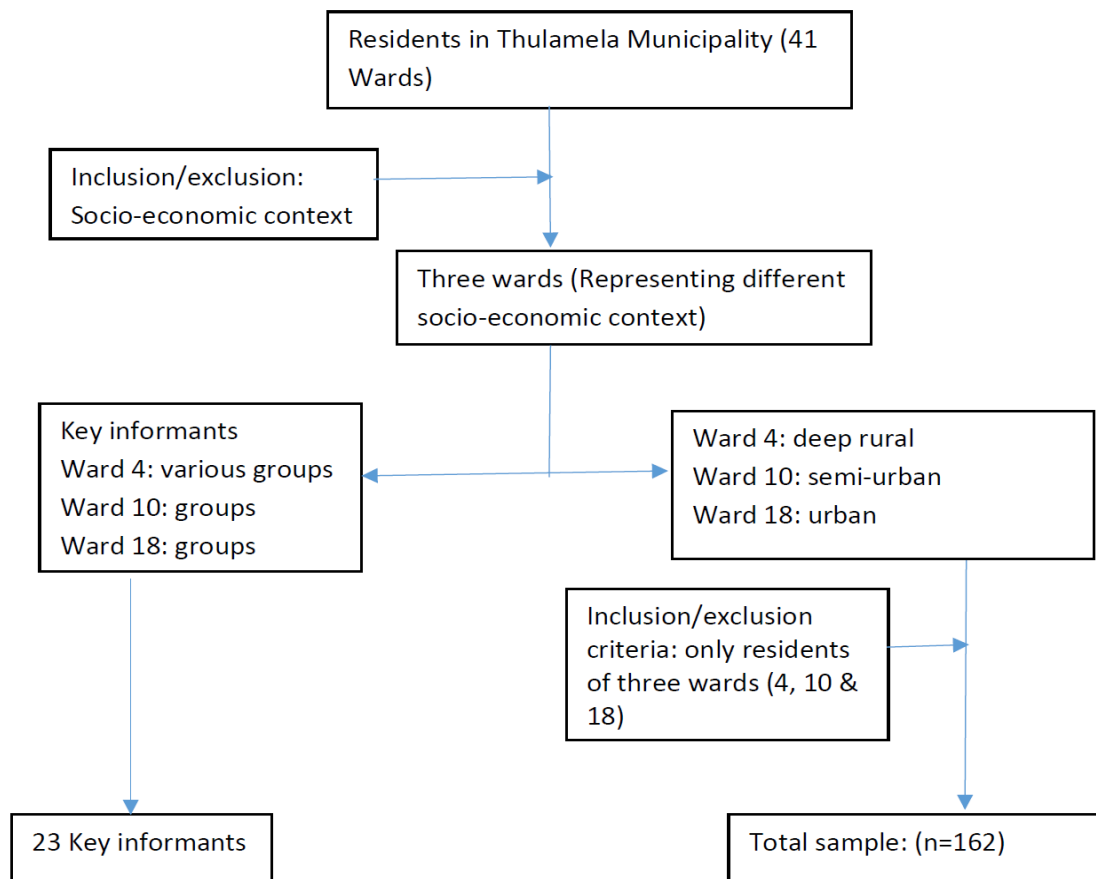
**Figure 3.2:** Exploratory sequential mixed research design.

**Source:** Nieuwenhuis (2020).

The research design employed in this study involved an initial qualitative analysis to assess the effectiveness of public participation in Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) by identifying patterns and key themes. Subsequently, the qualitative insights were utilised to guide a quantitative investigation aimed at measuring the variables under study. This approach allowed for a comprehensive exploration of community involvement in IDPs, combining qualitative depth with quantitative rigor to provide a holistic understanding of public participation dynamics in local governance processes (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018).

### 3.4 Population and Sampling Procedures

The target population used in the quantitative strand comprised all the residents in the selected wards, namely Wards 4, 10, and 18 of the TLM. The selection of these wards was based on their contextual and socio-economic situations in the study area. For instance, Ward 4 is a deep rural area located in the periphery of Thohoyandou town, while Ward 10 is situated in a semi-urban area with a relatively better profile than Ward 4. Ward 18 is located in Thohoyandou Town's Centre for Business Development (CBD), which is the economic hub of the TLM. The qualitative study employed purposive sampling to select participants. This method is utilized in unique circumstances where sampling is tailored to a specific objective (Maree & Pietersen, 2020).



**Figure 3.3:** *The sampling process followed in this study.*

For the qualitative study, participants were selected based on their familiarity with IDP processes and their eligibility as decision-makers. The specific groups considered were Traditional Leaders, Ward Committee members, youth, adults, civic, pastors, community development workers, and people with disabilities. A total of 23 residents from Wards 4, 10, and 18 were purposefully selected for the qualitative study to avoid misinformation from non-residents or visitors.

In the quantitative study, participants were selected using a simple random sampling technique from the same predefined groups of TLM residents as mentioned earlier. This approach guaranteed that each member of the identified groups had an equal opportunity to be included in the study. The final sample size for the quantitative phase comprised 162 participants.

### 3.5 Data Collection Methods, Tools and Techniques

This study utilised a mixed methods research design, which incorporated both the qualitative and quantitative methods of gathering data (Nataliya *et al.*, 2020). Focus group discussions

were used to gather qualitative data while questionnaire was used to collect the qualitative data.

### **3.5.1 Focus Group Discussions**

Focus groups for groups of individuals, including the Traditional Leaders, Ward Committee members, youth, adults, civic members, pastors, and people with disabilities to interact and share their perspectives on public participation in IDP processes (Maree, 2016). Employing focus group discussions facilitated the thorough exploration of topics and encouraged participants to expand on each other's insights and perspectives. Moreover, these discussions were recorded to aid in data analysis. Focus group discussions were selected due to their efficiency in swiftly and affordably gathering data (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2013). A total of 23 focus group discussions were conducted, comprising seven groups from each of the specified categories. The participants were selected based on recommendations from community leaders who represented structures within the wards and had knowledge of public participation in IDP processes.

### **3.5.2 Questionnaire Survey**

In the second phase of the research, a questionnaire survey was administered to gather quantitative data. Residents of Wards 4, 10, and 18 were surveyed using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised two sections: Section 1 aimed to collect demographic details from respondents, including stakeholder category, gender, age, education level, employment status, and ward designation or position. Section 2 focused on gauging respondents' perceptions of the nature and extent of public participation in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process (refer to Appendix 2 for details).

Survey questionnaires were distributed to 162 respondents with the aid of research assistants. In late November 2020, contact persons in Wards 04, 10, and 18 of the TLM were briefed on their roles in facilitating meetings between the researcher and respondents. Following this, suitable dates and venues were agreed upon, and the research assistants collected the questionnaires after each meeting in all three wards. The completed surveys were retrieved from the respondents within 25 minutes after the meetings (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2013). This structured approach ensured efficient data collection and engagement with the target population, highlighting the importance of clear communication and coordination in research

endeavours. The data were collected in November and December 2020 (Rabele & Motitsoe, 2021). After collecting the completed questionnaires, a letter was written to the contact persons of the TLM and research assistants to acknowledge their assistance (Rabele & Motitsoe, 2021).

### **3.6 Data Analysis Methods, Tools and Techniques**

#### **3.6.1 Qualitative Data Analysis**

Thematic content analysis was employed to scrutinise the qualitative data gathered during the initial phase. Prior to analysis, the qualitative data underwent thorough editing to rectify any inaccuracies in the responses. Themes and sub-themes were then derived from the insights provided by the specific groups engaged in the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Responses to open-ended inquiries were consolidated to identify prevalent patterns, involving the allocation of descriptive labels (open-codes) to text passages with analogous themes and assigning overarching labels as pattern codes (Maree, 2016). Continuous comparison was utilized to ensure that data segments were accurately categorized and aligned with the most suitable themes.

The analysis of qualitative data adhered to two fundamental strategies commonly employed in qualitative research, as outlined by Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007): data preparation and organization, and thematic reduction. Utilising a thematic analysis approach, the qualitative data underwent rigorous and systematic coding and categorisation to discern major themes from the transcripts and notes of the focus group discussions. Creswell (2007) characterises thematic analysis as the process of "aggregating the information into larger clusters of ideas."

By employing an interactive process of coding and condensing data, recurrent themes surfaced. Initially, words or phrases were extracted from transcripts and categorised by topic, including aspects like integrated development planning knowledge, facilitators and hindrances of public participation in the IDP, and strategies to bolster such engagement. Thematic tables were then constructed to aid in data interpretation and comparison of findings across participants within each data source, following the guidelines of Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007).

Once coded, the data were further organised into broader themes based on their frequency. Additionally, sub-themes emerged within each category, providing additional insight into the

findings. Throughout this analysis, the researcher meticulously noted the sub-themes mentioned by participants during focus group discussions for each overarching theme. These sub-themes were also ranked in chronological order, with priority given to responses mentioned earlier in the discussions. This systematic approach facilitated the identification of the most salient sub-themes discussed during the focus group sessions, thereby highlighting key aspects of public participation in the IDP processes within the TLM. To enhance rigor and trustworthiness, validation strategies were used as described below (Creswell & Plano-Clark (2007).

### **3.6.2 Trustworthiness of the Study**

To ensure this study's trustworthiness, the following strategies were implemented; credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. Addressing these aspects ensured that the study's qualitative results were trustworthy, and hence original. These aspects are detailed below. Their discussion ensures that the study is transparent, an integral part of its trustworthiness.

#### **3.6.2.1 Credibility**

To ensure the study's credibility, data triangulation, member check verification, and peer debriefing were used (Maher, Hadfield, Hutchings, & De Eyto, 2018). In addition to these, the researcher engaged extensively with the participants to understand how they felt about the IDP process. Doing so enabled the understanding of their views during interviews, and hence the development of the study's credibility. Spending time with the participants created a bond with the researcher, thereby helping them develop confidence, and hence opened up to the researcher (Charmaz, 2014). Recording interviews and taking observation notes provided evidence to boost this study's credibility as well (Korstjen & Moser, 2017).

#### **3.6.2.2 Transferability**

This study's transferability was ensured by choosing the participants who were knowledgeable about the issues investigated (Maher *et al.*, 2018). In this case, the chosen purposive sampling technique was critical to obtaining the participants with the characteristics required to provide information that ensured the study's transferability. Thus, the sampled participants assured that the study findings were generalisable to municipalities in the province and further (Korstjen & Moser, 2017). That is, the study's sample was composed of individuals who provided rich information concerning the IPD process.

### **3.6.2.3 Confirmability**

The study's confirmability was achieved through the utilisation of various data collection methods outlined in this chapter. Employing diverse data gathering techniques facilitated data triangulation, thereby reinforcing the study's confirmability (Creswell, 2014). The participants were also used to ensure this study's confirmability as the researcher spent months with them observing their involvement and participation or lack thereof in the IDP process. This was to confirm the information collected from them. Thus, member checking ensured that the data accurately reflected the participants' responses to issues raised (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, the study was given to a colleague to cross-check its data's authenticity in this respect. The researcher also ensured that his views or ideas were not used to alter those provided by the participants. In other words, the study is free from bias or manipulation as encouraged by (Creswell, 2014).

