IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE MAKHADO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

BY

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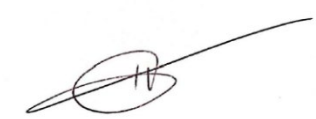
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DECLARATION

I, **Khomola Maluta (20000762)**, hereby declare that the research titled *"The importance of community participation in the implementation of Local Economic Development: A case study of Makhado Local Municipality"* for the Master of Administration degree at the University of Venda, hereby submitted by me, has not been submitted previously for a degree at this or any other university, that it is my own work in design and in execution, and that all reference materials contained herein has been duly acknowledged.



09/06/2025

..... **.....**

KHOMOLA MALUTA **DATE**

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research to the Khomola Munari family, for their endless support, love, and encouragement in my life and in my career.

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ABSTRACT

Community participation is often seen as essential for the effectiveness of numerous health programs. Nevertheless, there is a deficiency in theoretical frameworks and empirical data concerning the factors influencing participation within specific contexts and relationships. The study focused on the importance of community participation in the implementation of Local Economic Development in the Makhado Local Municipality. Local Economic Development is considered as a solution to the triple challenges (unemployment, poverty, and inequality) in South African municipalities. Local Economic Development approach aims to stimulate economic growth and improve the quality of life within communities by identifying the needs of communities through community participation. The study applied the participatory theory, which explains more about community participation and the contribution of citizens in community-based projects. Participatory theory was incorporated on mutual involvement of all important stakeholders, especially the use of respective members of citizens to make decisions and set the plans for their future. The study used a pragmatic research paradigm to select the research method of the study. The study deployed a mixed-methods research design. The descriptive research design was used as a blueprint for the study. The study population was limited to Makhado Local Municipality and the community members who were under Makhado Local Municipality. A purposive sampling technique that uses non-probability sampling was adopted in this study using a qualitative method. Statistical and thematic analyses were adopted to analyse data quantitatively and qualitatively. Enhanced research methodologies are required to enhance the conceptualisation of community participation and to elucidate a deeper comprehension of the ways in which factors like power and influence impact community engagement and its results.

The major findings of the study are:

- The study found that most respondents are unfamiliar with the goals and objectives of Local Economic Development initiatives, and there is a considerable knowledge gap within the community regarding understanding Local Economic Development and its objectives.
- The study found that poor information dissemination is a key challenge and a lack of proper channels by the Local Economic Development officials to reach

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out to the community members under Makhado Local Municipality.

- The study revealed that the role of Non-Governmental Organisations in the Makhado Local Municipality is not well played in terms of addressing the barriers to community participation for Local Economic Development initiatives.
- The findings indicated that active involvement fosters a sense of ownership among community members, which enhances both the sustainability and effectiveness of projects.
- The findings indicate that increasing access to information and education about Local Economic Development initiatives would improve participation.

The following are the recommendations that are made based on the findings of the study.

- The study recommends that the Makhado Local Municipality implement targeted public awareness campaigns using local radio stations, social media platforms, and community meetings to educate residents on Local Economic Development.
- The study recommends that Makhado Local Municipality develop a comprehensive Local Economic Development communication strategy to ensure the timely and clear dissemination of information.
- The study recommends the introduction of dedicated Local Economic Development awareness campaigns such as NGOs to educate the community on the benefits and opportunities available through Local Economic Development initiatives.
- The study recommends that the municipality launch extensive awareness programs to address the prevailing uncertainty about Local Economic Development inclusivity and ensure that all community members are well-informed in order to foster ownership to the community members.
- The study recommends that the municipality enhance the dissemination of information and educational materials on Local Economic Development initiatives to improve community awareness and participation.

Key words: Local Economic Development, Local Government, Integrated Development Plan, Municipality, Community Participation.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

LED	: Local Economic Development
EPWPs	: Expanded Public Works Programmes
NGOs	: Non-Governmental Organisations
SPSS	: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
IBM	: International Business Machines Corporation.
WHO	: World Health Organization
IDP	: Integrated Development Plan
CBOs:	: Community Based Organisations
WPLG:	: White Paper on Local Government
SALGA	: South African Local Government Association
SMS	: Short Message Service
DPLG	: Department of Provincial and Local Government
MPAC	: Municipal Property Assessment Corporation
SMME	: Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the importance of community participation in local economic development in Makhado Local Municipality. Despite an increasing understanding of why community participation in the Local Economic Development (LED) process is crucial, attention to the processes and mechanisms for securing more meaningful participation has been minimal. Many current methods for engaging civil society in local development rely on face-to-face meetings, which can be limited by time, cost, and the need for translators (Babbie, 2019:12). Furthermore, it can be difficult for local government and non-government organizations to involve all relevant stakeholders in the initial stages of LED project planning, something often acknowledged as crucial for successful project development. Kandil (2016:34) stated that face-to-face engagement can be time-consuming, especially if many participants are involved, thus reducing the local government's capacity to involve citizens in idea generation, project planning, project implementation, and ongoing problem-solving activities. The result is limited local ownership of and buy-in to LED programs and projects led by local government (Nzimakwe, 2012:153). The study focuses on the importance of community participation in the implementation of Local Economic Development at Makhado Local Municipality. Community participation could best be defined as the immediate contribution by community members in issues pertaining to the arrangement, administration, and advancement of development-oriented programmes at the local or grassroots level (Mafukidze, 2009:12).

Community participation is regarded as a way of countering development and encouraging the public to cooperate towards sustainable development (Kandil 2016:59). Sebola (2016:78) asserts that community participation is seen as an idea that is defined in diverse ways by numerous and different people and in a diversity of environments. Furthermore, Sebola (2016:28) emphasises that community participation is used interchangeably with the concepts, citizens' participation, and civil

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participation. Section 152 (1) (a) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 ensures the provision of democratic and accountable government for local communities. A democratic and accountable government for local communities includes the involvement of the people in matters that affect their well-being.

Community participation can be considered as any process that directly engages the members of the community in decision-making and considers public input in making that decision (Lachapelle, & Austin, 2024:45). This research aims to explore the range of engagement tools available to municipalities to ensure that meaningful engagement is activated, indicating a significant move in terms of engaging civil society at the initial stages of the LED process by developing qualifying criteria to be used during the selection of the most appropriate tools. The aspect of devising a matrix of tools, in line with activity or project complexity, or in line with low or high participation required, will also be explored (Madumo, 2014:137). The research will focus on the unique case of the Makhado Local Municipality. Community participation in the context of local economic development refers to the active and meaningful involvement of community members, stakeholders, and relevant actors in the planning, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation of strategies, projects, and policies that contribute to the economic growth and improvement of a specific geographic area or municipality (Masango, 2003:67). Whether the implementation or application of the tools serves as potential models that can be transported into most municipalities will also form part of the research findings.

The constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, section 152 (e), provides the framework for a representative and participatory democratic system. During the implementation of LED, there are different challenges including the problem of less understanding by community members of what LED is, lack of necessary knowledge about LED and limited inclusivity of community members to LED projects, lack of capacity building in the municipalities, lack of institutions and organisations that are aimed at enhancing the understanding of the citizens in Makhado Local Municipality.

The research sought to address the challenges of community participation that are facing Makhado Local Municipality in the implementation of Local Economic

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Development. The objective of this study is to encourage community participation in LED implementation in the Makhado Local Municipality.

This section presents the introduction and background of the study, problem statement, aim of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, definitions of operational concepts and the organisation of the study.

1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Community participation is currently regarded as a process that provides individuals with an opportunity to influence community members' decisions and has long been a component of the democratic decision-making process (Brynard, 2016:1). Sharma and Deepak (2001:352) contend that community participation has been a steady subject developed as far back as 50 years ago. Lachapelle, and Austin, (2024:15) added that during the 1970s, community participation became central to development projects to seek sustainability and equity, particularly for the poor. The study focuses on the area of Makhado Local Municipality, which is under Vhembe District Municipality in the province of Limpopo. Davids (2015:19) states that community participation is an inclusive process aimed at deepening democracy through formal participatory mechanisms. Cogan & Sharpe (2013:283) assert that the roots of community participation can be traced to ancient Greece and Colonial New England. Before the 1960s, governmental processes and procedures were designed to facilitate external participation (Babbie, 2019:12). Community participation was institutionalised in the mid-1960s when the United States of America, under President Lyndon Johnson, introduced his Great Society Programmes (Cogan & Sharpe, 2013:283).

The study focused on LED which was originally referred to as deliberate intervention to promote economic development in a specific area through the creation of an enabling environment in which local people and institutions can make their own realistic and practical decisions (Meyer, 2014:52). The formation of LED is also supported by Section 152 (e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 which mandates the municipalities to promote the social and economic development

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of the community and to participate in national and provincial development programmes. Davids (2015:19) stated that LED is seen as being important for reasons, for example, to create jobs and new economic opportunities, to increase income levels, thereby enabling municipalities to pay for services and to broaden the tax and revenue bases of a municipality. Hogwood and Gunn (2016:76) indicated that Local Economic Development policy is also intended to empower the most vulnerable, marginalised, and poor sectors of local communities to raise sufficient income to meet their basic needs and aspirations. The LED policy cannot be separated from poverty alleviation projects and programmes initiated and implemented at municipal level such as the Expanded Public Works Programmes (EPWPs), the provision of free basic services and the provision of support for Small Medium and Micro enterprises and cooperatives (Pycroft, 2013:90). According to Phutiagae (2014:103), the LED encourages the people and the institutions to take decisions which would strengthen the local economy, create more jobs (self-employment). Local Economic Development also encourages the promotion of new enterprises, bringing together key stakeholders from both public and private sectors, along with local community interest groups (Davids, 2015:29).

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Section 152 (e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, states that it is the objective of local government to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government. Institutions of local government should provide an environment to ensure that community participation opportunities are harnessed through decentralisation of decision-making and the availability of resources to local communities. The promulgation of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 (hereinafter referred to as the Systems Act), focused the attention of municipalities on the need to encourage the involvement of communities in the affairs of the municipality. The fact that community participation was high within the government agenda is evident from the fact that the whole of Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 is devoted to community participation. Section 195(e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996

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stated that the basic values and principles governing public administration include that people's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policymaking. The Local Government: Municipal System Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000), Section 16, obliges municipalities to create an enabling environment for the local communities to participate in municipal affairs, integrated development planning, and performance management systems. The Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005 (Act No. 13 of 2005) clarifies the meaning of the term consultation within a legislative context, defining it as a process whereby the views of communities on a specific matter are solicited, either orally or in writing, and considered.

Despite the legislative imperatives that guide community participation in LED, there are the following challenges of Community participation in Local Economic Development such as lack of necessary knowledge and understanding about LED approach, limited inclusivity of the community members in the LED programs, lack of capacity building within the municipal officials and lack of institutions that are aimed at enhancing understanding to the community participation in LED approach. According to the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA, 2022), over 45% of municipalities in South Africa lack adequately skilled personnel to drive LED initiatives, and Makhado is no exception. The lack of structures and institutions that are aimed at enhancing the understanding of citizens at Makhado Local Municipality about the roles that they are supposed to play in the approach of Local Economic Development. Lack of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) that are working together with LED officials and community members to facilitate a good relationship between the municipality and the community members. This study is conducted to produce strategies that will assist in addressing the issue of community participation in the Local Economic Development approach in Makhado Local Municipality.

1.4. AIM OF THE STUDY

To assess strategies to enhance community participation in Local Economic Development.

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1.5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following were the objectives of the study:

- To assess the level of understanding among community members about Local Economic Development at Makhado Local Municipality.
- To identify the key barriers to effective community participation in Local Economic Development programs at Makhado Local Municipality.
- To evaluate the role of Non-Governmental Organisations in facilitating community participation in Local Economic Development at Makhado Local Municipality.
- To assess the inclusivity of current Local Economic Development programs in terms of community participation at Makhado Local Municipality.
- To identify recommendable strategies that can be used to improve community participation in Local Economic Development programs at Makhado Local Municipality.

1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following were the research questions of the study:

- What is the current level of understanding of Local Economic Development among community members in Makhado Local Municipality?
- What are the key barriers to effective community participation in Local Economic Development programs at Makhado Local Municipality?
- What is the role of non-governmental organisations in facilitating community participation in Local Economic Development at Makhado Local Municipality?
- To what extent are Local Economic Development programs inclusive of different community groups in Makhado Local Municipality?
- What are the recommendable strategies that can be implemented to improve community participation in Local Economic Development programs at Makhado Local Municipality?

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1.7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant to the community members of Makhado Local Municipality to understand the importance of community participation in the approach of Local Economic Development. Community participation is one of the most significant phenomena in Local Economic Development because it will benefit Makhado Local Municipality on how they should engage the citizens and give them knowledge on how they should contribute to Local Economic Development. This study will contribute significantly to the understanding of community participation in Makhado Local Municipality and the participatory mechanisms in the Local Economic Development approach. The study will go beyond conceptualising community participation and focus on emphasising the value of public participation in the development of the local economy

1.8. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study focused on the role of community participation in the Local Economic Development approach in Makhado Local Municipality. The study was conducted at Makhado Local Municipality, which is found in Limpopo under the Vhembe District Municipality. However, the study focused more on how the citizens in the Makhado Local municipality can participate to ensure that Local Economic Development is effective.

1.9. DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

This section provides a clear explanation of major terms that are commonly used in this research. The terms that are explained in this research include participation, community participation, Local Economic Development, and Local Municipality.

1.9.1. Participation

Cele (2015:76) defines participation as a decision-making process, where community members express their opinions and influence the decisions taken. Masiya, Davids & Mazenda (2019:25), on the other hand, define participation as actively taking part and

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contributing to issues of interest. In this study, participation is perceived as a form of involvement by interested parties with the aim of acquiring information and influencing decisions taken.

1.9.2. Community Participation

Thwala (2017:96) defines community participation as the involvement of people in a community in projects to solve their own problems. Community participation is active group participation or participation of a person as representative of the group in activities where they not only provide ideas but are also involved in the intervention (Chuah et al., 2018). In this study, community participation is the process by which the Makhado local municipality engages with people about the decisions that they take regarding LED, which affects the communities.

1.9.3. Local Economic Development

Local economic development is defined as a process whereby partnerships between local governments, community-based groups and the private sector are established to manage existing resources, to create jobs, and to stimulate the economy of a well-defined territory (Rogerson, 2019:65). Nel and Humphrys (2015:277) defined LED as a process and a strategy in which locally based individuals or organisations use resources to modify or expand local economic activity to the benefit of the majority in the local community. According to the study, Local Economic Development is a policy that applies to local government with the aim of addressing the needs of the citizens.

1.9.4. Local Government

Local government can be described as some government bodies elected by the people that have administrative, legislative, and executive functions on the territories under their authority (Abrahams, 2019:63). Seduma (2014:134) also defined local government as an authority that decides or determines certain measures within a given territory. According to this study, the concept of local government refers to the area where the study is conducted, which is the Makhado local municipality.

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1.9.5. Participatory Development

Participatory development can be defined as a form of development that heightens sustainability and self-reliance and aims for the realisation of social justice by improving the quality of how people participate (Sebola, 2017:112). Mauger (2019:12) defined participatory development as an involvement by the local population to create and implement programmes to improve their lives; participatory development is built on the belief that community members can be trusted to shape their own future. The study defines participatory development as a process by which people take an active and influential hand in shaping decisions that affect their lives.

1.10. ORGANISATION OF STUDY

This study consists of five chapters, which are arranged as follows:

1.10.1. Chapter 1: Introduction and Background of the Study

The study focused on the introduction and background of the study, problem statement, aims of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, definition of operational concepts and organisations of the study.

1.10.2. Chapter 2: Literature Review

The chapter deliberate on the theoretical framework of community participation, legislative framework of community participation and Local Economic Development (LED), conceptualising public participation, reasons for public participation process, mechanisms of public participation, impact of public participation, principles of public participation, Local Economic Development impacts in Makhado Local Municipality, principles of LED, challenges of LED, successes of LED in Makhado Local Municipality, projects of LED, key elements of LED, impact of public participation in LED.

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1.10.3. Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter represents the research methodology that the researcher followed when conducting the research. The chapter represented research design, research paradigm, research methodologies, study area, population of the study, sampling methods, sampling size, data collection, and data analysis, as well as ethical considerations.