### **3.6.2.4 Dependability**

Regarding the study's dependability, the researcher-maintained consistency by employing the same data collection methods across all participant interactions (Maher et al., 2018). There was no deviation here as doing so would have compromised the study's dependability. The same participants were used throughout the study without introducing other people in the middle of the study. This ensured that the study's results were dependable. Doing an audit trail and member checking also helped to cement this study's dependability (Maher *et al.*, 2018). In addition to the above, each participant was provided with a transcript to ascertain whether it reflected what they said in response to issues raised during the data collection process.

### **3.6.3 Quantitative Data Analysis**

For data analysis in this study, the researchers utilised descriptive statistics, frequencies, and cross-tabulation tools available in the IBM Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) software (Maree & Pietersen, 2020). Descriptive statistics were employed to calculate means for diverse Likert scale responses pertaining to residents' involvement levels in IDP processes, facilitators and impediments to public participation, as well as strategies for enhancing such engagement. Frequencies were utilised to generate biographical information such as the respondents' location, age, education level, and marital status. To understand the distinctions in education levels across the three Wards, a cross tabulation test was utilised with the Chi-square to determine the significant level. The study was conducted in three Wards and thus, tests were conducted to distil the distinctions across the three Wards regarding the level of resident's participation in the IDP processes, enablers of public participation in the IDP

processes, barriers to public participation in the IDP processes, and strategies for enhancing public participation in the IDP processes.

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability**

This section addresses the study's validity and reliability in the context of the quantitative data collected and the instruments used to gather that data. The two concepts are illustrated separately to ensure clarity. Validity is discussed in the sub-section below, and reliability follows thereafter.

#### **3.7.1 Validity**

Validity looks at the quantitative data collection instruments in terms of their adequacy to provide samples of objects that denote the concept (De Vos *et al.*, 2005). Validity refers to the degree to which conclusions drawn from numerical data are pertinent, meaningful, and beneficial to the sample (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). This study ensured validity by creating adequate samples of items. Furthermore, inferences were made according to appropriate numerical scores that were meaningful and useful to the study sample. Accomplishing the above ensured that this study's qualitative research results were valid.

#### **3.7.2 Reliability**

Reliability in measurement refers to the consistency and stability of results obtained by an instrument when measuring the same variable under similar conditions. It signifies the instrument's ability to provide consistent and accurate numerical outcomes each time it is utilized, without significant fluctuations unless changes occur in the variable being measured (Creswell, 2010). Ensuring reliability involves obtaining identical results when measuring the same variable repeatedly, indicating the instrument's precision and consistency in measurement (De Vos *et al.* 2005). To validate the reliability of collected data, the study enlisted an independent Statistics expert to assess the questionnaire's alignment with the study's requirements, confirming the data's adherence to the study's specifications.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

To uphold ethical standards, the study obtained approval from the University of Venda Research and Ethics Committee, ensuring non-offensive questions and ethical adherence [1]. Subsequently, authorization was acquired from TLM authorities, specifically Ward Councillors of Ward 4, 10, and 18, to conduct the research. Informed consent, following Warren and Warren's guidelines (2013), was obtained from participants, emphasizing voluntary participation and the right to withdraw without consequences (Warren & Warren, 2013).

Written consent letters were collected before data collection, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity by using pseudonyms and refraining from recording personal details (Maree & Pietersen, 2020). This meticulous process aligns with ethical research practices, safeguarding participant rights and data integrity.

### **3.9 SUMMARY**

This chapter outlined the methodology used in the study, including the target population, and sampling procedures used to select the participants. The methodology adopted for this study was explained in terms of its strength and weaknesses. Most importantly, the study justified why it opted to use the said research methodology instead of the other two (qualitative and quantitative independent of each other). The study also justified why it used the population identified when compared to other population categories. This ensured that the reader gained a comprehensive understanding of the study population within the context of the investigated topic. Additionally, the chapter elucidated the data collection methods and techniques utilized for data acquisition. It also offered a thorough explanation of the data analysis methods chosen, providing rationale for their selection. The subsequent chapter will present, analyse, and discuss the qualitative data gathered from participants. This discussion will complement the data examined in Chapter Four, contributing to the resolution of the research problem articulated in Chapter One.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DESCRIPTION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS OBTAINED DURING THE EXPLORATORY PHASE OF THE STUDY

### 4.1 Introduction

Chapter Three meticulously outlined the methodology employed in this study, encompassing essential elements such as research design, study population, data collection and analysis methods, and ethical considerations safeguarding participants. By ensuring data quality aligned with the research questions, the methodology furnishes comprehensive insights into the study approach, guiding researchers in data gathering and analysis. Moreover, the preceding chapter delineated the study setting and sampling techniques. Qualitative data were gleaned through focused group discussions with selected participants. The primary aim of this study was to formulate a framework aimed at enhancing integrated development planning within local government, particularly in South Africa, with a focus on the TLM. In this chapter, the qualitative phase results are presented, interpreted, and deliberated upon. Direct quotations are incorporated to reinforce the significance of the identified themes unearthed during the study.

### 4.2 Major Themes on Integrated Development Planning

The four themes that were identified are shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1:** Themes on Integrated Development Planning in Thulamela Municipality.

Themes on integrated development planning	Sub-themes
1. Public knowledge of IDP.	a) No clear explanations of the IDP processes by municipal officials and Ward Councillors.
	b) Use of English language in IDP documents, which most residents find difficult to understand.
2. Enablers of public participation.	a) Timeous invitations to residents.
	b) Involvement of residents in all phases of IDP processes.
3. Barriers to public participation.	a) Difficulties of accessing IDP meetings
	b) Lack of resources especially transport to reach the venues where IDP meetings are held.

4. Strategies for enhancing public participation.	a) Explore opportunities that virtual platforms present
	b) Inclusion of civic education in school curriculum.

#### 4.2.1 Theme 1: Low Public Knowledge

The residents of Wards 4, 10, and 18 of the TLM revealed that they did not know much about IDP. For example, an elderly male Traditional Leader in Ward 4 said the following about that:

*“I am over 60 years old now. I do not know a lot about IDPs. How then do I tell others about what I am not sure of? I really doubt if my Ward Councillor and Ward Committee members know about IDP, where it starts and ends. Every month in my village, we have a community meeting. All stakeholders attend, that is, youth, adults, civic association, pastors and disabled people, why can’t a Ward Councillor come and share knowledge about IDP with us? They come to us during election time to tell us lies, there will be houses, sanitation, better road infrastructure, better education, better health care facilities. In my village, there is nothing, absolutely nothing. It is almost 27 years (1994 – 2021) into democracy, we don’t even know about IDPs. Lack of proper education on the issue of IDP is a big problem in my community. Municipal officials should show up in our monthly meetings and share information about IDP.”*

The Traditional Leader’s reflections reveal several issues hindering public participation and highlight opportunities that could be harnessed to address them. Residents in Thulamela have expressed frustration with their limited participation in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process, feeling that their community needs are not adequately addressed by the TLM. The IDP, a strategic five-year plan, is meant to involve the entire municipality and its residents to achieve sustainable local development. However, in the TLM, this inclusive approach is lacking. The Constitution of South Africa emphasizes the importance of community involvement in local government matters, aiming for democratic, accountable governance, social and economic development, and service provision (RSA, 2005). The disconnect between the residents’ expectations and the actual participation levels highlights a gap in fulfilling the constitutional objectives of local government in promoting community engagement and addressing community needs effectively.

Thulamela residences expressed their frustration that exists among them when it comes to participating in the IDP process. The IDP process has not leveraged the residents’ ability to have their community needs responded to by the TLM. IDP is a process whereby municipalities prepare a Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for five years. This process should

involve the whole municipality and the residents in order to find the solution to achieve sustainable development at local levels (RSA, 2005). However, this is not the case in the TLM.

Section 152 (1) of the Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, states that the core objectives of local government are to promote a democratic and accountable government, social and economic development, safe and healthy environment, ensure the provision of services and encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

The youth also expressed the same view and pointed out that Ward Councillors and municipal officials do not take time to explain the IDP process to the residents. Concerns were also raised with regards to the use of the English language in most of the IDP documents. This results with most residents failing to fully understand what is involved in the IDP process. One of the youth groups was quoted as saying:

*“Ward Councillors, all what they do is to come here and give us T-shirts and food so that we vote for them but they do not explain to us about the IDP processes in detail. Thulamela Municipality officials are always in a hurry. The problem with municipal officials and politicians is that they tell us about these IDPs now, and you will see them again during election campaign when they need our votes. They make us sign the attendance registers and in a short while they are gone. The documents are written in English, and they fail dismally to translate it to Tshivenda.”*

The findings of English language usage in IDP documents aligns with Human's (2007) assertion that incorporating an African language in the executive summary could bolster public engagement and facilitate the elicitation of views and feedback. This also makes it easy for residents to assimilate the IDP documents' contents as most documents are too bulky and technical for ordinary citizens to absorb. For example, the TLM's integrated development plan for 2016 – 2021 has 1000 pages.

The findings underscore the importance of conducting awareness campaigns on IDP processes within communities, involving both municipal officials and public office bearers to elevate public understanding of participation in IDP. Njenga (2009) advocates for incentivizing community involvement, emphasizing the need for key public events within the IDP process and leveraging councillors to disseminate information and raise awareness within communities.

#### 4.2.2 Theme 2: Enablers of Public Participation

The second theme is enablers of public participation in the IDP process. Given the low levels of public participation in all IDP processes, participants highlighted the key enablers for enhancing public participation in the TLM. Invitation and the complete involvement of residents were identified as key enablers of public participation in the IDP processes. It was highlighted that invitation should be sent out in advance and involvement should be in all of the IDP process stages. One of the participants was quoted as saying:

*“Invitation of residents to participate in IDP processes should be delivered on time. Municipality should involve us in all phases of the IDP such as the analysis phase, strategies phase, approval phase and, the monitoring and evaluation phase. The IDP process should be informed by the needs of the community. Municipality must find out from us, not vice versa.”*

This is in line with Njenga (2009) who stated that community members might be encouraged to participate through informing and involving residents in the entire IDP planning process. In terms of the involvement of residents in the IDP process, participants had mixed reactions. Some of them mentioned that they were involved in the IDP process and they participate accordingly. Two of the group participants were quoted thus:

*“As citizens, we feel that we make decisions that are implemented by the TLM. I participate to the best of my ability and questions are responded to by municipal officials including the IDP Manager, Municipal Manager, and Technical Services Manager. The process of formulating an IDP starts at ward level, led by the Ward Councillor and further consultation is done through the IDP municipal public participation programmes. In my village, all stakeholders participate equally despite political affiliation. In IDP meetings, the community is free to raise their needs and identify the projects that they want (sic) (Pastor).*

*“In my ward, the identified projects are accepted by the municipality... I start the process from the planning stages up to the final stage (approval stage) (Ward Committee). I get invited and attend... I get involved in any process preceding the IDP meetings... I do participate... but at times priorities as been given by the community are not adhered to... they don't get included” (sic) (disabled person).*

#### 4.2.3 Theme 3: Barriers to Public Participation

Residents of Thulamela highlighted several obstacles to public involvement in the IDP process, with a notable emphasis on resource constraints. Specifically, respondents cited challenges

related to attending IDP meetings due to transportation issues. A community member from Ward 10 expressed concern about the distance of meeting venues from some residents' homes, making attendance difficult without adequate means of transportation. This made it difficult for them to attend IDP meetings because they did not have any means of transport. The following quotations capture their sentiments.

*“In rural areas, getting public transport is difficult. Our areas are far from venues” (sic) (youth)*

Another participant pointed out that:

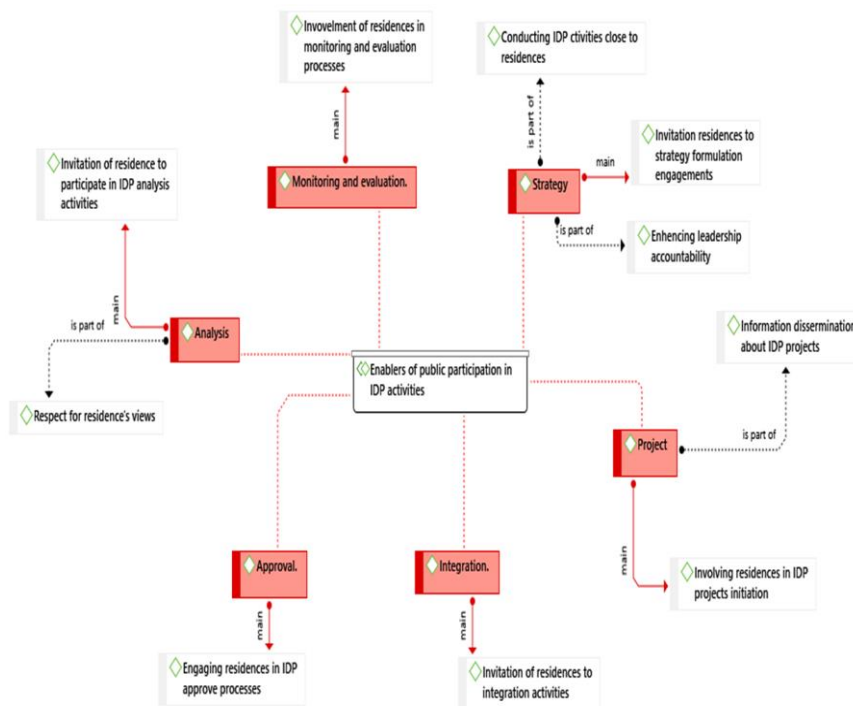
*“For Ward Committee members, it is difficult to reach certain areas because the stipend is next to nothing for travelling expenses... They are not capacitated to do consultation and to capture community needs and challenges” (sic) (Traditional Leader)*

Similarly, the issue of inadequate resources was a concern raised by yet another participant, who said:

*“The municipality did not give us transport allowance, we are not working, and some of us don't have money for transport to attend meetings” (sic) (civic representative).*

These findings suggest that public participation in the IDP procedures and processes in the TLM do not involve members of the community who do not have transport means. These findings are made evident by a focus group participant who said:

*“Due to lack of transport, some members cannot attend IDP meetings... The municipality should budget money in order to ferry community members to attend IDP meetings. The community has the right to say, Thulamela Local Municipality should hire transport for the community to attend IDP meetings” (sic) (male adult).*



**Figure 4.1:** Network diagram showing enablers of public participation.

The research findings suggest that residents' participation in Integrated Development Plan (IDP) processes is influenced by resources like money, political influence, and specialized knowledge. Accessing public participation spaces, particularly in marginalized and impoverished communities, necessitates these resources. In the absence of such resources, many residents are unable to engage in IDP planning processes [3]. Consequently, the availability of resources determines the extent of participation, while their absence favours the interests of more powerful stakeholders (Culley & angelique, 2011). This underscores how resource disparities shape the dynamics of community involvement in municipal affairs, highlighting the critical role of resources in determining the inclusivity and effectiveness of public participation in the IDP process (Chaskin & Joseph, 2012). One of the participants captured the need for resources in the TLM by noting that:

*“Many community members are unemployed... therefore, resources are the problem... The TLM only chips in when meetings are normally linked with the Mayoral Imbizo. Therefore, much resources are then availed to ensure the success of the Mayoral Imbizo... With the IDP consultative meetings, however, community members have to use their resources (sic) (disabled person).*

The findings align with Veneklasen and Miller's (2006) assertion that power pertains to the level of authority over material and human resources wielded by various segments of

community stakeholders during public participation in the IDP process. Thus, resource control emerges as a fundamental determinant of individual and societal influence or power.

#### **4.2.4 Theme 4: Intervention Strategies to Enhance Public Participation**

Various strategies that might enhance public participation in IDP processes were mentioned, which include utilisation of virtual platforms and social media, inclusion of civic education in the school curricula and a more active role by Ward Committee and CDWs. The quotations below illustrate these findings.

For effective public participation in the IDP processes, municipal planning must adopt a developmental approach that prioritises the needs of marginalised communities. Mayekiso et al. (2013) assert that planning entails engaging the entire municipality and its residents to devise sustainable, long-term development strategies, as mandated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) (Act 108 of 1996) and the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000). These legislative frameworks provide guidelines for municipalities to orchestrate and coordinate local development initiatives in an integrated fashion. This is corroborated by insights from focus group participants, who highlighted, for instance:

*“Explore the possibility of using virtual platforms such as Zoom and MS Teams to engage citizens especially those residing outside the area but have roots and interests in our wards or municipality” (sic) (Youth).*

*“Include civic education (processes that affect citizens’ beliefs, commitments, capabilities and actions as members of their communities, nations, and international community) in school curricula. In that curricula, infuse IDP and municipal business” (sic) (Pastor).*

*“Use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, among others, to engage and solicit ideas from citizens, especially children and youth” (Sic) (Youth).*

*“Ward Committees and community development workers should play a more active and meaningful role than is the case at present. Stop using consultants and rely more on internal staff who should be capacitated more to do their work. Meetings should be held during weekends and not during the week. This will accord those who are employed to be part of the engagement. Establish collaborative agreements with tertiary institutions (universities and colleges) so that academics and students can be deployed to various wards to assist” (sic) (Traditional Leader).*

As part of continuous capacity building strategy, the participants proposed that:

*“Ward councillors and Ward Committee members should constantly visit us, not to come only when we are closer to 2021 local government election. Keeping in constant touch with us would encourage us to participate in the IDPs. Just like they campaign for votes, they must also do that with IDPs in our villages. We need to do more awareness campaign on IDPs in this community.”*

Arnstein (1969) delved into the concept of power and its pivotal role in social dynamics. The author perceived public participation as a means of empowering marginalised groups, allowing those excluded from political and economic spheres to have a tangible stake. However, despite its potential, public participation often falls short of truly empowering a diverse cross-section of society. As Carvalho et al. (2016) previously highlighted, participation runs the risk of devolving into a tool of technocratic control or manipulation, lacking genuine empowerment or substantive knowledge exchange among involved parties. Insights gleaned from focus group participants underscore the potential for strategies fostering public participation in the integrated development planning process to empower community stakeholders if effectively implemented by the TLM. Some participants emphasized the adage that knowledge is power. It is imperative for the TLM to prioritize community needs over mere compliance with legislation. Public participation in integrated development planning should transcend tokenism, serving as a genuine means of community empowerment.

### **4.3 Discussions**

As already indicated in chapter 1.4, the study objectives were clearly stipulated to guide this study. Accordingly, the following specific research objectives were addressed:

- a) To examine the level of public participation in integrated development planning.
- b) To determine the barriers to public participation.
- c) To determine the factors that enable public participation.
- d) To suggest a strategic framework for enhancing public participation.

As outlined in the 1998 White Paper on local government, developmental local government entails a commitment to collaborating with citizens and community organisations to address their social, economic, and material needs sustainably, thereby enhancing their quality of life (South Africa, 1998). However, this study revealed a notable lack of understanding among participants regarding the IDP process, resulting in minimal public engagement. A study by the Gauteng City Region Observatory (GCRO) (2019) further underscored this issue, indicating that a significant majority of residents (77%) had never heard of the IDP, while 20%

were aware but had not participated. Across the province, overall participation in the IDP process remains extremely limited, with more than two-thirds of adult residents surveyed being unaware of its existence at all.

This study participants expressed their frustration due to inadequate public participation and that municipal officials and ward councillors failed to provide sufficient information about the IDP process to the local residents. Furthermore, using English language as primary means of communication also attributed to the lower understanding since the IDP documents are technically presented in a hard way and is too bulky for ordinary citizens. Mautjana and Makombe (2014) observed that community participation only takes place in the Capricorn District Municipality's local communes for the sake of adhering to the legal framework. That is, community comments are excluded in the IDP documents notwithstanding the fact that there is great coordination of community engagement among all local municipalities under the CDM. Tau (2013) argued that South Africa lacks citizens participation especially in marginalised and historically underprivileged communities. As shown above, the findings of this study align with the earlier studies regarding the low public participation of citizens in the IDP. Thus, the findings corroborate with the existing literature that concur that the biggest issue facing municipalities in the country is poor citizen participation in the IDP process (Molaba, 2016; Dywili, 2017).

Regarding facilitators of public participation, participants in this study emphasized the importance of extending invitations to all community members, organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders through appropriate channels, particularly catering to the needs of rural residents. Additionally, full engagement of all groups within the community and stakeholders in integrated development planning process facilitates active public engagement. A study by Mamokhere and Meyer (2022) found that the Tzaneen Municipal Council provide communities with chances to participate in Council affairs through appropriate channels and mechanisms. Naidoo and Ramphal (2018) found that the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality in South Africa does not adhere to the Batho Pele principles and the public participation guidelines in IDP processes implementation. The public engagement approach as well as Batho Pele principles both encourage residents to be informed and empowered through a variety of means so that they can become interested and collaborate in the development initiatives of their areas. Existing literature shows that there are various factors that affect community participation in the IDP, primarily the means that were adopted to encourage community participation (Mamokhere & Meyer, 2022; Mnguni, 2016; Mabuza, 2016). In relation to the previous finding, this study adds more insight into the need to strengthen invitation

mechanisms and participation of special groups in community including the youth, women, and people living with disabilities.

It was also reported by the participants that there were several barriers that affected effective public participation in the IDP processes. These challenges comprise inadequate resources, transport problems, lacking adequate infrastructure for meeting venues, with those available too far from residents, and political influence. Residents showed that they were dissatisfied with the current level of public involvement in the TLM's IDP processes. Lack of resources systematically discriminates against and excludes poor community members. This study's findings collaborate and align with reviewed literature (Fourie, 2021; Moyo, 2016; Mbelengwa, 2016). Thus, the local communes' active involvement in the governance affairs of municipals through the IDP process is hindered by multiple challenges that local municipalities face at local levels during the planning, implementation, and review processes.