1.10.4. Chapter 4: Data Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation

This chapter presents the data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. This chapter discussed the analysis and interpretation of the collected data by discussing the sampled population's responses as a way of providing an understanding of the nature of the research findings on the role of public participation in Local Economic Development, the Makhado Local Municipality. This chapter is divided into two sections, namely, analysis of data collected through questionnaires and analysis of data collected through interviews.

1.10.5. Chapter 5: Findings, Recommendations and Conclusions

In this chapter, an overview of the study, major discussion of the research findings, a synthesised discussion of findings, recommendations for job creation strategies, as well as recommendations for future research on a related subject are documented. This chapter also presents the product of what the researcher has studied. The chapter also summarises the implications of the study.

1.11 SUMMERY

This chapter presented the introduction and background of the study, the problem statement, the aim of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the delimitation of the study, the definition of operational terms, and the organisation of the study. The objectives of the study were to assess the level of understanding among community members about Local Economic Development (LED) at Makhado Local Municipality, identifying the key barriers to effective community participation in

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LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality, evaluating the role of Non-Governmental Organizations in facilitating community participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality, assessing the inclusivity of current LED programs in terms of community participation at Makhado Local Municipality, and identifying recommendable strategies that can be used to improve community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality. The study was conducted to benefit the South African citizens as well as the Makhado Local Municipality and the communities under Makhado.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The literature review outline a theory that is relevant to the study and explain its relevance to this study. The literature of the study discusses the effects of community participation in local economic development in South African municipalities. The literature of the study deliberates on community participation challenges facing local government in facilitating the Local Economic Development planning and implementation in South African municipalities, as well as challenges of community participation in general.

2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

A theory is a supposition, or a system of ideas intended to explain something (Neuman, 2001:171). Theory is also defined as a statement or group of statements that clarify the mechanics of the world around us and frequently explain relations among phenomena (Fung & Wright, 2013:4). The study uses different theories that are all relevant to community participation and Local Economic Development. The researcher used people centred development theory, participatory theory, and ladder of citizen participation theory.

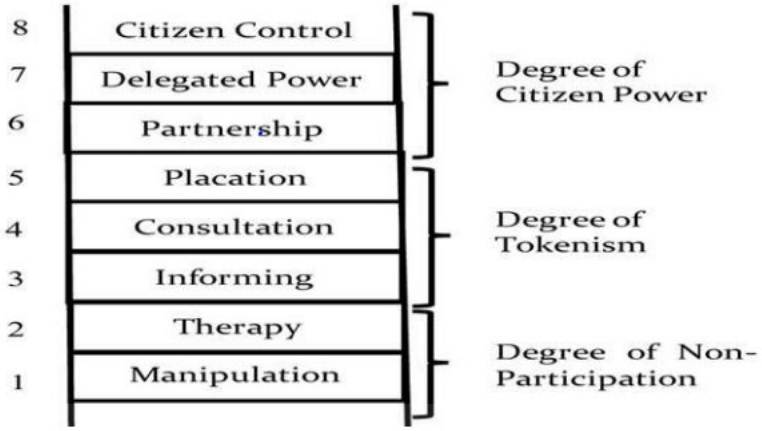
2.2.1. Ladder of Citizen Participation Theory

The Ladder of Citizen Participation theory, developed by Sherry Arnstein in 1969, has garnered significant acceptance and recognition within academic discussions. Arnstein's (1971:89) definition of citizen involvement is highly significant within the context of the United States since it emphasises the crucial significance of public interaction within the planning process. One of the most prominent conceptual frameworks in democratic citizen involvement is the Ladder of Citizen Participation. The theoretical framework explains the mechanisms by which institutional and political entities can either limit or enhance the ability of individuals to act, thereby defining how public empowerment, control, and influence in governance can be strengthened

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(Arnstein, 1971:52). The ladder consists of eight tiers and three categories, figure 2.1 demonstrates the information about the categories and the levels of participation.

Figure 2.1: Arnstein's Ladder of Participation



Source: (Arnstein 1961 in Mwiru 2015)

The first category comprises the manipulation and therapy rungs, where minimum or zero citizen participation exists. As a result, the first category is known as the degree of non-participation. On the other hand, the second category is known as the degree of tokenism, which comprises the informing, consultation, and placation rungs. In this category, citizens are permitted to participate only to the extent of voicing their views but have no real say that matters (Mwiru 2015:90). Finally, the last category is described as the degree of citizen power, which consists of partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. This is where true and meaningful participation takes place (Dodds, 2018:23). It can be concluded that the last category is a true reflection of a democratic and developmental state. According to Arnstein (1971:98), civic involvement is a fundamental aspect of democracy, requiring a legitimate power transfer to be appropriately classed as such. Similarly, Mnguni (2018:29) defines citizen participation as the proactive engagement of communities in policymaking.

This theory is relevant to this study because it categorises community participation to a level where it promotes the form of community participation that is required for the municipality to have a good implementation of LED. The sequential stages serve as factors for allocating authority in circumstances characterised by significant decision-making (Mamokhere, 2022:108). Therefore, developing effective tactics for citizen

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participation to achieve strategic goals is crucial. According to Arnstein (1971:26), a comprehensive citizen participation framework consists of eight levels: Citizen Control, Delegation, Partnership, Placation, Consultation, Informing, Therapy, and Manipulation. The researchers propose that community participation is a crucial technique for effectively managing planning processes, specifically in the context of LED. MacKay (2004:56) stated that the underlying assumption of this claim is that the active participation of the public in the planning processes can significantly improve the effective execution of community-focused initiatives, such as LED programs.

2.2.2. RELEVANCY OF LADDER OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION THEORY

The Ladder of Citizen Participation Theory by Arnstein is highly relevant to a study on the importance of community participation in implementing Local Economic Development (LED) in local municipalities (Khambule, 2018:45). Mwiru (2015:83) indicated that it provides a framework for understanding the depth and effectiveness of citizen involvement in LED processes, which is critical for achieving sustainable and inclusive outcomes. The theory's emphasis on moving from non-participation (manipulation and tokenism) to genuine citizen power (partnership, delegated power, and citizen control) highlights the need for communities to play a vital role in decision-making. This is particularly vital in LED, where the success of initiatives often depends on aligning with the local community's needs, priorities, and capacities. Arnstein's concept of tokenism underscores the risks of superficial engagement, where communities may be informed or consulted but lack real influence, leading to mistrust and poorly targeted interventions (Makalela, 2019:91). In contrast, higher levels of participation, such as partnerships and citizen control, foster collaboration, accountability, and ownership of LED projects, ensuring resources are allocated effectively and equitably. Mamokhere (2022:71) stated that the theory stresses the importance of inclusivity, ensuring marginalised groups have a voice in shaping development initiatives, which is essential in rural municipalities often characterised by inequality and limited opportunities.

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2.3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Legislation provides a proper framework in every aspect of community participation and policy, which may be implemented in South Africa. Legislations that guide how communities can participate in the Local Economic Development implementation, as well as the processes of LED, are explained in this section and analysed.

2.3.1. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996

Section 152 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 encourages the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government. Section 156 (4) of the Constitution 1996 further prohibits the passing of by-laws, unless the proposed by-law has been published for public comment in terms of Section 160 (4) of the Constitution, 1996. Section 162 (1) of the Constitution 1996 restricts the enforcement and promulgation of laws, unless they have been published in the official provincial government gazette and made accessible to the public by the municipality concerned. Section 195 of the Constitution 1996 expounds the basic values and principles that must govern public administration. Section 195 (1) (e) of the Constitution 1996 stipulates that people's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policymaking. The Constitution (1996) builds on the commitment to deepen democracy by making provision for direct and indirect representation of citizens.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa under sections 152 (c) and 153 (a) gives a constitutional mandate to local government in improving the standard of living for citizens through promoting LED initiatives (Khambule, 2018:98). The Constitution of South Africa under section 152 (c) and 153 (a) also provides the legal right for municipalities to enhance LED in ensuring the socio-economic development of the communities. Municipalities must provide and manage their administration, budgeting, and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of communities (Meyer & Venter, 2014:18). Further to that, section 152 (c) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa highlights the key aims of facilitating the inclusive socio-economic growth of the municipalities.

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2.3.2. Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998)

Section 72 (3) of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998) carries the sentiment that community participation enhances democracy. This is achieved through representative structures, where ward committees play a significant role. Section 74 of the Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998) grants ward committees the powers and functions such as to negotiate with the community members about how and when the basic services should be rendered (in addition to any other powers and duties delegated to them) to make recommendations on any matters affecting their wards, through the Ward Councillors, to the Council, Executive Committee, or the Executive Mayor. Section 16(1) of this Act provides that a municipality must develop a culture of municipal governance, which complements formal representative government by encouraging the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality.

2.3.3. Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)

In terms of Section 4 (2) (c) of the Municipal System Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) the council of a municipality has the duty to encourage the involvement of the local community and in terms of Section 4 (2) (e) to consult the community about the level, quality, range, and impact of municipal services provided by the municipality and options available for service delivery. Its preamble makes it clear that active participation of communities in the affairs of municipalities is a fundamental aspect of contemporary local government. Section 5 of the Municipal System Act grants members of the community the right to engage in the processes and mechanisms established by statute to participate in and contribute to the way the municipality is managed. Section 17 of the Municipal System Act, 2000 (as amended) makes provision for community participation in a way to promote the development of a culture of community participation; makes provision for the establishment of mechanisms, processes, and procedures for community participation; and provides for access to information and platforms for communication. Developmentally oriented planning is provided for in Section 23 (1) of the Municipal System Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000), which gives guidance on the way participation by the communities should take place.

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In addition, Section 42 of the Municipal System Act (Act No. 32 of 2000) shows that community involvement in the municipality's performance management system must be promoted.

2.3.4 White Paper on Local Government (WPLG) 1998

According to the White Paper on Local Government (WPLG), 1998, developmental local government is a government committed to collaborating with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic, and material needs and improve the quality of their lives. Section B of the White Paper on Local Government, 1998 requires municipalities to create mechanisms to guarantee community participation in policy initiation, formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of programmes. Each municipality must create a localised system of participation. The WPLG, 1998 gives local municipalities the opportunity to establish structures such as ward committees, which would ensure that there is indeed a meaningful involvement and collaboration with councillors.

The White Paper on Local Government (1998) labels the local sphere of government as dedicated to collaborating with local communities and a variety of stakeholders to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives. For this to be realised, municipalities are expected to maximise social and economic development opportunities within their local communities through the LED. The White Paper on Local Government 1996 further identifies three key developmental outcomes that local government must focus on, which include the provision of sustainable household infrastructure and services, and promotion of LED and community empowerment and redistribution. The White Paper on Local Government suggests that local government must be developmental in nature. To become more developmental, the instrument provides three approaches which can assist municipalities, namely integrated development planning and budgeting, performance management, and collaborating with local citizens and partners.

2.3.5. National Policy Framework on Public Participation, 2005

The purpose of the National Policy Framework on Public Participation, 2005, is to

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provide a policy framework for community participation in South Africa. It builds on the commitment of the democratic government to deepen democracy, which is embedded in the Constitution and in the concept of local government as comprising the municipality and the community. The National Policy Framework for Public Participation (2005:12) demonstrates the significance of participating in a democracy by stressing the commitment of the democratic government to deepen democracy. The National Policy Framework for Public Participation, 2005, contains guidelines for municipalities to ensure that the IDP and any improvement programmes from the government reach all needy communities in South Africa.

2.3.6. Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000

Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000, which is aimed at promoting participation, gives people the right to have access to any information which the government has if they need it to protect their rights. Municipal officials can only refuse to give information in certain limited situations. The study has checked whether the community is aware of or informed about their rights to participate in their development. The Constitution of Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 chapter two, Section 32, everyone has the right of access to (a) “any information held by the state; and (b) any information that is held by another person and that required for the exercise or protection of any rights”.

2.3.7. Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) in 1994

The promotion of LED before 1994 in South Africa was characterized by a pro-market economic approach centred on the promotion of the formal economy and marginalization of the township economy, which was exacerbated by suppression of LED in townships (Patterson, 2008:4). The introduction of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1994 was the first policy response to include the plight of the poor in LED and shifted from a solely market approach to include a pro-poor approach in LED (Mahlalela, 2014:36; Van der Waldt et al., 2018:157). The focus of the RDP emphasised social development of the marginalised communities, thus taking a pro-poor LED approach (Mahlalela, 2014:36). The South African approach to

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LED after 1994 had both characteristics of a pro-poor as well as a pro-market approach as a policy response.

2.4. CONCEPTUALISING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The word community is a multi-dimensional and complex idea that is characterised differently by various researchers. From a sociological perspective, community implies a gathering of individuals who live in a similar place, share same interests, an area or regular situation (Mansuri & Rao, 2004:98). Richards and Schmidt (2013:75) are of the view that community may likewise allude to a social or ethnic or language gathering or may allude to gathering of people having the equivalent or comparative premium. The attributes and conduct of communities' contrast from one community to the next, relying upon the historical background. As per Green and Mercer (2019:31), the community can be characterised as something that has a feeling of spot, limit, or having a place.

A community implies collaboration, uniformity and opportunity inside the group and the likelihood to develop in aggregate cognisance (Hall, 2018:187). A community has been characterised by Smith (2006:11) as occupants of a topographical neighbourhood or multi-neighbourhood region, regardless of how they identify with one another. A community is one of the focal ideas in sociology, yet it often comes up short on an exact definition. Tshikwatamba (2004:257) characterises a community as a bunch of individuals living respectively and sharing regular social qualities. Tshabalala (2006:46) points out that the participation of the local community in the local government system has its unique practice. The World Bank in Mansuri and Rao (2004:10) portrays community participation as the dynamic inclusion of a characterised community in various parts of the project design and implementation.
The World Bank in Mansuri and Rao (2004:10) indicates that participation is relied upon to prompt better structured tasks, better focused on advantages and more financially savvy and opportune conveyance of venture inputs. Morgan (2001:221) characterises community participation as something that occurs in connection with something different. Morgan (2001:221) further refers to the fact that, in most improvement ventures, community investment is associated with the involvement of a

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community in remote development interventions. Lyons (2001:13) indicated that community participation has turned out to be increasingly more significant as a method for enabling the community and making physical upgrades progressively feasible. Theron (2005:120) views community participation as a procedure to offer the community a chance to decide their own goal. This implies the arrangement of grassroots dimension with capacities, which could empower them to arrange improvement conveyance frameworks and have the option to take educated choices, as far as their advancement needs and priorities (Theron, 2005:119).

Parfitt (2004:537) views community participation as a functioning procedure by which customer gatherings or recipients impact the course and execution of the development program with a perspective on upgrading their prosperity as far as pay, individual development, confidence, profound improvement, and qualities they treasure. Mogale (2001:160) stresses that involving the community in rural development projects has the potential to boost their livelihoods. Bannett and Dearden (2014:107) state that community participation about rural development is not concerned with the principal occasion of how to accomplish a participatory society. However, Blakely (2010:48) asserted that it is increasingly concerned about how to achieve some rustic division with respect to the individuals who rely upon that area for employment.

2.5. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTEXT OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

This section discusses the interference of community participation in sustainable development initiatives such as LED at the local municipal level (Smith, 2006:11). Their visions and policies address the involvement of the communities in their development. The LED is about the delivery service of the government to the communities (MacKay, 2004:98). If the LED fails, therefore, there will be protests the government. Lyons (2001:13) stated that the government officials must not only be glued to their offices, but they should also go out and mix with the people, talk to them, and interact with the people. This channel of communication with the communities has been demonstrated by the government offices through the “imbizos.” These gatherings have made an impact on the communities and left the communities wanting

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to know more and keen to learn more about their rights (Hall, 2018:187).

Cele (2003:10) explains that community participation in the Local Economic Development process is regarded as essential in accordance with Section 152(1) of the Constitution (1996), which encourages the participation of communities and community organisations in local governments. According to Planact (2001:32), the LED is regarded as a vehicle for development because of its participatory approach to integrate economic, sectoral, spatial, social, institutional, environmental, and fiscal strategies to support the optimal allocation of scarce resources. To this end, the Planact (2001:41) states that one of the goals of LED is the transformation of municipalities into developmental structures through community participation.