The study further found that public participation in the IDP processes in TLM is just tokenism, since facilitators just do it to fulfil legal and regulatory obligations and for compliance. Thus, it is important to promote public participation by enhancing the role of Ward Committees, promote the use of virtual and social media platforms, and encourage civic education and awareness campaigns to improve public knowledge about the IDP.

#### 4.4 Summary

This chapter presents and deliberates on the outcomes derived from the exploratory phase of the study aimed at formulating a framework to amplify public participation in the IDP. Thematic analysis was employed to scrutinize qualitative data, yielding key themes that underpin the discussion. These themes encompass the limited public understanding of integrated development planning, factors facilitating public involvement, barriers hindering participation, and strategies for intervention to bolster engagement. A condensed overview of this exploratory investigation is outlined in Table 4.2 below:

**Table 4.2:** Summary of key results drawn from the exploratory study.

Objectives	Key results	Implications for integrated development planning
a) To examine the level of public participation in integrated development planning.	Participants demonstrated a restricted understanding of the integrated development planning process, resulting in minimal public engagement within this framework.	Insufficient awareness and limited public engagement in IDP may yield significant repercussions on infrastructure development and the provision of municipal essential services.

b) To determine the barriers to public participation.	Proper invitations and full engagement of rural community members and structures,	The municipality current mechanisms of invitation failed to achieve full community engagement. It entails using relevant mechanisms that are suitable for rural residents.
c) To determine the factors that enable public participation.	There were several barriers that affected effective public participation in integrated development planning. These barriers include lack of resources, means of transport problem, meeting venues too far from residents, and political influence	That the municipality needs urgently to address these barriers because it hinders public participation in IDP
d) To suggest a strategic framework for enhancing public participation.	The necessary strategic interventions are enhancing the role of ward committee, promoting virtual and social media platforms, and civic education.	The necessary tactical interventions should be implemented to promote public participation in IDP processes.

The chapter that follows delves in the quantitative strand of the study. It should be noted that these data collection methods complement each other here. Thus, the aspect of data presented and discussed in the next chapter either cement or refute the data discussed in the preceding chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE QUANTITATIVE PHASE OF THE STUDY

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented and discussed on the qualitative data strand. In doing so, the study provided some verbatim quotations to emphasise its findings given the nature of the study topic and the study's aim and objectives. In this case, data analysis, which must concurrently be carried out in reference to the study problem, was a crucial component of this research (Williams, 2011). This research used a mixed-methods research methodology and a pragmatic research philosophy. Quantitative data were collected from 162 respondents selected from the study area. The quantitative data were collected by means of a structured questionnaire. The data gathered using survey questionnaire focused on aspects of public participation in the IDP. This chapter presents the results of the quantitative phase of the research.

This study investigated public participation in the implementation of IDP processes in the TLM. The study was carried out by attempting to address the specific research objectives as shown below:

- (a) To examine the level of public participation in integrated development planning;
- (b) To determine the barriers to public participation;
- (c) To determine the factors that enable public participation; and (d) To develop a strategic framework for enhancing public participation.

### 5.2 Demographic Characteristics of Thulamela Local Municipality Residents

The results of the quantitative phase are presented in Table 5.1. Overall, the table shows the proportion (%) of the respondents in each category for Ward 4 (n=65), Ward 10 (n=49), and Ward 18 (n=48). Ward 4 was predominantly rural (76.9%), Ward 10 was a mix of urban and rural (53.1%), and Ward 18 was an urban township (100%). Regarding the age category, the highest proportion of the respondents fell in the 36-50 years category for all three wards (Ward 4: 44.6%, Ward 10: 42.9%, Ward 18: 37.5%). The lowest proportion of respondents fell in the 15-25 years category, with only 6.2% in Ward 4, no respondents in Ward 10, and 6.3% in Ward 18. Regarding education level of respondents, the highest proportion of respondents in Ward 4 and Ward 10 matriculated (27% and 17% respectively), while in Ward 18, the highest

proportion had secondary schooling (22%). Many of the respondents in all three wards were married (Ward 4: 72%, Ward 10: 88%, Ward 18: 88%). Regarding their employment standing, the biggest proportion of the sample were unemployed across all Wards (Ward 4: 26%, Ward 10: 29%, Ward 18: 10%). The second highest proportion of the respondents in Ward 4 and Ward 10 were retired (15% and 5% respectively), while in Ward 18, the second highest proportion were self-employed (12%).

**Table 5.1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.**

Descriptor		Proportion (%) of respondents in		
		Ward 4 (n = 65)	Ward 10 (n = 49)	Ward 18 (n = 48)
Location of Ward		Rural	Semi-rural (mixed urban and rural)	Urban township
Age category, years	a) 15-25 years	6.2	0	6.3
	b) 26-35 years	7.7	26.5	16.7
	c) 36-50 years	44.6	42,9	37,5
	d) 51-65 years	29.2	26,5	4,2
	e) >65 years	12.3	4,1	3
Level of education	a) Primary schooling	4	1	9
	b) Secondary schooling	11	15	22
	c) Matriculation	27	17	14
	d) Tertiary	23	16	10
Marital status	a) Single	88	2	22
	b) Married	72	16	88
	c) Widowed	10	2	5
	d) Divorced or separated	18	67	10
Employment status	a) Unemployed	26	29	10
	b) Self-employed	,2	5	12
	c) Employed permanently	,19	6	5
	d) Employed temporarily	,3	4 4	12
	e) Retired	15	5	11

The findings presented above suggest that the sample used in the study was representative as regards of location, education attained, marital status, age and employment status. The predominance of the rural respondents in Ward 4 and the mix of urban and rural respondents in Ward 10 might reflect the nature of these areas, while the urban township nature of Ward 18 might explain the higher proportion of respondents with secondary schooling. These results provide important information for future studies seeking to understand public participation in the IDP processes in the TLM.

### **5.3 Level of Residents' Participation in IDP Processes**

Table 5.2 presents a comparison of perceptions of the extent to which residents participate in the IDP process in Wards 4, 10, and 18 of the TLM. The mean as well as the standard deviation for each form of participation were calculated for each ward. For most nature of participation, residents in Ward 18, which is an urban township, had higher mean scores than residents in Ward 4, which is predominantly rural, and Ward 10, which is a mix of urban and rural areas. For example, in the approval of the integrated development plan, residents in Ward 18 had a mean score of  $5.2 \pm 0.8$ , while residents in Ward 4 and Ward 10 had mean scores of  $2.1 \pm 0.61$  and  $4.3 \pm 0.49$ , respectively. However, residents in Ward 10 had the highest mean score for attending meetings ( $2.1 \pm 0.48$ ) compared to Ward 4 ( $2.3 \pm 1.31$ ) and Ward 18 ( $1.0 \pm 0.06$ ). This suggests that residents in the semi-rural areas of Ward 10 tended to attend meetings more often than residents in rural and urban areas.

In terms of rural development implications, the lower average scores observed in rural locales indicate potentially diminished participation among residents in the IDP process. This might be caused by many forces like the lack of accessible information and resources, lower levels of education and employment, and limited opportunities for participation. To promote rural development, efforts should be made to increase awareness and participation in IDP among rural residents. This could be achieved through targeted outreach programmes, provision of relevant information in local languages, and collaboration with community leaders and organisations.

The TLM, located in South Africa's Limpopo Province, boasts a population of around 460,000 individuals (Stats SA, 2011). Table 5.2 offers a comparative analysis of residents' perceptions regarding their involvement in integrated development planning across Wards 4, 10, and 18 of the TLM. Mean and standard deviation calculations were conducted for each aspect of participation within each ward.

**Table 5.2:** Comparison of perception of extent to which residents participate in IDP.

Nature of participation	Mean standard deviation for perceptions in		
	Ward 4 (n = 65)	Ward 10 (n = 49)	Ward 18 (n = 48)
Description of Ward	Rural	Semi-rural (mixed urban and rural)	Urban township
a) Situational analysis only	2.9 ± 0.31	4.1 ± 0.49	1.2 ± 0.06
b) Strategy formulation	2.9 ± 2.25	2.1 ± 0.49	1.3 ± 0.06
c) Project formulation	2. ± 0.31	3.1 ± 0.1	1.5 ± 0.07
d) Integration of plans	.9 ± .31	2,1 ± .49	2.2 ± 0.6
e) Approval of the integrated development plan	2.1 ± 0.61	4.3 ± 0.49	5.2 ± 0.8
f) Monitoring and evaluating municipal business	4.9 ± 2.31	2.1 ± 1.49	1.4 ± 0.6
g) Attending meetings	2.3 ± 1.31	2.1 ± .48	1.0 ± 0.06
h) Always invited to participate	3.1 ± 4.31	3.1 ± 1.2	1.05 ± 0.07
i) Municipal officials bring ideas and we endorse	2.0 ± 0.21	1.1 ± 0.01	1.8 ± 0.04
j) Residents contribute ideas and views on matters brought before them	2.3 ± 2.31	2.1 ± 0.69	1.2 ± 0.02
k) Mobilizing members of our communities to participate	2. ± 1.31	3.1 ± 0.11	1.1 ± 0.03
l) Community protests that force the Local Municipality to act	3.9 ± 2.31	1.1 ± 0.01	1.0 ± 0.06

The results suggest that residents in Ward 18, an urban township, are more involved in the IDP process than residents in Ward 4, which is predominantly rural, and Ward 10, which is partly urban and partly rural. The lower mean scores in rural areas suggest that residents in these areas might be less involved in the IDP process. This might be caused by a number of, inter-alia, the lack of accessible information and resources, lower levels of education and employment, and limited opportunities for participation.

To promote rural development, efforts should be made to increase awareness and participation in the IDP among rural residents. This could be achieved through targeted outreach programmes, provision of relevant information in local languages, and collaboration with community leaders and organisations. These findings align with findings of others studies, which has shown that rural areas often face significant barriers to participation in development planning (Gomez & Jones, 2010; Tandon, 2011).

Overall, the results suggest that efforts should be made to promote participation in IDP across all three wards but with a particular emphasis on addressing the unique challenges rural communities face. This would require collaboration between government officials, community leaders, and other stakeholders to ensure that all residents have a voice in shaping the future of their communities.

#### **5.4 Enablers of Public Participation in IDP Processes**

Table 5.3 presents a comparison of perceptions of enablers of public participation in the IDP among Wards 4, 10, and 18 of the TLM. The mean and standard deviation for each descriptor were calculated for each ward. The table indicates that residents in Ward 18, an urban township, had higher mean scores than residents in Ward 4, a predominantly rural area, and Ward 10, a mix of urban and rural areas, for descriptors such as "there is an inner resolve in us that tells us that we must be part of IDP process and influence decisions that are made" ( $7.2 \pm 0.37$  in Ward 18, compared to  $6.2 \pm 0.42$  in Ward 4 and  $7.0 \pm 0.48$  in Ward 10) and "our views as citizens are appreciated and often adopted" ( $4.2 \pm 0.31$  in Ward 18, compared to  $7.2 \pm 0.42$  in Ward 4 and  $2.0 \pm 0.42$  in Ward 10).

**Table 5.3:** Comparison of perception of enablers of public participation among Wards in Thulamela Local Municipality.

Descriptor	Mean standard deviation for perceptions in		
	Ward 4 (n = 65)	Ward 10 (n = 49)	Ward 18 (n = 48)
Description of Ward	Rural	Semi-rural (mixed urban and rural)	Urban township
a) There is an inner resolve in us that tells us that we must be part of IDP process and influence decisions that are made	6.2 ± 0.42	7.0 ± 0.48	7.2 ± 0.37
b) There are many people in our communities who have the skills required for this phase of IDP	3.2 ± 1.42	4.0 ± 1.48	4.2 ± 0.33
c) Municipality leaders show that they are accountable to us as citizens	3.2 ± 0.43	4.0 ± 0.41	3.2 ± 0.37
d) As citizens, we are always invited to participate	1.2 ± 0.42	2.0 ± 0.48	2.2 ± 0.37
e) Municipal officials do not impose what they think on us	6.2 ± 0.45	8.0 ± 0.48	3.2 ± 0.37
f) Our views as citizens are appreciated and often adopted	7.2 ± 0.42	2.0 ± 0.42	4.2 ± 0.31
g) Information relating to IDP is regularly disseminated to us timely.	2.2 ± 0.43	5.0 ± 0.44	6.2 ± 0.31
h) As citizens, we feel that we make decisions that are implemented	3.2 ± 0.45	6.0 ± 0.47	1.2 ± 0.38
i) We are involved in implementation	1.2 ± 0.42	2.0 ± 0.48	1.2 ± 0.37
j) We trust the Municipality and thus want it to succeed in what it does for citizens	4.2 ± 0.45	3.0 ± 0.42	4.2 ± 0.27

Residents in Ward 10 had the highest mean score for the descriptor "information relating to IDP is disseminated to us on a regular basis and in a timely manner" ( $5.0 \pm 0.44$ ), while residents in Ward 18 had the highest mean score for the descriptor "we trust the municipality and thus want it to succeed in what it does for the citizens" ( $4.2 \pm 0.27$ ).

Overall, the table suggests that residents in urban townships are more likely to have positive perceptions of enablers of public participation in the IDP. This might be due to factors such as higher levels of education, greater access to information and resources, and more opportunities for participation. Efforts should be made to increase awareness and participation among residents in rural and semi-rural areas such as the targeted outreach programmes and provision of information in local languages.

The results presented in Table 5.3 suggest that residents in urban townships are more likely to have positive perceptions of public participation enablers the IDP compared to residents in rural and semi-rural areas. This finding is corroborates with those of Putnam's (2000) research who found that urban localities tended to have higher levels of civic engagement and participation.

The higher mean scores for descriptors such as "there is an inner resolve in us that tells us that we must be part of IDP process and influence decisions that are made" and "our views as citizens are appreciated and often adopted" in Ward 18 compared to Ward 4 and Ward 10 suggest that residents in urban townships might have a greater sense of ownership which assist in influencing over the IDP processes. On the other hand, the higher mean score for the descriptor "information relating to IDP is disseminated to us on a regular basis and in a timely manner" in Ward 10 suggests that residents in semi-rural areas might have greater access to information.

To promote public participation in the IDP among inhabitants in rural and semi-rural areas, efforts should be made to increase awareness and provide information in local languages. Targeted outreach programmes that engage community leaders and organisations might also be effective in increasing participation and creating ownership in residents of the IDP processes (Booyesen *et al.*, 2019). Ultimately, fostering greater engagement and participating in the IDP can lead to more effective and sustainable development outcomes for all residents in the TLM.

## 5.5 Barriers to Public Participation in IDP Processes

Table 5.4 presents a comparison of perceptions of barriers to public participation in the IDP among Wards 4, 10, and 18 of the TLM. The standard deviation and mean for each descriptor were considered for each ward.

The Table 5.4 indicates that residents in Ward 18, an urban township, had lower mean scores than residents in Ward 4, a predominantly rural area, and Ward 10, a mix of urban and rural areas, for most of the barriers to public participation in the IDP. For example, residents in Ward 18 had the lowest mean score for the descriptor "lack of money for transport makes most of us fail to attend sessions organised" ( $1.8 \pm 0.45$ ), while residents in Ward 4 and Ward 10 had mean scores of  $2.7 \pm 0.43$  and  $3.1 \pm 0.42$ , respectively.

Residents in Ward 10 had the highest mean score for the descriptor "engagements are held very far away from our places of residence" ( $7.5 \pm 0.49$ ), while residents in Ward 4 had the highest mean score for the descriptor "citizens lack skills that are required to participate actively" ( $3.7 \pm 0.41$ ).

Overall, the results suggest that residents in rural and semi-rural areas face more barriers to public participation in the IDP than residents in urban townships. This might be due to forces like limited access to information and resources, inadequate opportunities for participation, and higher transport costs. Efforts such as providing transportation to engagement sessions, offering training and resources to increase skills, and holding engagement sessions in more accessible locations and at times that are convenient to the participants, should be made to address these barriers.

According to research conducted in South Africa, rural and semi-rural areas face more barriers to public participation in the IDP than urban areas (Mulaudzi & Mulaudzi, L.N., 2019). The present study's findings support this, as residents in Ward 4, a predominantly rural area, reported lack of skills (mean score of  $3.7 \pm 0.41$ ), lack of timely information (mean score of  $3.0 \pm 0.42$ ), and lack of money for transport (mean score of  $2.7 \pm 0.43$ ) as significant barriers to participation. Mulaudzi and Mulaudzi, N.L. (2019) also found that rural areas face barriers linked to poor communication, infrastructure, and low trust in the government.

**Table 5.4:** Comparison of perception of barriers to public participation among Wards in Thulamela Local Municipality.

Descriptor	Mean standard deviation for perceptions in		
	Ward 4 (n = 65)	Ward 10 (n = 49)	Ward 18 (n = 48)
Description of Ward	Rural	Semi-rural (mixed urban and rural)	Urban township
a) Citizens lack skills that are required to participate actively	3.7 ± 0.41	5.5 ± 0.44	2.8 ± 0.43
b) Municipality does not share its plan of action for us to know well in time when we are expected to participate	3.0 ± 0.42	3.5 ± 0.42	2.7 ± 0.44
c) Invitations are normally delivered so late that we cannot adjust our plans to participate	2.7 ± 0.43	4.5 ± 0.34	1.8 ± 0.42
d) The Municipality seems to simply want to comply with legislation governing IDP and not in the quality of our participation	4.7 ± 0.44	5.4 ± 0.42	2.4 ± 0.41
e) It seems decisions are made elsewhere for us to just rubber stamp. Thus, there is no point in wasting time to participate in such engagements	4.3 ± 0.40	3.5 ± 0.41	2.5 ± 0.42
f) Engagements are held very far away from our places of residence	3.3 ± 0.46	7.5 ± 0.49	2.4 ± 0.33
g) The times when engagements are held do not make it easy for us to participate	3.8 ± 0.30	4.2 ± 0.41	3.8 ± 0.44
h) We are just tired of false promises and we have lost hope	3.3 ± 0.49	5.1 ± 0.4	2.0 ± 0.41
i) Lack of money for transport makes most of us fail to attend sessions organised	2.7 ± 0.43	3.1 ± 0.42	1.8 ± 0.45
j) The attitude of those who facilitate the engagements is so bad that there is no point in being part of what they do	3.0 ± 0.41	4.5 ± 0.34	2.1 ± 0.45
k) there are too many other activities we are involved in which leaves very little time to be part of the engagements	3.2 ± 0.4	0.5 ± 0.01	2.0 ± 0.11

In contrast, residents in urban townships like Ward 18 had lower mean scores for most barriers to public participation in the IDP. This is consistent with the idea that urban areas generally have more resources and opportunities for participation (McCarthy *et al.*, 2017).

To address the barriers faced by rural and semi-rural areas, Mulaudzi and Mulaudzi (2019) recommended developing targeted strategies that account for the unique challenges of these areas. For example, providing transportation to engagement sessions and offering training and resources to increase skills could be effective in addressing the lack of money and skills barriers reported by residents in Ward 4. Additionally, improving communication infrastructure and building trust in the government could help overcome barriers related to the lack of timely information and trust in the government (Mulaudzi & Mulaudzi, 2019).

In general, efforts ought to be made to address the targeted needs and contexts of each community to promote their participation in the IDP. This could be achieved by collaborating with community leaders and organisations, as well as the ongoing evaluation and adjustment of engagement strategies to ensure their effectiveness (McCarthy *et al.*, 2017).

## 5.6 Strategies to Enhance Public Participation in IDP

Table 5.5 presents a comparison of the perceived effective interventions for enhancing public participation in the IDP in Wards 4, 10, and 18 of the TLM. The mean and standard deviation for each descriptor were calculated for each ward. Table 5.5 shows that residents in all three wards agree that holding meetings mainly during weekends (mean score of  $8.6 \pm 0.34$  in Ward 4;  $8.2 \pm 0.40$  in Ward 10; and  $8.8 \pm 0.41$  in Ward 18), and using radio stations more creatively to engage residents (mean score of  $8.4 \pm 0.7$  in Ward 4;  $9.4 \pm 1.5$  in Ward 10; and  $5.0 \pm 0.17$  in Ward 18) are effective intervention strategies for enhancing public participation in the IDP.

Residents in Wards 10 and 18 had higher mean scores for descriptors such as "municipality should adopt more creative means of working with local stakeholders to find solutions to issues affecting citizens" ( $9.4 \pm 0.15$  in Ward 10 and  $9.0 \pm 0.17$  in Ward 18) and "give communities in the wards the opportunity to recruit interested, competent, and dedicated professionals and unemployed graduates to lead the IDP process" ( $9.4 \pm 0.15$  in Ward 10 and  $9.0 \pm 0.17$  in Ward 18). Residents in Ward 4 had the highest mean score for the descriptor "organise workshops to explain more clearly what citizens are expected to do in this phase of the IDP process" ( $3.4 \pm 4.1$ ).