David's (2005:64) states that the LED provides a strategic framework for democratic municipal governance because it sets out the vision, needs, priorities, goals, and strategies of a municipal council to develop, which are identified by means of engaging in the process of community participation. According to Theron (2005:136) and the RSA Ward Committee Resource book (2005:56), the LED is a process through which municipalities prepare, through community participation, an economic development plan which extends to a certain period. Furthermore, Theron (2005:136) asserts that the LED is a product of an integrated planning process that guides and informs all planning, budgeting, management, and decision-making in a municipality conducted with community participation principles.

Cele (2003:16) stated that the Local Economic Development planning process should take into consideration the knowledge and skills that people at the grassroots level possess through community participation. The LED implementation process should be people-driven and not determined by what change agents know, as is currently happening in municipalities (DPLG, 2005:41). If this bottom-up approach, which gives room for authentic community participation, is realised in the LED process, then local governance will be democratised.

Davids (2005:64) stated that community participation in the LED process regarding planning, implementation, monitoring, and review is obligatory as stipulated in Chapter

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4 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (32 of 2000). The LED is more based on community needs and priorities. Through the LED, the community members can participate in identifying their important needs (DPLG, 2005:141). One of the strengths of the LED is that it values the relationship between improvement, democracy, and delivery. Building local democracy is the fundamental responsibility of local government, and municipalities should develop policies and mechanisms to continuously connect with citizens, businesses, and community groups (Cele,2003:21).

2.6. CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE IDP AND LED

In South African municipalities, the correspondence between Integrated Development Planning (IDP) and Local Economic Development is vital for achieving sustainable economic growth and inclusive development (Tau, 2013:14). The IDP serves as a strategic planning tool that municipalities use to guide all development activities, aligning them with community needs and national policies. Local Economic Development, on the other hand, focuses specifically on economic initiatives that generate jobs, reduce poverty, and stimulate the local economy (Ndlela, 2005:88). The IDP provides the broader framework within which LED strategies are designed and implemented, ensuring that economic development projects are not isolated from other community needs but are part of a comprehensive development approach (Basdeo, 2012:17). This alignment helps municipalities ensure that LED initiatives contribute to overall community development goals such as infrastructure, housing, and social services.

One key area where the IDP and LED correspond is in resource allocation and stakeholder engagement. Van Winden (2009:32) argued that through the IDP process, municipalities engage with local communities to identify priority areas for development, which often include economic growth initiatives. Ranney (2016:87) pointed out that this participatory approach ensures that the economic strategies pursued under LED are reflective of local needs and can leverage community assets and opportunities. Mashamba (2008:21) added that the IDP helps to coordinate partnerships between municipalities, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, and other

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stakeholders, which are essential for successful LED projects. Khawula (2016:19) emphasized that this multi-stakeholder collaboration is crucial in ensuring that resources are efficiently used and that economic development initiatives are well-supported and aligned with broader social development objectives.

Despite the formal connection between IDP and LED, there are challenges in ensuring effective integration. Mashamaite and Madzivhandila (2014:56) identified that municipalities often struggle with a lack of capacity, poor interdepartmental coordination, and limited community participation, which can undermine the success of LED projects. For instance, if the IDP does not fully capture the economic needs of the community due to inadequate participation, LED initiatives may fail to address critical issues such as unemployment or skills development (Mashamba, 2008:21). Mulgan (2006:18) argued that a lack of clear communication between the departments responsible for economic development and those overseeing the broader IDP can lead to a misalignment of priorities, resulting in fragmented or ineffective project implementation. Addressing these challenges requires stronger institutional frameworks and a more consistent effort to engage communities and other stakeholders throughout both the IDP and LED processes (Van Gent, 2017:89).

Numerous studies have established that the linkage between LED and IDP is the pillar of economic development in all municipalities in South Africa. For instance, Gunter (2005:2) examined the contents, progress, and effect of IDP and LED amongst 23 municipalities in Mpumalanga Province in South Africa. In the study, Gunter argues that LED should be derived from the IDP of each municipality. LED and IDP are inseparable tools for local government in terms of service provision. To add, Malefane and Mashakoe (2008:90) hold the view that the relationship between the IDP and LED is supported by several legal frameworks such as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000, and the Local Government Transition Act, 1993.

Koma and Kuye (2014:53) assert that the establishment of the IDP in the new dispensation aims at the equitable allocation of services, public participation, reducing unemployment and poverty. Similarly, Mashamaite and Madzivhandila (2014:54) add

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that in the post-apartheid era in South Africa, the IDP is a very useful tool in responding to the needs of people at the municipal level in the country and it also plays a huge role in service delivery by enhancing transparency, accountability and poverty reduction. One of the most significant current discussions in the relationship between LED and IDP is challenges that hinder proper service provision, namely poor citizen engagement, the lack of adequate resources, unfunded mandates, and poor inter-governmental relations amongst different sectors (Mashamba, 2008:21).

Evidence suggests that a notable number of people in most provinces are not educated, have poor basic services and a prominent level of unemployment (Manana, 2016:87). By indicating all these shortcomings in the number of municipalities regarding the LED and IDP, there is no other way that local government can achieve its constitutional mandate without the alignment of these two inseparable instruments. Bogopane (2012:87) deduced that LED officers and managers are unable to understand their own IDPs. In numerous municipalities in South Africa, senior officials and political office bearers do not seem to understand the importance of IDP as the developmental document (Gunter, 2005:7). It is noted that programmes are only based on providing basic services, rather than economic growth (Koma and Kuye, 2014:43).

Subban, Theron, and Planning (2016:19) assert that the National Development Plan (NDP), through municipal IDPs, aims to address the rate of poverty, disparities, and unethical behaviour nationwide, with the intention of involving all related parties. In the study of Maphunye and Mafunisa (2008:75) state that the adoption of the IDP by the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) was on a legal basis in the new dispensation to give rise to the active participation of various institutions and parties so that ultimately the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa can be upheld. There are many similarities amongst the municipalities in South Africa that lead to a lack of service delivery because of the disintegration of the municipal IDP and LED.

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2.7. CHARACTERISTICS OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Local Economic Development (LED) in South African municipalities is characterised by several key features that reflect its role in promoting sustainable, inclusive growth. These characteristics include a strong focus on community participation, partnerships between various sectors, the development of local resources, and alignment with broader national and regional development goals.

2.7.1. Resource Availability

Nour (2011:16) stated that LED policies and strategies should consider the municipal budgets as determined and allocated by national bodies, and the strategy per municipality must be formulated in an integrative manner. Formulation of LED strategies must be developed on the grounds of available funds that will drive the programs and projects attached to each of the municipal strategies (Van Gent, 2017:79). For LED strategy to have a long-term impact, the strategy should be clearly defined during formulation and should be extensively funded during the initial stages until the strategy has the potential to become self-sustaining (Basdeo, 2012:15). Leigh and Backely (2016:29) stated that the LED strategy for a municipality should furthermore be envisioned in its entirety, which includes a fully-fledged plan, including detailed programs and projects that are concerned with the implementation and evaluation of each program. This finer detail in a development strategy will allow the commitment of a greater number of resources in comparison to the former and current detachment of LED programs from an overall strategic plan.

2.7.2. Capacity Building and Skills Development

Capacity building and skills development are key characteristics of LED, as they aim to equip both local government officials and community members with the knowledge and expertise required to effectively drive economic development (Ranney, 2016:87). Khawula (2016:18) stated that municipalities in collaboration with educational institutions, NGOs, and private businesses, often facilitate training programs that focus on areas such as entrepreneurship, project management, and technical skills relevant

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to local industries. These programs help enhance the capabilities of the local workforce, making them better suited to participate in LED projects, whether through starting small businesses or gaining employment in local industries (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2012:13).

Van Winden (2009:32) stated that strategies have maintained that objective achievement and effectiveness are dependent on the capacity of municipalities to conduct daily tasks with the required specialised expertise or techniques. Patterson (2008:87) also recommended that LED strategies be determined and formulated in relation to the capacity presented in their municipalities. According to Caputo *et.al,* (2019:112), cities are comprised of various categories of municipalities, differing in structural abilities and capacity. This means that the development of relationships for a municipality with outsourcing, privatised practices, as well as private-public partnerships will assist in building stature and building municipal expert backgrounds (Rogerson, 2018:12). It is further recommended that municipal officials undergo training to improve their expertise and to contribute to effective productivity in primary tasks. Emphasis on capacity is crucial for successful results and to satisfy the expectations of citizens by means of service delivery through strategy implementation (Heinrich, 2001:87).

2.7.3. Local Economic Development is community-centred

Local Economic Development in South African municipalities is deeply rooted in community participation, which ensures that local economic strategies reflect the needs and priorities of the people they aim to serve (Patterson, 2008:87). A community-cantered approach to LED involves extensive engagement between local governments and community members through public consultations, forums, and participatory planning processes. Ndlela (2005:56) stated that this inclusion fosters a sense of ownership among residents, ensuring that economic projects benefit not just a few but the broader community. Van Gent (2017:91) pointed out that the goal is to promote grassroots economic activities, create jobs, and reduce poverty, with a focus on addressing inequality and empowering marginalised groups such as women and youth. Involving the community from the start also enhances transparency and

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accountability, as residents can hold local governments accountable for delivering on their LED promises (Rogerson, 2018:14).

Community participation helps local governments identify key economic opportunities that resonate with local conditions (Mashamba, 2008:21). For instance, rural communities may focus on agriculture or eco-tourism, while urban areas might prioritize infrastructure development or small enterprise support. Swanepoel and De Beer (2012:97) asserted that this bottom-up approach allows LED strategies to be tailored to specific contexts, making them more sustainable eventually. However, the success of community participation depends heavily on how well local municipalities facilitate the process, including providing education, access to information, and clear communication channels to ensure all voices are heard (Mashamaite & Madzivhandila, 2014:54). Building trust between the community and the government is key to ensuring meaningful participation.

2.7.4. Public-Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships (PPP) are central to LED as they allow municipalities to leverage the financial resources, expertise, and innovation of the private sector (Koma, 2012:65). Local Economic Development initiatives often require substantial investment, and the collaboration between government and private businesses helps bridge funding gaps while ensuring that economic projects are implemented effectively (Mahlalela, 2014:76). For instance, municipalities may partner with private companies to develop local infrastructure, such as roads or industrial parks, which are crucial for enabling local businesses to thrive (Biggs, Westley & Carpenter, 2010:53). Public-Private Partnerships also provide an opportunity for the private sector to contribute to job creation and skills development by investing in local enterprises and training programs that benefit the community (Mulgan, 2006:23).

The private sector brings innovation and market-driven solutions to LED, helping local economies to remain competitive (MacKay, 2004:12). Malele (2018:41) also stated that municipalities that foster strong relationships with businesses are better positioned to attract investment, stimulate local industries, and diversify the local economy. Baker and Mehmood (2015:26) asserted that these partnerships are

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essential for sustaining long-term economic growth, as they create a collaborative environment where both public and private interests are aligned for mutual benefit. However, for PPPs to be successful, municipalities need to establish clear regulatory frameworks, foster open communication, and ensure that partnerships are based on shared goals that prioritise community well-being over short-term profits (Caputo *et.al,* 2019:98).

2.7.5. Alignment with National Development Goals

Local Economic Development in South Africa is closely aligned with national development goals, ensuring that local efforts contribute to the broader vision of the country's economic growth (Biggs, Westley & Carpenter, 2010:54). LED strategies are developed in accordance with national frameworks such as the National Development Plan (NDP) and the New Growth Path, which emphasise job creation, poverty reduction, and sustainable development (Koma, 2012:64). This alignment ensures that local initiatives are not implemented in isolation but form part of an integrated approach to development across all levels of government (Ranney, 2016:86). Municipalities are required to align their LED strategies with these broader policies, ensuring coherence between local, provincial, and national objectives.

Baker and Mehmood (2015:26) stated that this alignment involves ensuring that local LED projects contribute to key national priorities such as infrastructure development, skills training, and industrial growth. Municipalities may focus on developing small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) as part of a national effort to stimulate entrepreneurship and reduce unemployment (Mahlalela, 2014:76). This ensures that LED initiatives have a wider impact, contributing not only to local economies but also to national economic stability and growth (MacKay, 2004:15). Furthermore, aligning LED with national goals helps municipalities access funding and support from higher levels of government, enhancing their capacity to implement successful development initiatives.

2.7.6. Utilisation of Local Resources

A defining feature of LED is its focus on the utilisation of local resources and assets to

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drive economic growth (Mahlalela, 2014:76). This approach seeks to identify and harness the natural, human, and cultural resources unique to a locality to create sustainable economic opportunities. Malele (2018:41) also stated that rural municipalities may capitalise on their agricultural potential by supporting small-scale farming cooperatives or processing industries. Similarly, municipalities located in areas with rich biodiversity may develop eco-tourism initiatives that not only create jobs but also promote environmental conservation (Mulgan, 2006:26). By focusing on what is locally available, municipalities can foster self-reliance and reduce dependency on external markets.

The utilisation of local resources also ties into broader sustainable development goals. Biggs et.al (2010:53) stated that LED strategies often emphasise the importance of environmentally responsible economic activities, such as promoting green technologies or sustainable farming practices. Malele (2018:41) deduced that this ensures that while local resources are being leveraged for economic growth, they are also preserved for future generations. Additionally, by concentrating on local strengths, LED helps build resilience within communities, allowing them to withstand external economic shocks (Tau, 2013:14). It empowers local populations to take control of their own development, fostering a more inclusive and sustainable economic model (Basdeo, 2012:15).

2.8. MERIT OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community participation in Local Economic Development (LED) provides numerous advantages that contribute to the success and sustainability of development initiatives. These benefits extend not only to the community members themselves but also to local authorities, businesses, and the broader local economy.

2.8.1. Community Engagement Builds and Sustains Cohesive Communities

Community engagement is primarily part of a dialogue where organizations and communities can make decisions to create social capital and to implement decisions that involve their development strategies in LED (Pol & Ville: 2009:45). Engaging

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community members in LED projects allows them to feel involved in decisions that impact their lives, enhancing their sense of ownership. Patterson (2008:87) stated that compelling stories of the importance of community engagement range from creating change in local policies and service provisions that not only enrich everyday lives and liveability of communities but also help shape and envision a community's future, bringing with it not only wider societal change but also global impacts. Community engagement plays a vital role in building and sustaining cohesive communities within the framework of Local Economic Development (LED) at the local municipality level (Swinburn, Goga & Murphy, 2006:98). This process ensures that community members actively participate in and contribute to the planning, decision-making, and implementation of development initiatives, fostering a sense of ownership and collective responsibility.

2.8.2. Community participation leads to improved LED outcomes

Community engagement can lead to improved LED outcomes for communities when government organisations and public decision-making entities seek out the values of communities and the needs of community which can relevantly be addressed by the LED within the local municipality communities (Mulgan, 2006:12). Van Winden (2009:32) also argued that Local Economic Development is incorporated into decision-making processes, public decision makers are better informed and better able to meet community needs and the services that may be required by community members. Nour (2011:19) stated that establishing long-standing, effective partnerships between local municipalities and communities. This establishment results in a greater sense of community ownership and an improved uptake of services as they are tailored to the unique aspirations of the community (Neumeier, 2017:75). Community engagement helps governments improve the efficiency, legitimacy and transparency of their decision making (Mulgan, 2006:18). By embracing and encouraging participation, it enables policy makers to make more informed decisions by engaging with, and carefully mapping out the needs, opinions, and visions of local communities on issues that matter to them (Rogerson, 2018:13). It promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of

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all participants including decision makers (Mumford, 2002:67).

2.8.3. Community participation conveys capacity building and skill development to community members

Another advantage of community participation in LED is the transfer of skills and knowledge. Community members receive training in various areas such as financial literacy, entrepreneurship, project management, and resource management (Ndabeni & Rogerson, 2017:93). These newly acquired skills not only contribute to the success of the LED project but also enhance the economic opportunities available to individuals within the community. Van Winden (2009:32) stated that Community participation in LED fosters the development of local leaders who are crucial for driving economic initiatives forward. These leaders play a pivotal role in mobilising resources, advocating for the community, and ensuring the continuity of projects (Pol & Ville, 2009:45). Over time, this leadership base becomes critical for the sustainability of LED initiatives, creating a self-sufficient community capable of managing its development route (Heinrich, 2001:51).