**Table 5.5:** Comparison of perceived effective interventions for enhancing public participation in IDP.

Descriptor	Mean standard deviation for perceptions in		
	Ward 4 (n = 65)	Ward 10 (n = 49)	Ward 18 (n = 48)
Description of Ward	Rural	Semi-rural (mixed urban and rural)	Urban township
a) Hold meetings mainly during weekends	8.6 ± 0.34	8.2 ± 0.40	8.8 ± 0.41
b) Municipality should adopt more creative means of working with local stakeholders to find solutions to issues affecting citizens	8.4 ± 0.41	9.4 ± 0.15	9.0 ± 0.17
c) Organise workshops to explain more clearly what citizens are expected to do in this phase of the IDP process	3.4 ± 4.1	4.4 ± 1.7	1.0 ± 0.6
d) Stop using consultants and rely more on internal staff who should be capacitated more to do their work	4.4 ± 2.3	2.3 ± 2.6	5.6 ± 0.8
e) Co-opt interested and competent ordinary members of the community into planning and implementation committees on a voluntary basis	2.4 ± 0.41	0.4 ± 0.1	3.0 ± 0.3
f) Ward Committees and community development workers should play more active and meaningful roles than is the case at present	3.4 ± 0.41	6 ± 0.15	7.0 ± 0.12
g) Give communities in the wards the opportunity to recruit interested, competent and dedicated professionals and unemployed graduates to lead the IDP process	8.4 ± 0.41	9.4 ± 0.15	9.0 ± 0.17
h) Use radio stations more creatively to engage residents	8.4 ± 0.7	9.4 ± 0.15	5.0 ± 0.17
i) Use social media platforms to engage and solicit ideas from citizens especially children and youth	1.4 ± 0.45	3.4 ± 0.15	1.0 ± 0.17
j) Explore the possibility of using virtual platforms such as Zoom and MS Teams to engage citizens	3.4 ± 4.1	3.4 ± 0.05	3.0 ± 0.7
k) Establish collaborative agreements with tertiary institutions so that academics and students can be deployed to various wards to assist	7.4 ± 4.1	3.4 ± 1.5	5.0 ± 0.1
l) Offer training in project management	7.4 ± 0.41	5.4 ± 1.5	3.0 ± 1.7
m) Offer training in leadership and management of IDP process	2.4 ± 4.1	3.4 ± 1.7	4.0 ± 0.27
n) Include civic education in school curriculum and infuse IDP and municipal business in the curriculum	1.4 ± 0.43	6.4 ± 0.1	2.0 ± 0.1

Overall, the table suggests that there are several effective interventions that may be implemented to enhance public participation in the IDP in the TLM. These interventions include

using creative means to work with local stakeholders, recruiting interested and competent members of the community, using radio stations and virtual platforms to engage residents, and offering training in project management and civic education. It is crucial to note that these interventions should be tailor-made to the specific requirements and contexts of each community.

The findings presented in Table 5.5 suggest that there are effective interventions that can enhance public participation in the IDP in the TLM. These findings are consistent with studies that identify the importance of using various communication channels and engaging with local stakeholders to promote public participation (Mabogunje, 2002; Khan & Bekker, 2017).

The results show that holding meetings mainly during weekends and using radio stations more creatively to engage residents are effective interventions across all three wards. This finding aligns with other studies that have shown the importance of using accessible and convenient channels to promote participation, especially in rural and peri-urban areas where information and resources accessibility are limited (Mabogunje, 2002; Lekorwe *et al.*, 2012).

Residents in Wards 10 and 18 felt that the municipality should adopt more creative means of working with local stakeholders and give communities in the wards the opportunity to recruit interested and competent professionals and unemployed graduates to lead the IDP process. These findings are consistent with studies that have shown the importance of engaging with local stakeholders and building their capacity to participate effectively in planning processes (Khan & Bekker, 2017; Patel & Moon, 2018).

Residents in Ward 4 had the highest mean score for the descriptor "organise workshops to explain more clearly what citizens are expected to do in this phase of the IDP process". This finding suggests that providing clear and concise information to citizens about their responsibilities and roles in the planning process can promote their participation (Lekorwe *et al.*, 2012).

Largely, the findings suggest that there are effective intervention strategies that can be implemented to enhance public participation in the IDP in the TLM. These interventions should be tailored to the specific needs and contexts of each community to ensure their effectiveness. Efforts should also be made to address the barriers to participation as identified in Table 5.4, such as the limited access to resources and information, and the limited opportunities for participation in rural and semi-rural areas.

## 5.7 Summary

The research findings from the TLM indicate that various community groups, including Ward Committee members, Traditional Leaders, adults, civic members, youth, and community development workers, widely support public participation in the IDP process in Wards 4, 10, and 18. Despite a perception of effective functioning within the TLM, satisfaction with public participation did not correlate with demographic factors. The study also revealed that while public participation spaces were inclusive of vulnerable groups like youth and women, those with disabilities were often excluded. Municipal officials displayed discomfort with empowering residents in decision-making, indicating a tokenistic approach to public participation to meet legal requirements. Chapter six summarizes the study and offers recommendations based on the preceding chapters.

## CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 Introduction

The preceding section detailed the quantitative data collected via a survey questionnaire, complementing the qualitative data in this study's chosen methodology. The primary aim was to establish a strategic framework for boosting public involvement in the IDP process in South African local government. Four objectives were set: assessing participation levels at each stage, identifying barriers, pinpointing enabling factors, and crafting an enhancement framework. This section summarizes key findings on participation levels, barriers, and influencing factors. It also discusses the study's contribution to knowledge, limitations, and offers conclusions and recommendations for research, policy, and practice. Ultimately, this study offers crucial insights for improving public engagement in the IDP process, with implications for policy and practice in South African local governance.

### 6.2 Major Findings of the Study

The major findings of the study are the following:

- a) The level of public participation in IDP in the TLM is generally low, with limited or absent participation in each stage of the IDP process.
- b) Factors that limit participation in IDP processes include the lack of skills, late delivery of invitations, lack of trust and hope among residents, lack of money for transport, and poor attitudes of those who facilitate the engagements.
- c) Effective interventions for enhancing public participation in the IDP include using creative means to work with local stakeholders, recruiting interested and competent members of the community, using radio stations and virtual platforms to engage residents, and offering training in project management and civic education.
- d) Residents in rural and semi-rural areas face more barriers to public participation in the IDP process than those in urban townships.

### **6.3 The Contribution of the Study to the Body of Knowledge**

The research significantly contributes to the understanding of public participation in Integrated Development Planning (IDP) within South African local government contexts. It specifically focuses on the current state of public involvement in the Tzaneen Local Municipality (TLM) and identifies the obstacles and facilitators of such participation. Moreover, the study introduces a strategic framework (Table 6.1) aimed at enhancing public engagement in IDP processes, offering practical guidance for local government officials and stakeholders to improve the quality and extent of public involvement. By shedding light on the challenges and prospects for enhancing citizen engagement in development planning, this research enriches the literature on public participation in South Africa, providing valuable insights for advancing participatory practices.

### **6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The following limitations were encountered in the study:

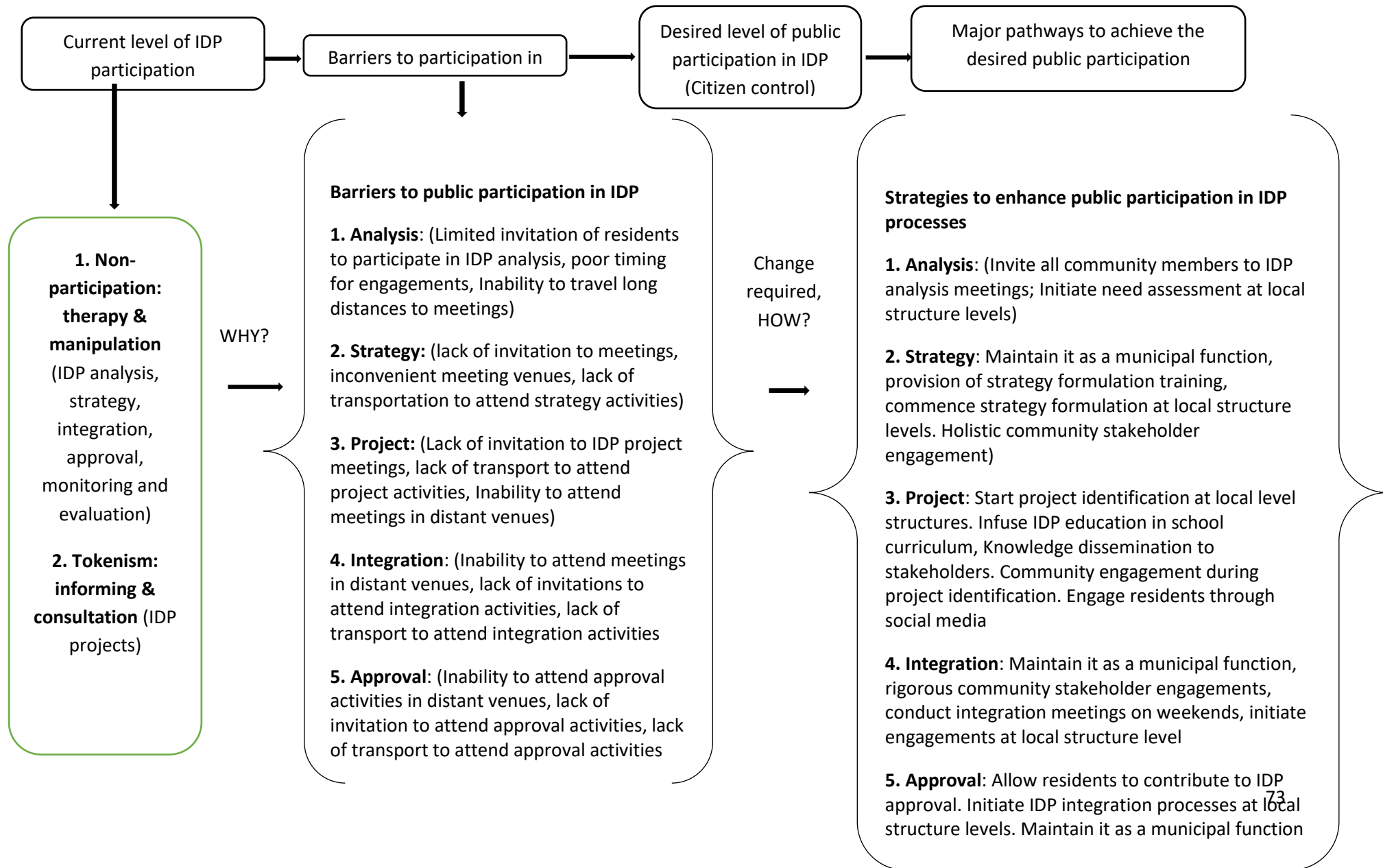
- a) The study focused on only three wards in the TLM, and its findings might not be generalisable to other municipalities or regions.
- b) The study relied on self-reported perceptions of its participants, and there might be differences between the participants' perceptions and actual levels of public participation in the IDP processes.
- c) The study did not investigate the perspectives of municipal officials on barriers to public participation in the IDP processes.

The proposed framework (Table 6.1) illustrates that enhancing public participation in the IDP within municipal government, especially in South Africa, would benefit policymakers, public participation practitioners, and local government. Strategies to promote public participation in the IDP process entail the following:

- (1) Analysis: Invite all community residents to the IDP analysis meetings and initiate need assessment at the local structure level.
- (2) Strategy: Maintain it as a municipal function, provision of strategy formulation training, commence strategy formulation at local structure levels and holistic community stakeholders' engagement.
- (3) Project: Start project identification at local level structures, infuse IDP education in school curricula, knowledge dissemination to stakeholders, and community engagement during project identification. Engage residents through social media.
- (4) Integration: Maintain it as a municipal function, rigorous community stakeholders' engagement, conduct interrogation meetings on week-ends, and initiate engagement at local structure level.
- (5) Approval: Allow residents to contribute to the IDP approval, initiate IDP integration processes at local structure levels, and maintain it as a municipal function.
- (6) Monitoring and Evaluation: Provision of monitoring and evaluation training, broad monitoring and evaluation information dissemination, and the inclusion of IDP monitoring and evaluation education in school curricula.