2.8.4. Increased Transparency and Accountability

When the community participates in the LED process, local government decisions are subject to public scrutiny (Pegu, 2014:56). This increased oversight fosters transparency, especially in budget allocation, project implementation, and resource management. As a result, local authorities are more accountable for their actions, reducing the chances of corruption or mismanagement of public funds (Ndabeni & Rogerson, 2017:35). Since community members are often the primary beneficiaries of LED projects, they are more motivated to monitor progress and outcomes (Mulgan, 2006:08). This continuous evaluation ensures that project goals are being met and that any potential issues are addressed early. The community-driven oversight acts as a safeguard for the project's integrity and ensures that funds and resources are used efficiently (Swinburn, et al, 2006:98).

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2.8.5. Enhanced ownership and responsibility

Involving the community members instils a shared responsibility for the outcomes. This can lead to communities taking proactive steps to ensure that projects are maintained that benefits are shared, and that the economic growth resulting from LED initiatives is sustainable (Patterson, 2008:87). When local businesses and residents feel responsible for the outcomes, they are more likely to contribute additional resources such as time, labour, or even capital. (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2010:37) asserted that one of the key principles of LED is that it is bottom-up, meaning that the people affected by development policies are active participants. When community members participate in planning and implementation, they take ownership of the process and results (Mumford, 2002:67). This sense of ownership often translates into stronger support for the project, reducing resistance or pushback from the community and enhancing the long-term viability of initiatives (Swinburn *et al.*, 2006:98).

2.8.6. Increased Project Sustainability

Community participation enables LED strategies to be flexible and adaptable to changing conditions. For example, suppose an economic shock or natural disaster affects the area. In that case, engaged communities can quickly reconfigure their strategies to address new challenges (Patterson, 2008:87). This adaptability increases the resilience of projects and ensures that they are not derailed by unexpected circumstances. Mulgan (2006:12) stated that projects that are co-designed and implemented by community members are more likely to be sustainable eventually. Pol and Ville (2009:48) have asserted that since the community is invested in the success of the initiative, there is a higher level of commitment to ensuring that it continues beyond the initial phases. A community-led agricultural project is more likely to sustain itself because locals are motivated to ensure long-term success, ensuring that the infrastructure, equipment, and knowledge are passed on to future generations (Ndabeni & Rogerson, 2017:97).

2.8.7. Addressing inequality and promoting social inclusion

Local Economic Development initiatives that actively involve the community help

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ensure that marginalised and vulnerable groups such as women, youth, the elderly, and minorities are represented and have a voice in decision-making (Mlambo, Manganyi & Mphurpi, 2022:76). This prevents development from being skewed towards the interests of only a few and ensures that the benefits are more evenly distributed. Mlambo *et al*. (2022:76) further started by including all segments of society, LED fosters social inclusion and addresses historical inequalities. Malele (2018) also argued that participation in LED ensures that decisions are made in a way that is fair and just, reducing the concentration of wealth and opportunity in the hands of a few. Mahlalela (2014:45) also stated that community-driven LED programs tend to focus on the needs of those who are often left out of traditional economic development strategies, such as informal workers or smallholder farmers, promoting more equitable growth.

2.8.8. Boosted local employment opportunities

LED initiatives that involve community participation often prioritise local employment. For instance, construction projects or community-driven industries focus on hiring local labour, which directly contributes to reducing unemployment rates (Mlambo *et al*., 2022:76). Local governments and private sector actors may also collaborate to create training programs that equip residents with skills needed in emerging sectors. Mumford (2002:67) stated that community-driven LED projects usually emphasise the development of local enterprises. By encouraging the growth of small businesses, cooperatives, and informal sector activities, community participation helps create a more robust local economy (Pol & Ville, 2009:45). This has a ripple effect as successful businesses generate jobs and contribute to the local tax base.

2.9. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE ON THE IMPACT OF LED

Several Local Economic Development (LED) projects in the Vhembe District municipalities, including Makhado Local Municipality, have varying success levels. Below are a few examples of projects that have shown positive outcomes in the region, highlighting sectors like agriculture, tourism, and infrastructure development. The Makhado Local Municipality Annual Report (2021:41) has outlined several projects

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which were successfully implemented under the Vhembe District Municipality, which are as follows:

2.9.1. Macadamia Nut Farming Project

The LED under Makhado Local Municipality has made a project which was focused on Agriculture through the Macadamia Nut Production in Tshakhuma. This project leverages the climate of the Makhado region, which is conducive to macadamia nut farming. The Makhado Local Municipality, in collaboration with private partners, has supported smallholder farmers in cultivating and processing macadamia nuts for both local and export markets (Makhado Municipality KPI Evaluation, 2002:15). The project had number of successful factors which include job creation, the project has created employment opportunities in the farming and processing sectors. Market Linkages was one of the successful factors through partnerships, and farmers have gained access to lucrative international markets, especially in Europe and Asia. The noted challenges of this project included challenges related to funding, access to land, and infrastructure, particularly for water supply and irrigation (Makhado Local Municipality Annual Report, 2021:43).

2.9.2. Makhado Hawkers' Market Development

The LED in Makhado Local Municipality also implemented a project to support Makhado Hawkers Market development, which focused on Informal Trade and Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises Development. According to (Makhado Key Performance Workshop, 2002:43), the municipality has developed market facilities for local hawkers, providing a designated space for informal traders to sell goods in a more organised environment. This supports Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises' growth in the region, particularly for traders who previously operated without formal trading spaces. This project had several successful factors, which also include the formalisation of informal trade. According to Makhado Local Municipality 2018:23 (2018:23), this project has provided stability and legitimacy to informal traders, enabling them to grow their businesses. This project also had challenges, which included access to utilities like water and electricity, as well as the need for more

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training and support for small businesses (Makhado Key Performance Workshop, 2002:12).

2.9.3. Community Brickmaking Cooperative

The LED under the Vhembe District Municipality also implemented a project that was focused on Manufacturing and Small Medium Micro Enterprises Development, this project was on community brickmaking cooperative at Vuwani Area (The Sustainable Tourism Research Institute of Southern Africa, 2004:20). A brickmaking cooperative was established to create jobs for residents by producing bricks for construction projects within the community. The cooperative has received support from the local municipality in the form of equipment and training. Makhado Municipality Key Performance Indicator Evaluation (2002:16) stated that there are different notable success factors, which include Job Creation. This project has created jobs, particularly for youth, and contributed to local infrastructure development. The other success was skills development; the participants in the cooperative have received training in brickmaking and business management, enabling them to become more competitive. The challenge was with securing steady contracts and markets for their products, limiting their profitability.

2.9.4. Makhado Agricultural Hub

The LED in Makhado Local Municipality also successfully implemented the Makhado Agricultural Hub, which was focused on Agriculture and Agro processing. According to Makhado Local Municipality (2018:76), the Agricultural Hub serves as a central support system for local farmers, providing them with access to modern farming techniques, equipment, and markets. It promotes both subsistence and commercial farming by linking farmers to buyers and processors. There are several success factors which include economic growth. Makhado Local Municipality Annual Report (2021:12) presented that the hub has helped boost agricultural output in the region, especially for crops like maize, citrus, and peanuts. The success factor included Skills Training Farmers; in this factor, the community members who formed part of the project received continuous training in the best agricultural practices, which has

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improved productivity and income. The notable challenge was infrastructure issues, such as inadequate roads and access to water, limiting the hub's full impact.

2.9.5. Avocado Farming Initiatives

The LED in Makhado Local Municipality was also implemented successfully, and the Avocado Farming Initiatives in different communities, including Tshakhuma. Like macadamia nuts, Makhado's fertile land is ideal for avocado farming. Small-scale farmers have been organised into cooperatives and provided with training and resources to cultivate avocados, focusing on both local consumption and export (Makhado Specialist Retail Assessment Report, 2004:76). The successful factors of Avocado Farming Initiatives include job creation and skills transfer, which is also a primary objective of LED. The project has created jobs, particularly for youth and women, and enhanced farming skills among participants. The other success factor is export growth; farmers have been able to export their produce, contributing to local economic growth. The notable challenge in this project has been the following: market access, consistent funding, and the infrastructure of remaining areas needing improvement (Mulgan, 2006:17).

2.9.6. Vleifontein Community Garden Project

The Local Economic Development also implemented the Vleifontein Community Garden Project, which was focused on Agriculture, Food Security and SMME Development. This community-driven agricultural project focuses on creating food security and providing income generation for local families (The Sustainable Tourism Research Institute of Southern Africa, 2004:26). The initiative supports local households with the tools and skills to grow their own vegetables, which are then sold in local markets. The achievements of this project implementation also included food security; the project has improved food access for local families, reducing dependency on external food sources. The achievement of this project also included income generation; households and community members participating in the program have been able to sell surplus produce, creating a modest income. According to Makhado Key Performance Workshop (2002:54), the challenges of this project include the

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following: limited access to water and irrigation remains a challenge, especially during drought periods. The other challenge also included expanding the scale of the project is also difficult without additional resources.

2.9.7. Dzata Cultural Village

Makhado Specialist Retail Assessment Report (2004:14) has spoken about the LED under the Vhembe region, which also implemented Dzata Cultural Village at Thohoyandou under Thulamela Local Municipality. This project was implemented with the focus of enhancing tourism and heritage. The Dzata Cultural Village is a heritage site project that celebrates the Venda culture, offering tourists a rich cultural experience while generating income for local artisans and cultural practitioners. It plays a role in promoting tourism in the region, aligning with LED strategies focused on cultural tourism (Makhado Municipality KPI Evaluation, 2002:16). The notable successful factors of this project implementation include tourism growth; the site attracts both domestic and international tourists. The other advantage includes economic diversification; it provides an alternative revenue stream for the local economy outside of agriculture. The challenges to this Dzata Cultural Village include marketing and continuous development needed to expand the project's reach and impact.

2.10. APPROACHES TO LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN MAKHADO

Masikane (2021:12) added that over the past few decades, there have been several developments in the sphere of LED. Moreover, Masikane (2021:13) deduces that this has been a result of an improved comprehension of the dynamics of the concept and tools related to the process. Consequently, several different approaches regarding LED have emerged both internationally, in Africa, and in South Africa (Carison & Johnson, 2018:67). In terms of these new developments, the approaches adopted by municipalities are solely directly dependent upon assumptions about local economies and the impact of local authorities therein (Rogerson, 2018:62).

2.10.1. Traditional Approach

Kansimme and Harris (2020:62) state that the traditional approaches seek to bring

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about investments in the local economy. Moreover, Mala (2020:16) added that the rise of the entrepreneurial state is one of the traditional approaches that was attempted and developed because of its potential to attract investment; this process breaks the dominance of the government in the private sector. Blakely (2010:48) argues that traditional approaches to LED have been entrenched in principles of silo planning and development, where an emphasis has been placed on attracting large manufacturing companies. Consequently, this has been done to the detriment of the local economic climate. DPLG (2006:11) added that it leads to poor working conditions, causing health problems for the residents who work in such conditions while simultaneously compromising the quality of life in the area. Many factories release lethal pollutants as a by-product of their processing and in rural areas. Ebenezer (2013:90) asserted that the enforcement of regulations related to atmospheric, mineral, ground, and water resources is weak since their locality is outside the mainstream of urban development, where regulatory processes are more stringently applied. Blakely (2010:07) states that attracting business and trying to stimulate economic development through such means has, of late, proven inadequate in countries where labour unions and protection of labour rights are strong.

2.10.2. Entrepreneurial-Competitive Approach

Masikane (2021:89) added that the entrepreneurial-competitive approach is characterised by principles that advocate for the identification of competitive opportunities and strengths that can be exploited to gain comparative advantages over other neighbouring areas. According to (MacKay, 2004:19), entrepreneurial competitive approaches emphasize opportunities for local business through research, loans, grants, and technical infrastructure, in entrepreneurial competitive approaches, the approach is to introduce inclusive markets for LED (Fiorentino, 2019:60). New enterprises contribute to economic development in several ways, as a channel for converting innovative ideas into economic opportunities, revival of social and productive networks' competitiveness, source of new employment, and as productivity enhancement (Kantis, Ishida & Komori, 2014:36). Local authorities are the main custodians of this approach as they are perceived to be the main drivers of

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development within their area of authority. They play an initiative-taking role in identifying actual or potential growth sectors and indirectly supporting local businesses through research, loans, grants, consultancy, premises, technical infrastructure, and so on (Blakely, 2010:19).

2.10.3. Urban and Rural Efficiency Approach

According to Malizia et al. (2020:65), cities are facing urban challenges of unprecedented scale and will continue to do so into the near future. As growing populations intensify pollution, resource scarcity, crime, traffic, emissions, and more, communities must pre-emptively respond and preserve the integrity, attractiveness, and competitiveness of their cities by becoming smarter (Rogerson, 2018:12). Moreover, Malizia *et al.* (2020:15) setting a smart city vision and effectively moving towards it with a bottom-up, systems-based approach is critical to ensuring resource efficiency and security, as well as maintaining socially inclusive growth.

This means sharing information across city departments, breaking down silos, and involving global leaders with world-class capabilities, as well as local providers and stakeholders who know their cities the best. Success will come from combining public governance, people ownership, and business collaboration, driving communication between these groups by giving each of them a true stake in the smart city built out of their community (Caputo, Pasetti & Ferrari, 2019:112). The efficiency approach to LED emphasizes the need to create an investment climate that promotes both pro-poor and pro-growth development that yields sustainable and tangible benefits for the locals. The Department of Cooperative Governance, formerly DPLG (2006:09), notes that the efficiency approach proponents argue for a strategy where local authorities should craft innovative ways that will raise productivity.

2.10.4 Human Resource Development Approach

Leigh and Backely (2016:19) deduce that the Government's commitment to promoting active labour market policies and guaranteeing the quality of training and education provided is well demonstrated in the Skills Development Act 1998 (Act 97 of 1998), for Human Resource Development (HRD) The Human Resource Development aims to

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develop local skills through improving the foundations for human development. Improving the supply of high-quality skills (particularly scarce skills), which are more responsive to societal and economic needs (Garavan & McCarthy, 2019:87). Furthermore, Blakely (2010:51) argues that poor people are unlikely to benefit from whatever new jobs there are unless they have appropriate skills. The human resource development approach can be achieved by encouraging local authorities to either support the establishment of local training bodies to uplift local skills or focus on the activities of national training agencies in the local area to reach a similar outcome (DPLG, 2006:07). Additionally, conditions can be imposed on companies doing business within the municipal or local area boundaries requiring that investors provide a minimum amount of training for their employees (MacKay, 2004:12). This would form part of their community responsibility or skills development contribution.

2.10.5 Community-Based Approaches

According to Carison and Johnson (2018:22), as the use of more local resources in an efficient way will be critical to improve outcomes and reduce regional disparities, many countries have transferred development responsibilities to local authorities. Bottom-up approaches are increasingly favoured in the neo-liberal economy. The public, private businesses, and non-governmental sectors should work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation (Ayandibu & Houghton, 2017:12). This means the local government should attempt to coordinate efforts, improve the operational environment, and take initiatives within the framework of coherent local policies or strategies. The development activities are inspired, owned, and managed by all actors in the locality through the identification and mobilisation of local resources (Purwanto et al., 2018:97). One can say LED is a solution for unemployment, poverty, and inequality, especially in developing countries recognising the following characteristics of LED. The community-based approach emphasises the empowerment of destitute groups and targets marginalised people.

2.10.6 A Pro-Poor Approach

A pro-poor approach comprises policies that are redistributive and inclusive by

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explicitly targeting the poor and marginalised. More broadly, these policies seek to achieve their participation, self-reliance, prosperity, collaboration, and environmentally sustainable and inclusive development (Molefane, 2006:23; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] 2007:11). Inclusive development means the inclusion of marginalised community members and groups, like women, youth, and people with disabilities, Indigenous people, and community sectors in social, political, and economic processes to increase their standard of living (Van Gent, 2017:9). In a pro-poor approach, local stakeholders are expected to jointly cooperate and learn about the possibilities in their territory and take into consideration the comparative advantage of their locality to improve local conditions and LED (Nel & Rogerson, 2015:110). The stakeholders in the pro-poor strategies are the government (Local Government, public sector, national and provincial government), communities, civil society (non-governmental and community-based organisations), and the business sector (Rodrigues-Pose & Tijmstra, 2005:10).

2.10.7 Pro-Market Approach

Pro-market LEDs are directed at achieving high and sustained economic growth rates (Molefane, 2006:28). The stakeholders in this strategy are the government (national and Local Government), the business sector, and individual entrepreneurs. A pro-market approach requires government to create a conducive environment for businesses, supporting and promoting SMMEs and business in general, promoting investment strategies in the locality, supporting tourism, and marketing a location internally and globally (Nel & Rogerson, 2015:6). The intention of a pro-market approach is to allow and facilitate individual self-reliance, entrepreneurship, and support for competitiveness, market growth with the ultimate end being to create and reduce unemployment while maintaining high economic growth rates (Molefane, 2006:28). Pro-market approach in which there is clear support for established big businesses, marketing the location, promoting investment strategies, and the provision of infrastructure for development purposes (Nel & Rogerson, 2015:9). This is attributed to the ability of these municipalities to form partnerships in pursuit of pro-market interventions while improving their pro-poor interventions (Koma, 2012:11; Nel

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& Rogerson, 2015:12).

2.11. KEY BARRIERS OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN LED

This section discusses the literature that relates to the barriers that serve as limitations of community participation towards the implementation of LED policy at the local municipality level.

2.11.1 Lack of awareness and information

One of the major barriers to effective community participation in Local Economic Development is the limited dissemination of information about the projects, initiatives, and opportunities available (Swinburn, Goga, & Murphy, 2006:99). The local municipalities often do not actively inform or educate community members about the objectives of LED or how they can participate (Koma, 2012:63). Nzimakwe (2008:06) stated that this lack of communication leaves many citizens unaware of what LED entails or how it can improve their livelihoods. Announcements may be made through channels that do not reach the broader population, such as online platforms or printed bulletins in a language or format that is not accessible to everyone (Nour, 2011:19). Without targeted efforts to spread information, especially to marginalized groups like rural residents, women, and youth, community participation remains low (Molefane, 2006:28).

Moreover, even when information is shared, it may not always be presented in ways that the local population can easily understand or relate to. Ebenezer (2013:91) stated that unclear objectives and complex explanations often prevent communities from seeing the value or relevance of LED in their daily lives. Basdeo (2012:12) proposed that to overcome this, municipalities need to employ communication strategies that are clear, inclusive, and adapted to the community's context. Imbizo's community meetings, local radio broadcasts, social media, and community workshops are some of the tools that could be used to enhance awareness and understanding of LED initiatives (Van Gent, 2017:89).

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2.11.2 Limited Capacity and Skills

Community participation in LED is often hindered by a lack of capacity and skills among residents. Many community members, particularly in underdeveloped regions, do not have the necessary knowledge, technical expertise, or business acumen to actively engage in LED activities (Mala, 2020:16). For example, starting a small business, participating in cooperatives, or contributing to local economic planning requires skills in financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and governance. Without proper training or access to education, people are often unable to take advantage of the economic opportunities available through LED programs. Blakely (2010:48) deduced that capacity-building initiatives, such as workshops, vocational training, and mentorship programs, are essential to address this issue. Municipalities should collaborate with educational institutions, NGOs, and the private sector to offer programs that teach practical skills tailored to local economic conditions (Carison & Johnson 2018:69). Building capacity is not just about technical skills but also about fostering leadership, problem-solving, and decision-making capabilities within the community. Masikane (2021:90) further stated that these initiatives empower local citizens to become active participants in the development of their own communities, ensuring they can contribute meaningfully to LED efforts.

2.11.3 Insufficient Financial Resources

A significant barrier to community involvement in LED is the lack of financial resources. Many community members face financial hardships, including high unemployment rates, low wages, and limited access to credit or investment opportunities (Van Gent, 2017:89). This makes it difficult for them to engage in business ventures or contribute to local development projects. (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2010:56) stated that small businesses and local entrepreneurs are often key drivers of LED, but without access to funding, their ability to participate is severely limited. Financial exclusion is particularly pronounced in rural areas, where formal banking services may be scarce (Basdeo, 2012:76).

Carison & Johnson (2018:71) stated that municipalities can establish local financing

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mechanisms that provide small grants, microloans, or subsidies to entrepreneurs and community groups. Partnering with banks, cooperatives, or development finance institutions can help ensure that financial resources are available to support local economic initiatives (Ranney, 2016:87). Offering financial literacy programs would enable community members to better manage their finances, plan for investments, and improve their ability to secure funding for LED projects. The availability of financial resources can stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship, giving community members the opportunity to take an active role in their local economy (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2012:97).

2.11.4 Weak Institutional Support

Weak institutional capacity within local municipalities is a critical barrier to effective community participation in LED. Khawula, (2016:17), asserted that the municipalities often face challenges such as poor governance, lack of qualified staff, and inadequate administrative systems, which make it difficult to implement LED initiatives effectively. Without strong institutional support, LED efforts can become fragmented, poorly managed, or even fail to launch. Basdeo (2012:15) stated that local governments are responsible for creating a supportive environment where communities can participate, but without the necessary infrastructure or human resources, these efforts may be unable to address the community participation barrier to LED implementation.

Tau, (2013:14) stated that weak institutional support can lead to slow decision-making processes, a lack of coordination amongst the departments, and poor resource allocation. These challenges frustrate community members who attempt to participate in LED initiatives but face bureaucratic obstacles at every turn (Blakely, 2010:48). To strengthen institutional support, municipalities should invest in training and development for local government employees, streamline administrative processes, and establish clear roles and responsibilities for LED management (Malele, 2018:41). According to MacKay, (2004:19), building institutional capacity is crucial for creating a responsive, transparent, and efficient local government that can facilitate community participation in LED.

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2.11.5 Cultural and Social Barriers

Kantis et al. (2014:36) stated that cultural and social norms can pose significant obstacles to community participation in LED, particularly for marginalised groups. In many communities, traditional gender roles and social hierarchies limit the participation of women, youth, and minorities in public decision-making and economic activities (Fiorentino, 2019:67). Women may be excluded from economic opportunities due to cultural expectations that prioritize their domestic roles, while youth may be seen as inexperienced and therefore unworthy of participating in local economic planning. Mala (2020:98) stated that these social barriers prevent a large segment of the population from contributing to LED. These barriers require targeted interventions that challenge existing norms and promote inclusivity. Blakely (2010:87) suggests that municipalities can implement policies that encourage the participation of women, youth, and marginalised groups in LED initiatives. Gender-sensitive approaches, youth empowerment programs, and cultural awareness training can help break down these barriers. Additionally, creating safe spaces for dialogue and ensuring that community forums are accessible and welcoming to all can foster greater inclusivity (Ebenezer, 2013:97).

2.11.6 Poor Coordination and Integration

Effective LED requires coordination between various stakeholders, including local governments, businesses, civil society organizations, and community members. Ceasar (2009:65) stated that, however, poor coordination and a lack of integration among these actors often result in fragmented efforts. When different sectors fail to collaborate, resources are misallocated, efforts are duplicated, and opportunities for constructive collaboration are lost (Blakely, 2010:48). Lack of communication between local government and the private sector may result in mismatched priorities, with businesses pursuing profit-driven projects while municipalities focus on social objectives (Mahlalela, 2014:76). This disconnect can weaken the overall impact of LED initiatives.

Municipalities should foster partnerships between public and private stakeholders and

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create platforms for regular dialogue and collaboration (Basdeo, 2012:15). Khawula (2016:17) also stated that establishing clear roles, shared goals, and communication channels among all parties involved in LED can lead to more cohesive and integrated development strategies. Leigh and Backely (2016:12) added that municipalities should work to align LED plans with national and regional development goals, ensuring that local efforts are part of a broader strategy for economic growth. Effective coordination not only maximises the impact of LED initiatives but also ensures that the benefits are distributed equitably across the community (Rogerson, 2018:12).

2.11.7 Lack of Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms

A lack of effective monitoring and feedback mechanisms poses a significant barrier to sustained community participation in LED. Van Gent, (2017:90) revealed that without proper systems in place to track the progress of LED projects and assess their impact, it becomes difficult for municipalities to evaluate what is working and what needs improvement. Leigh and Backely (2016:20) also asserted that this lack of oversight can lead to wasted resources, inefficiencies, and project failures. Moreover, without feedback loops that allow community members to share their experiences and suggestions, municipalities miss valuable insights that could improve the implementation of LED initiatives (Nour, 2011:18). Municipalities should establish monitoring and evaluation systems that track the performance of LED projects and involve community members in the assessment process. Regular feedback sessions, surveys, and community consultations can provide essential information about the effectiveness of initiatives and identify areas for improvement (Van Gent, 2017:81). Transparency in sharing the results of these evaluations is also critical, as it allows communities to see how their input is being used to shape future LED efforts. Ceasar (2009:09) claimed that by creating mechanisms for continuous monitoring and feedback, municipalities can ensure that LED initiatives remain responsive to the needs of the community and are adjusted as necessary to achieve desired outcomes.

2.12. EFFECTS OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICAN MUNICIPALITIES

The Integrated Development Plan is essential in formulating local economic

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development programs. The engagement of local people through open collaboration should help them through local economic development programs. Concerning the IDP process, LED was developed to meet the needs of people marginalized by the apartheid government and to drive social and economic change (Mamokhere, 2022:31). Mkhize and Mutereko (2022:36) believe that the level of participation of relevant stakeholders should be high and consistent across all communities in South Africa. Due to inadequate community participation, local economic development initiatives in communities are characterised by prevalent poverty, extreme poverty rates, unemployment, poor service delivery, mismanagement of scarce resources, and illiteracy (Koma, 2012:16). Inadequate community participation in LED leads to the community experiencing violent protests regarding service delivery.

Community participation plays a significant role in Local Economic Development (LED) within South African municipalities, offering both positive effects and challenges. Masikane (2021:96) claimed that effective participation ensures that development initiatives are aligned with the specific needs and aspirations of the local population, which enhances the legitimacy of municipal projects and fosters trust between the community and government officials. According to MacKay (2004:26), this participatory approach improves accountability, ensures that resources are used more efficiently, and increases the likelihood of long-term success for LED projects. However, the effects of community participation can vary depending on the level of engagement (Fiorentino, 2019:59). When communities are actively involved, they contribute to improving service delivery, reducing social tensions, and mitigating risks of violent protests that often arise from discontent with local governance (Blakely, 2010:58).

Conversely, a lack of participation can result in poor project outcomes, mistrust in leadership, and the perception that local governments are unresponsive to community needs (Masikane, 2021:89). Despite legislative frameworks encouraging public involvement, many communities still struggle with barriers such as limited access to participation platforms, lack of education about the importance of their engagement in LED and lack of necessary knowledge for LED (Tau, 2013:14). Fostering meaningful

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community participation in LED is essential for creating sustainable, inclusive economic growth in South African municipalities. Nour (2011:19) indicated that addressing the obstacles to participation and building stronger, more transparent relationships between governments and communities are critical steps for improving the effectiveness of LED initiatives.

Community participation is seen as a method of strengthening local economic development at the grassroots level of governance through inclusive democracy and as a compelling component of bias-free governance (Enaifoghe & Cotties, 2019:56). Community participation in local economic development ensures that people have a voice in their development and informs communities about what people lack at the grassroots level and what they need for a better life. The addition to community participation in modern times affects and shapes a conversation from LED, which has also led to the development of various assemblies, symposiums, meetings, and hearings, to name a few example models (Barnes et al., 2003:71). Such meetings and gatherings occur among residents and officials. Regardless, no regulatory agency or other experts could claim to know what residents are (Sebola, 2017:21).

Community participation is essential in much of the governed country so that residents can communicate their needs and concerns. Nevertheless, residents are strongly urged to participate in the strategies planned and selected by the respective powers (Sebola, 2017:46). Community participation strengthens people's commitment to issues that impact them (Mauger, 2019:12). It enables policymakers to perceive the development needs of residents. LED is a critical mathematics that focuses on private fulfilment and ensures better access to financial organizations. Involving residents leads to a separate way of dealing with things (Kamara, 2017:100;). Things previously kept secret or secret in the dark become public to be known to all accomplices or material people for whom they were normal (Mahlalela, 2014:76). It makes the planning framework LED less complex. Community participation keeps resources from being wasted that is not set in stone by the overall population (Tropp & Jagerskog, 2018:66). It is ensured that the South African government strives for choice for all to the extent that the interests and needs of the overall society are considered an open

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process (Sebola, 2017:112).

2.13. BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

Community participation offers numerous benefits in Local Economic Development in local municipalities, both for the community itself and for the larger society. Here are some of the key benefits of community participation in Local Economic Development policies.

2.13.1 Improving the Quality of Decision

One of the major benefits of community participation in Local Economic Development (LED) is the improvement in the quality of decision-making (Kusambiza-Kiingi, 2019:76). Involving community members in the LED process ensures that decisions are informed by local knowledge, experiences, and insights, which are often overlooked in top-down approaches (Fung, 2015:81). By engaging residents, local governments can gather diverse perspectives on the challenges and opportunities within the community, leading to more comprehensive and relevant development strategies. Biljohn and Lues (2020:90) stated that this grassroots input helps identify the real economic needs and potential of the area, resulting in LED initiatives that are more aligned with the realities on the ground. Decisions made with community input tend to be more practical and tailored to the specific socio-economic and cultural context, enhancing the likelihood of successful outcomes (Moschidis & Ismyrlis, 2018:21).

Kumagai and Lorio (2020:18) also asserted that community participation reduces the risk of poor decision-making by minimizing the chance of overlooking important local concerns. Van Holm (2019:64) also stated that with a more inclusive process, municipalities can avoid the top-down imposition of development projects that may be unsuited to the local environment or fail to gain public support. Waweru (2015:72) also pointed out that residents' involvement in decision-making also increases transparency, reducing the potential for bias or mismanagement, as communities can hold local governments accountable. Moschidis and Ismyrlis (2018:23) stated that this

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collaborative approach helps create policies that reflect the collective wisdom and interests of the entire community, leading to more effective and sustainable development solutions.

Madzivhandila and Maloka (2014:64) highlighted that community participation necessitates active engagement of communities in decision-making processes to enhance the quality of decisions made concerning the needs of the people. Community participation offers alternative decisions based on the information provided by community members. Enshassi et al. (2016:1) argued that community participation leads to the adoption of more realistically grounded policies that align with citizen needs and demands, thereby improving the decision-making process. Madzivhandila and Maloka (2014:54) also pointed out that community participation in local government decision-making is influenced by the integration and mutual interaction between all spheres of government, leading to the formulation of quality and reliable decisions.

2.13.2 Minimisation of Cost and Delay

Community participation in Local Economic Development (LED) can help minimise costs and reduce delays in project implementation. According to Najima (2018:22), when residents are actively involved in the planning and execution of LED initiatives, they contribute local knowledge, skills, and resources, reducing the need for external consultants or expensive research. Van Holm (2019:66) stated that this could lower overall project costs by utilising community assets like volunteer labour or local materials. Biljohn and Lues (2020:91) asserted that engaging in the community early on helps prevent potential conflicts or opposition that might arise from decisions being made without their input. Van Holm (2019:64) stated that by addressing concerns proactively and fostering buy-in from the community, municipalities can avoid costly delays associated with protests, resistance, or revisions to plans.

Community participation promotes smoother project implementation by creating a shared understanding of goals and timelines. Reddy and Sikhakane (2008:56) asserted that when residents are part of the decision-making process, they are more

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likely to support LED projects and cooperate in their execution, reducing the chance of delays due to miscommunication or a lack of community support. This alignment between the municipality and the local community facilitates faster decision-making and smoother operational processes, as potential issues are addressed collaboratively from the outset (Patel, & Gibbon, 2017:43). Local Economic Development projects can move forward more efficiently, avoiding bottlenecks that could arise if community concerns are ignored (Creighton, 2006:90).