The cohesion of society plays a pivotal role in fostering robust public participation and facilitating a governance framework characterized by citizen involvement within the TLM. Acknowledging the significance of residents' engagement in both the IDP process and its subsequent implementation is paramount. Additionally, prioritizing the establishment of a comprehensive public participation framework stands out as an instrumental mechanism for augmenting community involvement.

**Table 6.1:** Strategic framework for enhancing public participation in IDP process.



## 6.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study provides important insights into the level of public participation in the IDP process in the TLM. The findings suggest that there are significant barriers to public participation, including the lack of skills, late delivery of invitations, lack of trust, and poor attitudes of those facilitating engagements. These barriers have resulted in limited or no participation in each stage of the IDP, leading to the lack of satisfaction of the residents' needs.

Despite the existence of legislative frameworks supporting public participation, the TLM still lags behind in enhancing public participation in the IDP. This study recommends several interventions to enhance public participation, including using creative means to work with local stakeholders, recruiting interested and competent members of the community, using radio stations and virtual platforms to engage residents, and offering training in project management and civic education. However, the study has some limitations, and these include the use of a small sample size and limited geographic scope. There is a need for further research to be conducted in different municipalities across South Africa to identify the barriers to public participation, and hence develop effective intervention strategies.

In summary, the study emphasises the importance of public participation in the IDP process and the need to address the barriers faced by residents in the TLM. By enhancing public participation, municipalities can better serve the needs of their residents and promote democratic decision-making.

## 6.6 Recommendations

The findings of this study propose several recommendations for further research, policy and practice. Some of the recommendations are as follows:

### 6.6.1 Research gaps

- a) There is a need for more research on the effective strategies for promoting public participation in the IDP in South Africa, particularly in rural and semi-rural areas.
- b) Research could investigate the impact of public participation on the quality of IDP outcomes and the relationship between public participation and government accountability.
- c) Future research could also examine the effectiveness of different methods for engaging local stakeholders in the IDP processes.

## 6.6.2 Policy and practice

Key recommendations for policy and practice are as follows:

- a) Municipal officials should ensure the timely delivery of invitations and use creative means to engage local stakeholders in the IDP processes.
- b) Efforts should be made to increase access to information and resources, including offering training and resources to increase skills and holding engagement sessions in more accessible locations and at times that are convenient for the participants.
- c) The TLM should establish collaborative agreements with tertiary institutions to deploy academics and students to various wards to assist with the IDP processes.
- d) Ward committees and community development workers should play more active and meaningful roles in the IDP processes.
- e) Municipal authorities should address the poor attitudes of those who facilitate engagements on the IDP.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Focus group discussion guide

CASE	GROU P 1	GROU P 2	GROU P 3	GROU P 4	GROU P 5	GROU P 6	GROU P 7	GROU P 8
WARD NO	04/10/1 8	04/10/1 8	04/10/1 8	04/10/1 8	04/10/1 8	04/10/1 8	04/10/1 8	04/10/1 8
INTERES T GROUP	Male Youth	Fe- male Youth	Adult Men	Adult Wo- men	Civic Male	Civic Fe- male	Khoro dza Misand a	Men Pas- tors
<b>1. How do the residences of Thulamela participate in the IDP process</b>								
Analysis								
Strate- gies								
Projects								
Integra- tion								
Appro- val								
Monito- ring and evalua- tion								

CASE	GROU P 1	GROU P 2	GROU P 3	GROU P 4	GROU P 5	GROU P 6	GROU P 7	GROU P 8
WARD NO	04/10/1 8	04/10/1 8	04/10/1 8	04/10/1 8	04/10/1 8	04/10/1 8	04/10/1 8	04/10/1 8
INTE- REST GROUP	Male Youth	Female Youth	Adult Men	Adult Wome n	Civic Male	Civic Female	Khoro dza Misand a	Men Pastor s
<b>2. What makes it possible to participate in the IDP process</b>								

<b>Analys s</b>								
<b>Strate- gies</b>								
<b>Project s</b>								
<b>Integra- tion</b>								
<b>Appro- val</b>								
<b>Monito- ring and evalua- tion</b>								

<b>CASE</b>	<b>GROU P 1</b>	<b>GROU P 2</b>	<b>GROU P 3</b>	<b>GROU P 4</b>	<b>GROU P 5</b>	<b>GROU P 6</b>	<b>GROU P 7</b>	<b>GROU P 8</b>
<b>WARD NO</b>	<b>04/10/1 8</b>	<b>04/10/1 8</b>	<b>04/10/1 8</b>	<b>04/10/1 8</b>	<b>04/10/1 8</b>	<b>04/10/1 8</b>	<b>04/10/1 8</b>	<b>04/10/1 8</b>
<b>INTE- REST GROU P</b>	<b>Male Youth</b>	<b>Fe- male Youth</b>	<b>Adult Men</b>	<b>Adult Wo- men</b>	<b>Civic Male</b>	<b>Civic Fe- male</b>	<b>Khoro dza Misand a</b>	<b>Men Pas- tors</b>

**3. What limits people to participate in IDP process**

<b>Analy- sis</b>								
<b>Strate- gies</b>								
<b>Project s</b>								
<b>Integra- -tion</b>								
<b>Appro- val</b>								

<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>								
----------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

<b>CASE</b>	<b>GROU P 1</b>	<b>GROU P 2</b>	<b>GROU P 3</b>	<b>GROU P 4</b>	<b>GROU P 5</b>	<b>GROU P 6</b>	<b>GROU P 7</b>	<b>GROU P 8</b>
<b>WARD NO</b>	04/10/18	04/10/18	04/10/18	04/10/18	04/10/18	04/10/18	04/10/18	04/10/18
<b>INTE-REST GROUP</b>	Male Youth	Female Youth	Adult Men	Adult Women	Civic Male	Civic Female	Khoro dza Misand a	Men Pastors
<b>4. What needs to be done to make sure that residents of Thulamela participate in the IDP processes</b>								
<b>Analysiss</b>								
<b>Strategies</b>								
<b>Projects</b>								
<b>Integration</b>								
<b>Approval</b>								
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>								

## Appendix 2: Survey questionnaire

### *Enhancing Public Participation in Integrated Development Planning in Thulamela Local Municipality*

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#### ENHANCING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN A SOUTH AFRICAN RURAL-BASED LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

#### Background

The aim of this study is to develop a framework for enhancing public participation in integrated planning in South Africa's local government system. Results of this study will help Thulamela Municipality to enhance its connectedness with society and deliver better quality services. Thus, it is crucial to ensure that correct data is collected and used to make informed decisions.

#### Section 1 Demographic Information of Respondents

##### *Instruction*

*For questions in this section, please tick the most appropriate box corresponding to your answer.*

1. Indicate your Ward here \_\_\_\_\_
2. Category of stakeholder you are representing \_\_\_\_\_
3. For how long have you been a resident of this ward? \_\_\_\_\_ years.
4. Gender (a) Male  (b) Female
5. What leadership position do you hold in this Ward?  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### 6. Indicate your age out of the categories shown below

1.	15-25 years	
2.	26-35 years	
3.	36-50 years	
4.	51-65 years	
5.	More than 65 years	

### 7. Highest level of education attained

1.	None	
2.	Primary schooling	
3.	Secondary schooling but not completed matric	
4.	Matric	
5.	Tertiary qualification	

### 8. Marital status

1.	Single (no children)	
2.	Married	
3.	Widowed	
4.	Separated or Divorced	

### 9. Employment status

1.	Unemployed	
2.	Self-employed	
3.	Employed permanently	
4.	Employed temporarily	
5.	Retired	

## Section 2 Understanding the Nature and Form of Public Participation in Integrated Development Planning (IDP)

### ***Instruction***

*Study the statement about public participation in the following sections. Using a score of 1 (Completely disagree) to 10 (Completely agree), indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement. Please be as honest and truthful as possible.*

**Question 1: How do residents of the Ward participate in IDP activities?**

Activity	Score (from 1 to 10)
We participate by ..... Situational Analysis	
We participate by ..... Strategy Formulation	
We participate by ..... Projects	
We participate by ..... Integration	
We participate by ..... Approval	
We participate by monitoring and evaluating the IDP process.	
We participate through attending meetings	
We are always invited to participate.	
Municipal officials bring their ideas and we endorse them	
Residents contribute ideas and views on matters brought before us	
Mobilizing members of our communities to participate.	
Community protests that force the Municipality to act given that this is the language officials and elected representatives seem to understand	

**Question 2: What makes it possible for you to participate in the IDP process?**

Activity	Score (from 1 to 10)
Thulamela Local Municipality leaders show that they are accountable to us as citizens	
As citizens, we are always invited to participate	
Municipal officials do not impose what they think on us	

Activity	Score (from 1 to 10)
Our views as citizens are appreciated and often adopted	
Information relating to IDP is disseminated to us on a regular basis and in a timely manner	
As citizens, we feel that we make decisions that are implemented	
As citizens, we are involved in implementation	
There is an inner resolve in us that tells us that we must be part of the IDP process and influence decisions that are made	
There are many people in our communities who have the skills required for this phase of the IDP	
We trust the Municipality and thus want it to succeed in what it does for citizens	

**Question 3: What makes it difficult for you to participate in the IDP process?**

Activity	Score (from 1 to 10)
Citizens lack skills that are required to participate actively	
Municipality does not share its plan of action for us to know well in time when we are expected to participate	
Invitations are normally delivered so late that we cannot adjust our plans to participate.	
The Municipality seems to simply want to comply with legislation governing IDP and not interested in the quality of our participation.	
It seems decisions are made elsewhere for us to just rubber stamp. Thus, there is no point in wasting time to participate in such engagements.	
Engagements are held very far away from our places of residence.	
The times when engagements are held do not make it easy for us to participate.	
We are just tired of false promises and we have lost hope.	

Activity	Score (from 1 to 10)
Lack of money for transport makes most fail to attend sessions organized.	
The attitudes of those who facilitate the engagements is so bad that there is no point in being part of what they do.	

**Question 4: What strategies do you recommend for enhancing public participation?**

Activity	Score (from 1 to 10)
Meetings should be held during weekends and not during the week. This will allow those who are employed to be part of the engagements.	
Municipality should adopt more creative means of working with local stakeholders to find solutions to issues affecting citizens	
Organize workshops to explain more clearly what citizens are expected to do in this phase of the IDP process.	
Stop using consultants and rely more on internal staff who should be capacitated more to do their work	
Co-opt interested and competent ordinary members of the community into planning and implementation committees on a voluntary basis.	
Ward Committees and Community Development Workers should play more active and meaningful roles than is the case at present.	
Give communities in the Wards the opportunity to recruit interested, competent and dedicated retired professionals and unemployed graduates who then lead the IDP process.	
Use radio stations more creatively to engage residents.	
Use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, among others, to engage with and solicit ideas from citizens especially children and youth	
Explore the possibility of using virtual platforms such as Zoom and MS Teams to engage citizens especially those residing outside the area but have roots and interests in our Wards or Municipality.	