Community participation can introduce delays to municipal processes, nevertheless, when implemented effectively, it has the potential to minimize costs and expedite processes based on the information provided (Creighton, 2006:18). This suggests that municipalities should actively involve community members in developmental programs to avoid plans that do not address the actual needs of the communities. Rather than twenty-four allocating funds to projects that may be irrelevant to communities, community participation can bring relevance to essential service delivery (Enshassi, *et.al.*, 2016:23).

2.13.3 Sense of Ownership and Accountability

One of the most significant benefits of community participation in Local Economic Development (LED) is the development of a sense of ownership among residents (Moschidis & Ismyrlis, 2018:24). When local communities engage in the design, planning, and implementation of LED initiatives, they are more likely to feel invested in the success of these projects (Najima, 2018:23). This sense of ownership leads to greater community responsibility and accountability for the success and sustainability of development efforts (Wade, & Demb, 2009:31). Community members become partners in the process, rather than passive beneficiaries, which fosters long-term commitment to maintaining infrastructure, programs, and economic activities (Axelsson, Melin & Lindgren, 2010:15). This is particularly important in rural or underdeveloped areas, where a lack of community buy-in can result in project failure due to neglect or insufficient local support (Moschidis & Ismyrlis, 2018:28).

According to Petricone (2020:288), credibility serves as the foundation of a democratic

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system. Najima (2018:5) affirmed that community participation promotes democracy, builds trust between the government and citizens, enhances efficiency, improves service delivery, and helps to reduce corruption. Petricone (2020:289) further noted that credibility involves competence or discursive ability in establishing an effective relationship between leaders and citizens. Abjorensen (2019:214) stated that legitimacy is the general acceptance and recognition of the authority of a governing regime by the public, where authority is empowered through consent and mutual understanding. Credibility and legitimacy are achieved through following the prescribed decision-making processes (Creighton, 2006:18).

Community participation ensures that LED initiatives are more responsive to the actual needs and priorities of local people (Kusambiza-Kiingi, 2019:77). By involving residents in decision-making, municipalities can design projects that target specific socio-economic challenges, whether it is job creation, skills development, or poverty alleviation (Wade, & Demb, 2009:37). This alignment with community needs not only enhances project relevance but also improves the efficiency and impact of municipal interventions (Van Holm, 2019:64). The involvement of community members allows for the integration of local knowledge and traditional practices, which can lead to more innovative and culturally sensitive approaches to development (Axelsson *et.al*, 2010:14).

2.13.4 Improved Governance and Trust

Community participation in LED also promotes improved governance and fosters trust between residents and local municipalities. Kusambiza-Kiingi (2019:76) stated that when communities are given a role in the governance of economic development projects, transparency is increased as residents can directly observe how decisions are made and how funds are allocated. According to Creighton (2006:98), this participatory process reduces the risk of corruption, enhances accountability, and builds trust between local governments and the people they serve. Biljohn and Lues (2020:93) asserted that transparent LED processes encourage active engagement, which reduces the disconnect that often exists between municipalities and communities, particularly in rural or marginalized areas. When residents trust that their

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voices are being heard and that development efforts are genuinely aimed at improving their lives, they are more likely to support local governance structures (Reddy & Sikhakane, 2008:48).

Community participation in LED creates stronger social cohesion and a more democratic approach to local governance. Axelsson, Melin & Lindgren (2010:05) stated that the process of engaging with diverse community stakeholders such as youth, women, and small business owners creates a platform for dialogue and collaboration, fostering a more inclusive and equitable development environment. This collaborative governance reduces the potential for conflicts, as it encourages the resolution of issues through collective problem-solving (Reddy & Sikhakane, 2008:61). Moreover, when communities feel represented and included in LED processes, the resulting social stability contributes to a more conducive environment for economic growth, making municipalities more attractive to investors and development partners (Petricone, 2020:87).

2.13.5 Maintain Credibility and Legitimacy

Community participation in Local Economic Development (LED) plays a crucial role in maintaining the credibility and legitimacy of local governments and their development projects (Waweru, 2015:72). When residents participate in the decision-making and implementation processes, it demonstrates the municipality's commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and democratic governance. Van Holm (2019:67) stated that this active engagement strengthens the perception that local government actions are rooted in the actual needs and desires of the community, rather than being driven by external or top-down agendas. According to Neshkova and Kalesnikaite (2019:54), municipalities that promote community participation build credibility with their constituents, making it easier to gain public support and foster trust in government-led initiatives. This credibility is vital for ensuring that development projects are not only accepted but also actively supported by local populations (Fung, 2015:83).

The legitimacy of local governments is reinforced when they are seen as responsive to their citizens' needs and concerns. By integrating community voices into the LED

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process, municipalities demonstrate their willingness to share power and decision-making authority, which enhances their democratic legitimacy (Axelsson *et.al*, 2010:32). Community participation also allows residents to feel represented, ensuring that their economic, social, and cultural interests are reflected in local policies. According to Van Holm (2019:69), this perceived legitimacy reduces the likelihood of public resistance or protests development projects, creating a more stable environment for implementing LED initiatives. When municipalities are seen as credible and legitimate, they are more effective in achieving their development goals and ensuring long-term sustainability (Biljohn & Lues, 2020:90).

2.14. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND IN LED IN LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are important components of service delivery and play a key role in poverty alleviation, skills development, health-related issues, and job creation. In the last two decades in South Africa there has been an increase in NGOs that are funded within and outside the country (Heinrich, 2001:57). In South Africa since the 1980s, there has been a rapid increase of NGOs as they play a key role in socio-economic growth (Habib & Taylor, 1999:98). During the apartheid regime, some races were marginalized, and others were privileged regarding the quality of services they received from the government in South Africa (Mala, 2020:78). Consequently, NGOs emerged in the democratic regime to address the imbalances of the past within communities (Mazibuko, 2000:16). Several NGOs in South Africa are church-based NGOs to support vulnerable groups in society, to fight poverty in the form of soup kitchens. It should be noted that the churches in South Africa have been instrumental in fighting poverty through soup kitchens (Van der Merwe, 2014:15).

Apart from poverty alleviation programmes the NGOs in South Africans play a pivotal role in various initiatives (Cele, 2003:21). Non-Governmental Organizations have for many years been involved in several programmes such as environmental policies, decentralization, bilateral and multilateral agreements, Public-Private Partnership (PPPs), public participation and social justice in South Africa (Burgess, 2017:29). However, in the South Africa context and like other countries, NGOs need to address

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the challenges of the past and present to survive (Koma & Kuye, 2014:43). There are numerous obstacles that hinder the effectiveness of NGOs in South Africa, such as inadequate accountability, poor transparency on cash flow, lack of financial assistance from other sectors, limited capacity building of personnel and others (Zhang, 2005:67). NGOs in South Africa are very instrumental in various initiatives nationally and even outside the country. Ndlela (2005:12) stated that NGOs, as a non-state actor in terms of public participation, play a huge role in the distribution of information, specifically in previously disadvantaged communities. In many cases, NGOs have strengthened democracy and social justice in South Africa at the local level and at the national level.

2.15. STAKEHOLDERS OF THE LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

This sub-section of the study presents stakeholders of the LED process. The process undertaken to produce the LED consists of different stakeholders, which include the municipality, councillors, communities, and other stakeholders, and the National and Provincial Departments.

2.15.1 Municipality

The LED guides the development plans of the local municipality. All municipalities (metros, districts, and local) are guided by the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) to undertake a local economic development process to produce LED. Local municipalities in South Africa use LED as a method to plan for present and future development in their respective areas. Ndlela (2005:65) stated that it is a design approach that involves municipal officials and community members of the municipality to find the best solutions to achieve a long-term positive development that recognises residents as people who know best what they need. Municipalities should encourage and provide a platform for their communities to participate effectively in the LED process (Biggs, Westley & Carpenter, 2010:53). According to the LED guideline (2011:4), local economic development is a process by which municipalities prepare a strategic development plan for a period of five years. Local economic development is a very interactive and participatory process that requires the participation of various stakeholders (Khawula, 2016:17).

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Local municipalities are key stakeholders in Local Economic Development (LED) as they are the primary bodies responsible for planning, implementing, and managing LED initiatives at the local level (Mulgan, 2006:21). They play a leading role in creating a conducive environment for economic growth by ensuring that local infrastructure, services, and regulations support business activities and entrepreneurial development (Heinrich, 2001:23). Through the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), municipalities integrate LED into their broader developmental agenda, which includes socio-economic development, service delivery, and poverty alleviation (Nour,2011:19). Local municipalities oversee the identification of LED opportunities, allocate resources, and coordinate with various stakeholders, such as local businesses, NGOs, and communities, to ensure that economic growth is inclusive and sustainable (Baker & Mehmood, 2015:36).

2.15.2 Councillors

Councillors are crucial stakeholders in Local Economic Development (LED) as they function as the direct link between local government and the communities they serve. In their role as elected representatives, councillors are responsible for ensuring that the needs and priorities of their constituents are incorporated into LED strategies (Van Winden, 2009:33). This means that they play an essential role in facilitating community participation in the LED process, advocating for inclusive policies, and ensuring that LED initiatives align with the socio-economic needs of their wards. Councillors participate in the formulation of Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), which include LED components, and participate in monitoring and evaluating the progress of LED projects to ensure they deliver the intended outcomes (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2010:56). Their engagement is vital in promoting transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in the LED process, especially in areas where local communities may feel disconnected from municipal decision-making.

The LED gives councillors an opportunity to make decisions based on the needs and aspirations of their constituencies. Craythorne (2006:146) indicates that councillors are elected directly to municipalities by the communities to represent the needs and aspirations of their respective communities from within the municipality. For this

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reason, councillors are bound to ensure that communities are given sufficient information and encouraged to participate actively in the LED process. According to the IDP Guide Pack (2011:5), councillors play a decisive role for both parties, the municipality, and their communities, in bringing forth good relationships that should result in quality service delivery to improve the general welfare of the people.

2.15.3 Communities and Community-Based Structures

During the LED process, municipalities are responsible for coordinating LED and must attract other interested parties to the area that may impact or benefit from development in the area, which includes government departments that implement any project in the area of specific municipality, businesses, churches, schools, clinics and any other structure in the municipality (Leigh & Backely, 2016:19). Khawula (2016:34) believes that these stakeholders are the target of the LED result, as it integrates the needs and aspirations of their entire community, which may have different demands based on their groups. Khawula (2016:34) also argues that a well-planned LED should lead to the improvement and development of the lives of local populations and, more importantly, to the promotion of local democracy among people.

Local communities are at the heart of LED initiatives, both as beneficiaries and active participants in the economic development process (Ranney, 2016:87). Their involvement ensures that development strategies are grounded in local realities and are responsive to community needs. Tau (2013:14) stated that by participating in LED planning and decision-making processes, community members can influence the design and implementation of projects that directly impact their livelihoods. Leigh and Backely (2016:19) stated that this participatory approach also fosters a sense of ownership and accountability, increasing the likelihood of long-term success for LED initiatives.

2.15.4 National and Provincial Sector Departments

According to Managa (2012: 5), many government services are provided by provincial and national government departments at the local level. Municipalities must consider the programmes and policies of these departments. Departments must participate in

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the LED process so that they can be guided on how to use their resources to meet local needs (IDP Guide Pack, 2011:7). The LED intends to coordinate the work of local and other spheres of government in a coherent plan to improve the quality of life of all people living in an area (Baker & Mehmood, 2015:26). It must consider the existing conditions, the challenges, and the resources available for development. According to Mahlalela (2014:76), the cooperative government means that the three spheres of government must work together (cooperate) to provide citizens with a comprehensive package of services. Chapter 3 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, states that the three spheres must help each other and support each other, share information, and coordinate their efforts.

National and Provincial Sector Departments are key stakeholders in Local Economic Development (LED) in South Africa, playing a strategic role in ensuring that LED initiatives are well-coordinated, adequately funded, and aligned with broader regional and national economic objectives (MacKay, 2004:16). National sector departments, such as the Department of Economic Development, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and the Department of Tourism, provide policy direction, technical support, and financial resources to municipalities for LED projects (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2012:77). These departments are instrumental in shaping the regulatory framework for economic activities and in ensuring that municipalities have access to national funding instruments such as grants, subsidies, and capacity-building programs (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2010:54). By setting national targets and providing oversight, these departments ensure that LED initiatives contribute to macroeconomic goals such as job creation, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development (Biggs *et.al*, 2010:54).

2.15.5 Government Institutions and Government Departments

Government institutions are the primary facilitators of Local Economic Development (LED) in South Africa. Van Winden (2009:43) asserted that local municipalities hold the direct responsibility for developing and implementing LED strategies that align with the broader objectives of national policies like the National Development Plan (NDP) and provincial strategies. Through the Department of Cooperative Governance and

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Traditional Affairs (COGTA) and the Department of Economic Development, the national government provides the necessary legislative framework, policy guidance, and financial support for LED initiatives (Van der Merwe, 2014:15). Municipalities play a key role in identifying local economic priorities, coordinating stakeholder engagement, and ensuring that LED projects are sustainable and aligned with broader social development goals (Mala, 2020:98). This hierarchical structure allows for consistency in planning and implementation across the various levels of government.

According to Van Gent (2017:75), municipal LED units or departments are often tasked with working closely with local communities and the private sector to create a conducive environment for economic growth. These government bodies facilitate public-private partnerships (PPPs) and community participation to ensure that development initiatives are reflective of the local needs and potential (Ceasar, 2009:67). Many municipalities face challenges, such as capacity constraints and limited financial resources, which can hinder the successful implementation of LED (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2012:97). Strengthening local government capacity is therefore essential for ensuring that government institutions can adequately support economic development projects and deliver services effectively (Koma & Kuye, 2014:43).

2.15.6 Private Sector

The private sector is a crucial stakeholder in LED, providing investment, innovation, and expertise that drive local economic growth (Mahlalela, 2014:76). Businesses, both large corporations and small enterprises, contribute by creating employment opportunities, promoting entrepreneurship, and investing in infrastructure that supports LED objectives (Bogopane, 2012:54). Their participation is often facilitated through public-private partnerships (PPPs), where private sector investments are leveraged to finance and implement projects such as industrial parks, agricultural processing facilities, or tourism initiatives (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2012:93). These collaborations help municipalities attract external funding, modernize infrastructure, and stimulate sectors that can create a multiplier effect on local economies (Van der Merwe, 2014:18).

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Private sector involvement is also essential for fostering a competitive and diversified local economy (Ceasar, 2009:62). Koma and Kuye (2014:43) stated that by providing training and skills development programs, businesses help build the capacity of the local workforce, which in turn enhances productivity and innovation within the local economy. Leigh and Backely (2016:26), the private sector often plays a leading role in developing small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs), which are critical for driving inclusive growth. Manana (2016:85) asserted that despite the benefits, challenges such as regulatory barriers and a lack of trust between government and private businesses can hinder collaboration, making it essential for municipalities to create an enabling environment for private sector engagement.

2.16. METHODS TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION ON IDP PROCESS IN LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

This section presents methods that can be used to enhance community participation in the LED process. The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) (2013: 8) has identified some methods to improve community participation in terms of LED implementation as well as IDP processes. These methods include the following:

2.16.1 Ward Committee

In acknowledging community participation as a significant part of local democracy and participatory local governance and the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matter of local government, SALGA (2013:8) believes that ward committees are the only method used to promote community involvement and community participation in the municipality. South African Local Government Association believes that formal ward committees have been developed in most municipalities in the country and municipalities are very willing to encourage community participation, particularly through effective ward committees, and therefore it does not seem necessary to require municipalities to set up ward committees. Therefore, attention should be paid to the effectiveness of these ward committees, with respect to the governance model, a model of accountability and resources. The South African Local Government Association has developed a model that indicates

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the aspects to be considered in this regard during the fiscal year 2011/2012 and was adopted by the NEC of SALGA in March 2012.