Activity	Score (from 1 to 10)
. Establish collaborative agreements with tertiary institutions (universities and colleges) so that academics and students can be deployed to various Wards to assist.	
. Offer training in project management	
. Offer training in leadership and management of IDP processes	
. Include civic education (processes that affect citizens' beliefs, commitments, capabilities and actions as members of their communities, nations and international community) in the school curriculum. In that curriculum, infuse IDP and municipal business.	

**Thank you for your participation**

### Appendix 3: Request to conduct research

**P.O BOX 494  
MUTALE  
0956**

**THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER  
THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY  
PRIVATE BAG X5066  
OLD AGRIVEN BUILDING  
THOHOYANDOU  
0956**

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

I am a PhD candidate at the University of Venda. It is for this reason that I request your permission to undertake my research in Thulamela Local Municipality. The title of my Thesis is: **ENHANCING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN A SOUTH AFRICAN RURAL-BASED LOCAL MUNICIPALITY** and is being undertaken under the promotion of Professor J. Francis (Promoter) and Dr Beata Kilonzo (Co-Promoter).

The research study shall make use of focus group discussion (n=23) and also use of the completion of a questionnaire survey (n=162), with very selected potential participants/respondents, chosen through purposeful sampling. The study will be beneficial to Thulamela Local Municipality as it will provide both elected and appointed public officials, with a deeper understanding of public participation in the integrated development planning processes, thereby benefiting Thulamela Local Municipality in terms of future integrated development planning.

The ethical research principles will be strictly adhered to throughout the research process, so as to maintain a high standard of work and high quality of the research study. The information obtained will be used only for the purposes of this study and anonymity and confidentiality of potential research participants or respondents will strictly be ensured. A copy of the full research report, once approved by the University of Venda, will be handed to Thulamela Local Municipality.

I thus request granting of permission to enable me to collect the necessary data/information from relevant officials, Ward Committees and structures at Thulamela Local Municipality for the purposes of completion of my Thesis.

Your kind assistance in granting me permission will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

---

**THIATHU ISHMAEL RAVHURA**

**E-MAIL ADDRESS: thiathuravhura@gmail.com**


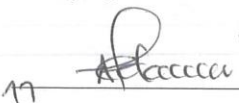


**CELLPHONE: 066 276 5942**

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**MUNICIPAL MANAGER**

<b>APPROVED</b>		<b>NOT APPROVED</b>	
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**Appendix 4: Permission to conduct a research**

	<p>Private Bag X5066 Thohoyandou 0950 Limpopo Province Tel: 015 962 7500 Fax: 015 962 4020</p>
Ref	: 4/3/4/1
Enquiries	: Mabasa N.H
Tel	: 015 962 7514
Fax	: 015 962 4020
To	: Mr. Ravhura Thiathu Ishmael
From	: THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY
Date	: 05 SEPTEMBER 2019
Subject	: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The above matter refers.</li><li>2. Kindly note that permission to conduct research has been granted.</li><li>3. Contact Human Resources Section for more information.</li><li>4. Hoping that this will meet your favourable considerations.</li></ol>	
<p> MUNICIPAL MANAGER: MALULEKE H.E</p>	
	
	

## Appendix 5: Informed consent forms

Name of Respondent.....

**Participate in a focus group discussion for the PhD study titled:** Enhancing public participation in integrated development planning in a South African rural-based Local Municipality.

My name is **Thiathu Ishmael Ravhura**, a PhD candidate in the Institution for Rural Development, School of Agriculture at the University of Venda. I am requesting your participation in a **focus group discussion** which seeks to develop a framework for use in enhancing public participation in integrated development planning within local government, especially in South Africa. This form serves to:

- i) Provide a synopsis of the information regarding the research and
- ii) To request permission for your signature in this **focus group discussion**.

### i) Synopsis of the information regarding the research

**Problem statement and rationale for the study:** Public participation in integrated development planning is implemented with the limited involvement of interest groups and stakeholders. Existing 'invited space' are for compliance purposes.

**The aim:** The aim of this study is to develop a framework for use in enhancing public participation in integrated development with special reference to Thulamela Local Municipality.

**The method to be employed:** An exploratory sequential mixed methods approach will be used. Data will be collected in two separate phases: a focus group discussion will be the first method of data collection. After the analysis of the qualitative data, the researcher uses these results to connect through a survey questionnaire with Traditional Leaders, Ward Committee, youth, adults, pastors, civic, CDW and disabled people.

**The contribution that the study will make:** This study will contribute to a better understanding of public participation in the integrated development planning process. By contributing knowledge that recognizes the limitations and possibilities of public participation in integrated development planning spaces, as well as the influence of public participation at all stages of IDP, the study will further enhance competencies and capabilities of Thulamela

residents and local government practitioners as well as policymakers in public participation. Municipal public officials and stakeholders will therefore benefit from the results of this study.

**Ethical Approval:** The study was approved by University of Venda's Research Ethics Committee.

**The nature of participation in the study:** A questionnaire survey will be self-administered to Traditional Leaders, Ward Committee members, youth, women, pastors, CDW and people with disabilities. It is anticipated that data collection could take place from October to December 2020.

**The potential benefit of taking part in this study:** The results of the study will assist public officials and policymakers and thereby benefit your Municipality in terms of future planning.

**The potential risk of taking part in this study:** There are no foreseen potential risks or physical potential risks or physical discomfort to the participant. The only inconvenience might be for the participants to make personal time available to complete the focus group discussion.

**Confidentiality:** All your responses will remain confidential. In both the dissertation and any other academic publication emanating from this study, your responses will remain anonymous and only grouped data will be presented.

**Remuneration:** There is no material or financial benefit for individual participants in the study.

**Sharing findings:** A final single copy of the research report will be made available to the Municipality on request. The findings of the study may also be published in academic publications. The final study will also be accessible on the University of Venda electronic database on Theses and Dissertations.

Contact detail should you require more information:

E-mail: [thiathuravhura@gmail.com](mailto:thiathuravhura@gmail.com)

Cell: 066 276 5942

**Request permission for your signature, should you choose to participate in this pilot study**

As part of this study, I wish to conduct a focus group discussion on public participation in the integrated development planning process. If you agree to take part in this focus group discussion, I will ask to complete this informed consent form and take part in this focus group discussion. Please note there are no correct or wrong responses. This should take approximately 20 to 25 minutes.

Before I proceed, I need your agreement, that you are aware of the following:

1. I volunteer to participate in this PhD research which is conducted by Thiathu Ishmael Ravhura, a registered PhD candidate at the University of Venda.
2. I understand that I am free to stop or withdraw from this survey questionnaire at any time, without any negative consequences.
3. I understand that I may also refuse to answer any questions that I am not comfortable with and still remain part of the study.
4. I understand that I will not directly benefit materially by taking part in the study.
5. I understand that I will not be remunerated for taking part.
6. My participation involves completing a questionnaire survey facilitated by the researcher and his research assistants. The questionnaire survey will take approximately 20 to 25 minutes.
7. The findings of the study may be published in an academic publication. As with the dissertation, my identity will remain confidential in any such publication.
8. The information above was explained to me by Thiathu Ishmael Ravhura in Tshivenda. I am in command of this language. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction. I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

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**Participant:**  
**Name and Surname**

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**Participant:**  
**Signature**

---

**Date**

**Researcher:**  
**Name and Surname**

**Researcher:**  
**Signature**

**Date**

**Informed consent form – SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Name of Respondent**.....

**Participate in a Survey Questionnaire for the PhD study titled:** Enhancing public participation in integrated development planning in a South African rural-based Local Municipality.

My name is **Thiathu Ishmael Ravhura**, a PhD candidate in the Institution for Rural Development, School of Agriculture at the University of Venda. I am requesting your participation in a **Survey Questionnaire** which seeks to develop a framework for use in enhancing public participation in integrated development planning within local government, especially in South Africa. This form serves to:

- iii) Provide a synopsis of the information regarding the research and
- iv) To request permission for your signature in this **Survey Questionnaire**.

**ii) Synopsis of the information regarding the research**

**Problem statement and rationale for the study:** Public participation in integrated development planning is implemented with the limited involvement of interest groups and stakeholders. Existing 'invited space' are for compliance purposes.

**The aim:** The aim of this study is to develop a framework for use in enhancing public participation in integrated development with special reference to Thulamela Local Municipality.

**The method to be employed:** An exploratory sequential mixed methods approach will be used. Data will be collected in two separate phases: a focus group discussion will be the first method of data collection. After the analysis of the qualitative data, the researcher uses these results to connect through the survey questionnaire with Traditional Leaders, Ward Committee, youth, adults, pastors, civic, CDW and disabled people.

**The contribution that the study will make:** This study will contribute to a better understanding of public participation in the integrated development planning process. By contributing knowledge that recognizes the limitations and possibilities of public participation in integrated development planning spaces, as well as the influence of public participation at

all stages of IDP, the study will further enhance competencies and capabilities of Thulamela residents and local government practitioners as well as policymakers in public participation. Municipal public officials and stakeholders will therefore benefit from the results of this study.

**Ethical Approval:** The study was approved by University of Venda, Research Ethics Committee.

**The nature of participation in the study:** A questionnaire survey will be self-administered to Traditional Leaders, Ward Committee members, youth, women, pastors, CDW and people with disabilities. It is anticipated that data collection could take place from October to December 2020.

**The potential benefit of taking part in this study:** The results of the study will assist public official and, policymakers and thereby benefit your Municipality in terms of future planning.

**The potential risk of taking part in this study:** There are no foreseen potential risks or physical potential risks or physical discomfort to the participant. The only inconvenience might be for the participants to make personal time available to complete the survey questionnaire.

**Confidentiality:** All your responses will remain confidential. In both the dissertation and any other academic publication emanating from this study, your responses will remain anonymous and only grouped data will be presented.

**Remuneration:** There is no material or financial benefit for individual participants in the study.

**Sharing findings:** A final single copy of the research report will be made available to the Municipality on request. The findings of the study may also be published in academic publications. The final study will also be accessible on the University of Venda electronic Thesis and Dissertation.

Contact detail should you require more information:

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Cell: 066 276 5942

**Request permission for your signature, should you choose to participate in this research**

As part of this study, I wish to collect information on public participation in integrated development planning process. If you agree to take part in this study, I will ask to complete this survey questionnaire. Please note there are no correct or wrong responses. This should take approximately 20 to 25 minutes.

Before I proceed, I need your agreement, that you are aware of the following:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
**Participant:**  
**Name and Surname**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Participant:**  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Researcher:**  
**Name and Surname**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Researcher:**  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**