2.16.2 Participation of Members of the Public in Oversight / MPAC Committee

In a situation where municipalities have limited performance in terms of economic responsibility, they must identify ways to improve. SALGA (2013:7) declared community participation in overseeing municipal finances through the establishment of well-trained audit committees, as well as the establishment of the Municipal Public Accounting Committee (MPAC) to prepare the supervision report on the annual report and to fulfil these other supervisory functions determined by the council as one of the mechanisms to improve municipal financial responsibility. Since MPAC is a committee in the section 79 committee, the meetings should be open to the public, and the public should be encouraged to attend such meetings, unless an issue is considered confidential in terms of the committee order rules of the municipality.

Section 129 of the Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) states that members of the public may attend council meetings that prepare the oversight report on the annual report and make contributions to the report on supervision. SALGA (2003:9) believes that community contributions and community participation during the preparation of the oversight report will ensure a well-informed and balanced oversight report. In addition to the development of oversight reports, the dates of MPAC meetings should be published and community members should be encouraged to attend meetings, even if they cannot participate in the discussions. The same principle should apply to other oversight committees in section 79 when a municipality has established it.

2.16.3 Community Participation Policy

Siphuma (2009: 45) indicates that institutionalisation of plans and approaches towards community participation by adopting a public participation policy in the municipality provides the function of community participation with legitimacy to mainstream community participation in overall municipal planning and budgeting. Without institutionalisation, the integrity of community participation in a locality is thus troubled,

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as there would be no formal institutional commitment to it. Community members should be allowed to participate in the development of the policy, which should be discussed at ward level and must be communicated through the media to ensure that adequate input is provided (SALGA, 2003:14). The policy, once developed, should be made available to community members for them to understand their rights and obligations in terms of community participation. The policy must comply with the requirements contained in the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) and alluded to above and must provide for the mechanisms of community participation that will be used by the municipality and can include any of the proposals set out below.

2.16.4 Language Policy

SALGA (2003:10) believes that although it is widely recognised that community participation is one of the key elements of democracy and can serve as an instrument to prevent any form of marginalisation, it seems that municipalities are not willing to respond to the different linguistic needs of members of the community. Managa (2012:4) agrees with SALGA stating that while the cost implications of a multilingual policy are recognized, especially for smaller municipalities, it is proposed that municipalities adopt a language policy that allows all members of the community to be able to access municipal documents in a language they understand and, therefore, be able to participate in council processes and proceedings. Creighton (2005:23) argues that politics should be informed by the needs of the community in the specific municipality in terms of linguistic preference. Particular attention should be paid to illiterate members of the communities, to ensure that they are not marginalized.

2.16.5 Community Participation Resources

In addition to political commitment, promoting community participation requires investment and this should be in the form of institutional, financial, and personal systems dedicated to community participation in the broadest form. In this sense, SALGA (2003: 10) believes that the municipalities should, within their financial capacity, make available a resolute budget and personnel staff for all forms of public

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participation, not only for the structures of the ward committees. The White Paper on Transforming Public Services Delivery, 1997, provides value for money as one of the eight principles of *Batho Pele*, which implies that public services must be provided economically and profitably so that citizens have better value for money. Citizens pay income, Value Added Tax (VAT) and other taxes to finance the administration of the country. For these reasons, De Visser (2005:75) argues that citizens have the right to insist that their money be used correctly and that municipalities must exercise the financial capacity to make community participation resources available in an acceptable manner to the taxpayers.

2.16.6 Location and Functioning of Community Participation Function

Khawula (2016:90) states that community participation is a cross-cutting issue and needs to be placed strategically at a level that can oversee and coordinate the inter-departmental responses to community participation. Community participation must be embedded into all municipal activities, approaches, and policies. The Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 requires both political and administrative leadership to ensure that communities engage in municipal policies, planning, and any decision that affects them. For example, Section 55 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that, among other responsibilities, the municipal manager is responsible for facilitating participation by the local community in the affairs of the municipality.

2.16.7 Ward Based Planning

SALGA (2003:11) defines ward-based planning as a development planning process that is rooted in and guided at the ward level. This process involves the active participation of all stakeholders in the ward and is not limited to ward committees. Although the municipality may be the initiator of this process, it does not necessarily have to be the only driver of the process. The IDP Guide Pack (2011:4) indicates that stakeholders in the ward, such as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) with reasonable skills, can help facilitate some processes. In this case, the municipality can enable the process by providing locations and other logistical and technical support,

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where appropriate.

According to the IDP Guide Pack (2011:4), the ward-based planning process is not just about identifying the needs and challenges of ward communities but is also interested in finding a solution created and led by the ward communities. As a result, all stakeholders gather their knowledge to identify and analyse their ward's development requirements, seek viable and sustainable solutions and work together to mobilize resources to implement the proposed solution (SALGA, 2003: 12). Forward-based planning to be successful, the municipality must include in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and budget process the priorities identified in the IDP process and in the subsequent budgetary procedure.

2.16.8 Feedback from and to Communities

Bekker (1996:44) indicates that different methods can be used to provide feedback to communities on the activities of the municipal council and municipalities in general. According to SALGA (2003:13), municipalities can use advertising media, public announcements, ward committees, and ward meetings to provide feedback to communities. Even the messages in the utility bills can be highly effective. The reports of mayors and councillors can also be used. Municipalities can also use community radio stations to provide information to the community on a regular basis and at a specific time. With the wide range of technologies available, municipalities must establish investments in electronic communication methods and create a database of mobile phone numbers and email addresses of community members. A short message service (SMS) or a bulk email system can be used to disseminate information to community members. The periodic news transmitted via email or SMS can be a highly effective method for communicating messages and guaranteeing immediate access to these messages (SALGA, 2003:13).

2.16.9 Effective Municipal Communication with Communities

According to Mahole (2012:20), continuous communication is one of the critical elements of community participation. The mechanisms that municipalities use to communicate with community members have the potential to promote or limit

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community participation. Municipalities can use municipal newsletters/magazines and mayoral imbizos to communicate with communities and municipal accounts, local media, posters, customer satisfaction surveys and public notice boards. The less-used communication mechanisms are municipal websites, e-mails, billboards, and text messages. The municipality must determine the most effective way to communicate with the communities, given their unique circumstances, but in the process, it must ensure that vulnerable groups are included in effective communication processes (SALGA,2003:13). The municipality must also determine which communication method the community prefers.

2.17. CONCLUSION

Chapter 2 of the study has outlined the participatory theory as the theory that will support the study and its relevance in this context. The section has also indicated the effects of community participation in Local Economic Development in South African municipalities. The section also indicated the community participation challenges facing local government in facilitating Local Economic Development planning and implementation in South African municipalities as well as the challenges and the mechanisms of community participation.

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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the research methodology used in the study. Research is a systematic process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting information (data) to increase our understanding of the phenomenon about which we are interested or concerned (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:2). This chapter presents the research design and methodology that the researcher followed when conducting research. The research was conducted using a mixed approach, that is, both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The chapter also presents the research paradigm, research design, research strategies, study area, population of the study, sampling procedures and sample size, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM

Antwi and Hamza (2015:217) characterise a research paradigm as a comprehensive system encompassing interconnected practices and thinking that delineate the nature of inquiry across three dimensions. A research paradigm is a set of common beliefs and agreements shared among experts within a discipline about how problems should be understood and addressed (Busseto, Wick & Gumbinger, 2020:81). A research paradigm can also be described as a method or model employed in conducting research, validated by the research community over an extended period, and with a history spanning hundreds of years (Park, Konge & Artino, 2020:65). Kumar (2011:55) on the other hand provides a definition of a research paradigm as an approach or research model for conducting research, one that has been validated by the research community over an extended period and has been in practical use for hundreds of years. The paradigm adopted for this study is therefore discussed next.

3.2.1 Pragmatic Research Paradigm

This study adopted a Pragmatic Research Paradigm. Park, *et.al.*, (2020:65) defines

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Pragmatic Research Paradigm as a deconstructive paradigm that advocates the use of mixed methods in research, sidesteps the contentious issues of truth and reality, and focuses instead on what works as the truth regarding the research questions under investigation, on the other hand, Biesta (2010:87) defines Pragmatic Research Paradigm as an outcome-oriented and interested in determining the meaning of things or focusing on the product of the research. The Pragmatic Research Paradigm was employed because it is more practical and pluralistic, as it allows a combination of methods that jointly shed light on the actual behaviour of participants.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Bryman (2016:56), research design is defined as a procedure of conditions for collecting and analysing data in a way that has the purpose of combining relevance to the research purpose. Gray (2018:138) stated that a research design is the overarching plan for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. This study used a descriptive research design as a blueprint plan.

3.3.1 Descriptive Research Design

Zohrabi (2014:63) characterises descriptive research design as a type of research study primarily focused on providing an accurate portrayal of the characteristics of persons, situations, or groups. Descriptive research involves direct exploration, analysis, and description of specific phenomena, aiming for a presentation that is as free as possible from unexplained presuppositions, striving for maximum intuitive representation (Burns & Grove, 2010:25). The rationale for choosing descriptive research in this study lies in the opportunity it presented to integrate qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection.

3.4. RESEARCH APPROACH

Daniel (2022:63) describes research methodology as the general approach a researcher takes in conducting a research project. In contrast, Fink (2012:63) defines research methodology as a theory outlining how an inquiry should proceed, encompassing the analysis of assumptions, principles, and procedures within a

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specific approach to inquiry. In this study, a mixed-methods research approach was employed, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

3.4.1. Mixed Method

Creswell (2021:02) articulates that the mixed method is an approach employed to gather information by integrating both qualitative and quantitative data. This integration aims to derive interpretations that enhance the comprehension of the researched topic (Zohrabi, 2014:52). This study used the mixed method because it facilitates the exploration of research questions that cannot be adequately addressed by either quantitative or qualitative methods alone. The researcher used a triangulation approach, which was defined by Denzin (2012:17) as a process of using multiple methods, data sources, or perspectives to gain a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem.

3.4.1.1. Quantitative research method

Quantitative methods are employed when the research aims to establish universal statements and when it intends to quantify observations (Brynard, 2018:29). Edmonds and Kennedy (2010:4), define quantitative research as a type of educational research in which the researcher decides what to study, asks specific, narrow questions, collects quantifiable data from participants, analyses these numbers using statistics, and conducts the inquiry in an unbiased objective manner. In this study, quantitative research was used because the findings are intended to be generalised to the entire population or a specific sub-population, given the involvement of a larger sample randomly selected. The Quantitative method was used to investigate the answers to the questions starting with how many, how much, and to what extent.

3.4.1.2. Qualitative Research Method

Sekaran and Bougie (2016:71) define the qualitative method as a systematic subjective approach employed to elucidate life experiences and situations, aiming to attribute meaning to these experiences. Holloway and Wheeler (2010:30), define qualitative research as a form of social enquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experience and the world in which they live. The

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qualitative method was employed in this research as it delves into the behaviours, perspectives, experiences, and feelings of individuals, placing emphasis on understanding these elements. Quantitative research method was employed to the study because it also helps to clarify the ambiguities in responding to the research questions by the participant.

3.5. STUDY AREA

Johnson and Clark (2010:96) define a study area as the geographical area that is selected for a specific research project. To Soanes and Stevenson (2016:836), the study area is a particular place or position. The study was conducted at Makhado



Local Municipality, which is found in Vhembe District Municipality in the province of Limpopo.

FIGURE 3.4.1: A MAP OF MAKHADO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Map extracted from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_municipalities_in_Limpopo.

3.6. POPULATION OF THE STUDY

According to Rehman and Alharthi (2018:130), a study population is the aggregate of all units of analysis that have a chance of being included in the sample to be observed.

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According to Daniel (2022:63), population refers to individuals in the universe who possess specific characteristics, or to a set of entities that represent all the measurements of interest to the practitioner or researchers. Burns and Grove (2018:63) emphasizes that the characteristics defining a study's population can span numerous factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, location, or any other relevant criteria. The study focused on the elected and appointed officials in the Municipality, i.e.. Mayor, municipal manager, ward councillors, integrated development program officials, local economic development officials, and traditional leaders, community development coordinators, civic engagement coordinator, youth engagement coordinator and community members who are older than 18 years. Makhado Local Municipality is comprised of 38 wards, with 285 villages and an estimated 129 829 households with a total estimated population of 416 728 people.

3.7. SAMPLING

According to Burns and Grove (2018:75), sampling is a procedure that involves using a small number of elements from a given population as a basis for drawing conclusions about the entire population. The sampled group of this study included the mayor, municipal manager, ward councillors, traditional leaders, integrated development program officials, local economic development officials, community development coordinators, civic engagement coordinator, youth engagement coordinator and community members who are older than 18 years of the study, including people who participated in the research.

3.7.1. Sampling Method

The researcher used the non-probability sampling method. The non-probability sampling method, according to Daniel (2022:63), is a sampling method that represents a group of sampling techniques that help researchers select units from a population that they are interested in studying. Ritchie and Elam (2019:19) define a non-probability sampling method as a sampling technique where the odds of any member being selected for a sample cannot be calculated. The researcher used a purposive sampling method.

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3.7.1.1 Purposive Sampling

According to Babbie (2019:192), the sampling method is a technique in which samples are chosen, and in this study, a non-probability sampling method was employed. Rahman (2023:58) stated that non-probability sampling is a type of sampling where each member of the population does not have a known probability of being selected in the sample. Purposive sampling method was used in the present study to allow the researcher to choose participants arbitrarily for their unique characteristics, experience, attitudes, or perceptions. Purposive sampling method was also used in the present study because the researcher knows the age groups to consider as well as the variables used in the study.

3.6.2. Sampling Size

Sample size is the number of individuals, usually denoted by the letter n, from whom you obtain the required information (Fink, 2012:63). A sample must be large enough to correctly represent a population. For this study, the samples differed from one population to another. Other categories, such as special interest groups and experts, were included depending on their availability in the area. The population of the study involved 110 respondents. Which were randomly selected from the communities under the Makhado Local Municipality. In this study, 100 participants participated through questionnaires while 10 participants participated through interviews. The participants who participated through interviews were a total of 10 participants, which will consist of 1 mayor, 1 municipal manager, 1 ward councillor, 1 traditional leader, 1 IDP Staff, 1 LED official, 1 community development official, 1 civic engagement officer and 2 community members. Participants who responded to questionnaires were as follows, 19 ward councillors, 9 traditional leaders, 9 IDP officials, 5 LED officials, 2 community development coordinators, 2 civic engagement coordinators, 2 youth engagement coordinators and 52 community members who are above 18 years.

3.7. Data Collection

Data collection, as per Creswell (2017:201), is the systematic process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest. This established systematic

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approach enables researchers to answer stated research questions, assess hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. Sekaran and Bougie (2016:156) similarly define data collection as a process of gathering information from all relevant sources to address the research problem, test hypotheses, and assess outcomes. In this study, data will be collected using a structured questionnaire and open-ended interviews.

3.7.1. Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions (or other types of prompts) for gathering information from respondents (Zohrabi, 2014:254). A questionnaire is also defined by Fink (2012:372) as a structured form, either written or printed, that consists of a formalised set of questions designed to collect information on some subject or subjects from one or more respondents. The researcher used structured questionnaires because they enable the researcher to contact large numbers of people quickly, easily, and efficiently using postal questionnaires. The researcher made appointments before collecting data. Closed ended structured questionnaires are utilised due to their ability to provide more accurate data and achieve a higher response rate. The questionnaires were made up of a 5-point Likert scale, including options such as Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. It was divided into two sections: Section A gathered biographical information from the respondents, while Section B focused on the content details of the study. All statements in the questionnaire were carefully crafted to avoid contingencies or misunderstandings, ensuring straightforward responses from the participants. The questions were concise and easy to understand. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents after scheduling appointments and collected three days later.

3.7.2. Interviews

An interview is defined by Fink (2012:374) as the process that involves an interviewer, who coordinates the process of the conversation and asks questions, and an interviewee, who responds to those questions. Rubin (2011:65) defines interview as a systematic way of talking and listening to people and as another way to collect data

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from individuals through conversations. The researcher used open-ended questions to interview the participants because it allowed the respondents to include more information, including feelings, attitudes and understanding of the subject. Open-ended questions are utilized to initiate and facilitate conversations, thereby creating a more comfortable atmosphere for individuals. The researcher conducted interviews with 10 participants to collect qualitative data which consisted of 1 mayor, 1 municipal manager, 1 ward councillor, 1 traditional leader, 1 IDP Staff, 1 LED officials, 1 community development official, 1 civic engagement officer and 2 community members. These people are selected because they are the ones who can provide more information which is relevant to the study, and each category in the sample size was represented in the interview with each person.

3.8. Data Analysis techniques

Data analysis, according to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport (2021:27), involves the process of imparting order, structure, and meaning to a substantial volume of data. In succinct terms, as described by Anney (2018:21), data analysis is a method of applying facts to address the research problem. In this study, a combination of statistical and thematic analysis methods was employed.

Statistical analysis is defined by Stevens (2012:145) as a measure to determine whether any differences observed between the groups being studied are real or they are simply due to chance. Statistical analysis is defined by Urdan (2011:264) as a measure of whether the research findings are meaningful. The data collected through the questionnaire was analysed through International Business Machinery (IBM): Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS), the latest version 28.0 and the information was presented in the form of tables, followed by frequencies and percentages.

Thematic analysis is defined by Turunen and Bondas (2013:398) as a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. Schurink (2011:400) defines thematic analysis as a foundational method for qualitative analysis, as it provides core skills for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis. Information collected through interviews was presented in a narrative form and

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grouped in themes using Creswell (2014:87) outlines the following seven (6) steps for conducting data analysis:

3.8.1. Data Exploration

Data exploration entails analysing and visualising data to gain a thorough understanding of the characteristics and relationships between variables. This step entails using descriptive statistics, data visualization techniques, data profiling, data quality checks, and correlation analysis to identify patterns and potential issues in the data (Creswell & John, 2021:66). Through conducting data exploration, the study can identify outliers in the data, refine the data analysis approach, and ensure that accurate and meaningful insights are discovered from the data.

3.8.2. Theme Generation

Theme generation entails grouping similar codes to create overarching themes that capture the main ideas in the data (Creswell, 2017:201). This step assists in identifying key patterns in the data, making it simpler to draw insights and conclusions. The theme generation process entails reviewing the codes, grouping similar codes, refining the groups, naming the themes, and validating the themes to ensure that they are representative of the data. Through generating a theme, a researcher can gain a better understanding with regards to the main ideas in the data, which may assist a researcher in refining the data analysis approach and drawing important insights from the data.

3.8.3. Interrelating Themes

Interrelating themes refers to the process of exploring the relationships between themes generated during the process of data analysis (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016:156). It entails scrutinizing how the distinct themes identified are interconnected and how they work together to create a broader understanding of the data. This step is of paramount importance in data analysis because it helps to uncover the underlying patterns and relationships that may not be immediately apparent. This process classically entails the reviewing of themes and identifying any connections between

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them. It may also include creating visual aids such as diagrams to better understand the connections between the themes. Through interrelating themes, a researcher may gain a more comprehensive understanding of the data and this on its own may be effective in terms of assisting the study to draw more meaningful insights and conclusions.

3.8.4. Testing Emergent Understanding

Testing emergent understanding entails evaluating the initial conclusions or assumptions drawn from data to ensure that they are accurate and dependable. This step is significant because it helps to validate the findings of the data analysis process and ensure that they are robust and trustworthy (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016:155). This step may help to identify any limitations in the initial conclusions and may lead to discoveries. Overall, the goal of testing emergent understanding is to ensure that the conclusions drawn from the data are accurate, dependable, and can be used to inform decision-making.

3.8.5. Searching for Alternative Explanation

Searching for alternative explanations is a key step in the process of data analysis. It entails exploring different interpretations of the data and considering alternative hypotheses that may emphasise the observed results (Hlalukana, 2017:16). This step is essential because it helps to ensure that the conclusions drawn from the data are robust and not influenced by any biases. Analysts may conduct sensitivity analyses to assess the robustness of their findings or assumptions to see how this impacts the results. They may also consider alternative explanations for the data and evaluate them against the evidence. Through searching for alternative explanations, the researchers can ensure that they are taking a rigorous and objective approach to data analysis.

3.8.6. Interpretation

This is the decisive step in the data analysis process. It entails drawing important insights and conclusions from the data that can be used to inform decision-making

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(Hlalukana, 2017:16). Interpretation is a vital step because it translates the raw data into meaningful information that can be used to guide actions or inform strategic decisions. The process of interpretation typically involves reviewing the data and identifying key patterns and relationships. Researchers may also compare their findings to existing literature to validate their conclusions. Interpretation may also include creating visual aids such as graphs, charts, or diagrams to help communicate the findings to others or readers. Overall, the main aim of interpretation is to ensure that the conclusions drawn from the data are meaningful, dependable, accurate, and actionable and can be used to achieve specific objectives.

3.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OBSERVED IN THE STUDY

The study was conducted and guided by different research ethics which were defined by Hlalukana (2017:16) as a collection of moral principles proposed by an individual or group, widely accepted, and offering rules and behavioural expectations regarding appropriate conduct towards experimental subjects, respondents, employers, sponsors, as well as other researchers, assistants, and students. The study adhered to the following research ethics: Permission to conduct the study, informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity, and no harm to participants.

3.7.1. Permission to Conduct the Study

Creswell (2014:14) emphasizes the significance of securing ethical permission before initiating a research project, underscoring the importance of aligning the study's activities with the norms and regulations governing research. The consideration of ethics extended to both internal and external institutions. The research received ethical clearance from the University of Venda and a permission letter from the Makhado Local Municipality.

3.7.2. Informed Consent

Rahman (2023:58) articulates informed consent as permission granted with full knowledge of the potential consequences. This necessitates ensuring that research participants are apprised of both the risks and benefits associated with the study. In

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this context, participants were explicitly informed that their privacy would be safeguarded, with no utilisation of personal information. The researcher also provided respondents with comprehensive details about the general nature of the study, including the anticipated duration of their participation, the interview process, and the study's potential benefits. There is a standard University Consent form to be used by participants.

3.7.3. Voluntary Participation

Johnson and Clark (2010:96) asserted that voluntary participation is a human research subject's exercise of free will in determining whether to participate in a research activity. This was ascertained by the researcher through ensuring voluntary, non-coerced participation. Respondents were allowed to withdraw from participation whenever they wished to (Rahman, 2023:58). The researcher will comply to this ethic through replacing the names of the participants with the pseudonyms such as participant A.

3.7.4. Confidentiality and Anonymity

Amdur and Bankert (2010:278) define confidentiality as the safeguarding of information disclosed by an individual in a relationship of trust, with the expectation that it will not be disclosed to others without permission, in a manner inconsistent with the understanding of the initial disclosure. In reporting or presenting findings, the researcher ensured the attribution of mentions to identify participants, incorporating both direct attribution and indirect references.

3.7.5. No Harm to Participants

According to (Busseto, *et.al*, 2020:81), social research should never injure the people being studied, regardless of whether they volunteer to participate in the study or not. Participants were given assurance and protected against physical and emotional harm. The study did not harm the respondents or punish the participants during the interviews. The researcher made sure that all respondents remained as they were in the past or before the research was conducted.

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3.8. CONCLUSION

Chapter 3 of the study indicated that the methods and procedures that were followed in conducting the study employed a pragmatic research paradigm. The researcher also applied mixed methods, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, and the reasons for the choices were provided in this chapter. The researcher clearly outlined the research design, research methodology, study area, population of the study, sampling method, sampling size, data collection, data collection instruments, and data analysis methods, as well as ethical considerations. The researcher further applied data collection using questionnaires and interviews.

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CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents data on the importance of community participation in the implementation of Local Economic Development at the communities under the Makhado Local Municipality. The data regarding the importance of community participation in the implementation of Local Economic Development is collected by both quantitative (research questionnaires) and qualitative (research interviews) research methods. The data from the questionnaires and the interviews is tabulated and calculated to show the frequency and percentages that are easy to explain. Data collected through interviews is presented in a thematic-narrative analysis. Each question from the questionnaire will be presented, analysed then interpreted. The researcher employed two methods, namely questionnaires and interviews, for data collection. Questionnaire responses are depicted in graphical and tabular formats, accompanied by a concise discussion of the findings. Of the 110 respondents who participated in the study, 100 responded to the research questionnaire, and 10 participants answered the interview.

4.2. QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Data is collected through questionnaires and consists of two sections, namely: Section A and Section B. In the first section A, the research presents the biographical details of the respondents, and in the second section B, presents data on the importance of community participation in the implementation of LED in Makhado Local Municipality. The researcher used a graphical tabular format, frequencies, and percentages to present the data collected through questionnaires. Each table is followed by a brief discussion of the findings.

4.2.1. Section A: Biographical Information of Respondents

In this section, the researcher presents the biographical details of the respondents

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who participated in the study by responding to the questionnaire item. The information is displayed in a graphical tabular format, followed by a concise explanation of the findings.

Table 4.1: Gender of respondents

#	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Male	53	53%
2	Female	47	47%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

Table 4.1 presents the biographic information of the respondents in terms of gender. Based on the table above, a total of 100 participants took part in this study, of which the majority, 53 (53%), were male, whereas 47(47%) of respondents were female. From the above information, a conclusion can be drawn that most respondents who participated in this study were males. Although it was intended to have at least an equal number of female and male participants in the study, the findings show that males exceeded the females in the study. This shows that there has been better representation for both male and female respondents on the importance of community participation in the implementation of LED in Makhado Local Municipality.

Table 4.2: Age of respondents

#	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	18 to 35 years	31	31%
2	36 to 49 years	37	37%
3	50 years and above	26	26%

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	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Table 4.2 presents the ages of the respondents. The information collected indicates that from the 100 respondents who took part in the study, the majority are. The information collected indicates that from the 100 respondents who took part in the study, the majority, 37 (37%), were aged 36 to 49 years. The next respondents were (31) 31% of the respondents were between 18 to 35 years. Few respondents, 26 (26%), were 50 and above. From the above table, a conclusion can be drawn that more respondents who participated in the questionnaires were between the ages of 36 and 49 years.

Table 4.3: Position of respondents

#	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Ward Councillors	19	19%
2	Traditional Leaders	9	9%
3	IDP Officials	9	9%
4	LED Officials	5	5%
5	Community Development Coordinators	2	2%
6	Civic Engagement Coordinators	2	2%
7	Youth Engagement Coordinators	2	2%
8	Selected Community Members	52	52%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Table 4.3 indicates the position of the respondents who took part in the study by

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providing information through questionnaire items. From the 100 respondents who responded to the questionnaires in the study, the majority is at 52 (52%) of the respondents were selected community members. The respondents who participated as traditional leaders and equalized the number of IDPs, which were both 9 and they each consisted 9% of the study them. The data collected also indicated that there were 5 LED officials who took part in the study, which made a percentage contribution of 5% in total. Data collected also indicated that community development coordinators, youth development coordinators and civic engagement coordinators all had 2 respondents to the questionnaires, which contributed to 2% each. It can be concluded that Makhado Local Municipality members and the community members are the ones who participated significantly in responding to the questionnaire.

Table 4.4: Educational qualification of respondents

	Response	**Frequencies**	**Percentage**
1	Grade 12	21	21%
2	Diploma	30	30%
3	Degree	32	32%
4	Honours/B-Tech	12	12%
5	Masters/M-Tech	3	3%
6	PhD/D-Tech	2	2%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

The above findings reveal that most respondents who took part in the study, 32 (32%), reported that they had completed secondary education. 21 (21%) of these respondents alluded that they were unable to acquire tertiary education due to poverty and lack of funds. Thirty 30 (30%) of the respondents reported that they have attended

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tertiary education to acquire the diploma. While 12 (12%) of the respondents have managed to obtain honours/B-Tech. While 3 (3%) of the respondents managed to obtain masters/M-Tech. two 2 (2%) of the respondents had PhD/D-Tech. The researcher believes that obtaining data from educated respondents will help the study conclusion carry more weight in its findings since educated people have a high chance of bringing logical views.

4.2.2. Section B: The Importance of Community Participation in the Implementation of LED at Makhado Local Municipality

The data in this section is presented in a graphical tabular form, which was compiled from the questionnaire items. This section is categorized into four (04) sub-sections, namely: assessing the level of understanding among community members about Local Economic Development at Makhado Local Municipality, Key barriers to effective community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality, evaluation of the role of Non-Governmental Organisations in facilitating community participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality, the inclusivity of current LED programs in terms of community participation at Makhado Local Municipality, and recommendation of strategies that can be used to improve community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality.

4.2.2.1. Assessing the Level of Understanding Amongst Community Members about Local Economic Development (LED) at Makhado Local Municipality

This subsection presents the data regarding the importance of community participation in the implementation of LED in Makhado Local Municipality. The data is presented in the form of tables and followed by a short interpretation of findings.

Table 4.5: There is a clear understanding of what Local Economic Development at Makhado Local Municipality means.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	2	2%

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2	Agree	4	4%
3	Not Sure	36	36%
4	Disagree	45	45%
5	Strongly Disagree	13	13%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

The table above shows that the majority of the respondents who were forty-five, which constituted 45%, disagreed that they have a clear understanding of what LED means at Makhado Local Municipality, while thirty-six, which constituted 36% of the respondents, indicated that they were not sure if there is a clear understanding among the community members. The table also indicated that thirteen respondents who constituted 13% had strongly disagreed with the statement, while four of the respondents, who constituted 4%, had agreed with the statement. Lastly, 2 respondents have strongly agreed to the statement. Based on the data that was gathered from the sampling size, which came from people under Makhado Local Municipality, it can be concluded that the citizens do not have a clear understanding of the meaning of LED at Makhado Local Municipality.

Table 4.6: Community members are familiar with the goals and objectives of LED initiatives in Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1	Strongly Agree	09	9%
2	Agree	12	12%
3	Not Sure	15	15%

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4	Disagree	26	26%
5	Strongly Disagree	38	38%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

With regards to the information displayed on the table above, there are thirty-eight respondents who constituted 38% of the total respondents strongly disagreed that they are familiar with the objectives and goals of LED in Makhado Local Municipality, while there are twenty-six respondents who constituted 26% who disagreed that they are familiar with the same objectives and goals. The table above also indicates that there were fifteen respondents who constituted 15% of the respondents who were not sure if they were familiar with such objectives and goals, while there were twelve respondents who constituted 12% who were aware of these goals and objectives. And lastly, there were nine respondents who constituted 9% of the respondents who participated in the study, who were also strongly agreeing that they are aware of the goals and objectives of LED in Makhado Local Municipality. It can be concluded based on the information presented above, that majority of the people under Makhado Local Municipality are not aware of the goals and objectives of LED, while there are also participants who are well informed about such goals and objectives, but they are less compared to those who are unaware of such goals and objectives.

Table 4.7: The LED initiatives benefit the communities under the Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1	Strongly Agree	17	17%
2	Agree	16	16%
3	Not Sure	39	39%

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4	Disagree	12	12%
5	Strongly Disagree	16	16%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Table 4.7 represents that there are thirty-nine respondents who constituted 39% of the study population, were not sure about the benefits that are offered by the LED in their communities, while there were seventeen respondents who constituted 17% of the study population and strongly agreed. The table above also shows that sixteen respondents, who constituted 16%, agreed that the communities under Makhado Local Municipality benefit from LED initiatives, while the number equalled the respondents who strongly agreed to the same statement. Lastly, there are twelve respondents who amounted to 12% of the study sample size for questionnaires who disagreed that the communities' benefits from the initiatives of LED under Makhado Local Municipality. It can be concluded from the illustration above that many of the people under Makhado Local Municipality are not sure of what is going on and how they are benefiting from the initiatives that are done by LED local municipalities.

Table 4.8: Community members are aware of the specific LED programs currently being implemented in Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1	Strongly Agree	16	16%
2	Agree	22	22%
3	Not Sure	34	34%
4	Disagree	19	19%
5	Strongly Disagree	9	9%

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	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Based on table above, it is reflected that thirty-four who consisted 34% of the study sample size were not sure if they were aware of the specific LED programs that are currently being implemented under Makhado Local Municipality, while twenty-two respondents who consisted 22% of the sample size has agreed that they have agreed that they are aware of LED initiatives in their communities. The table above also indicated that there were nineteen respondents who disagreed that they are aware of LED programmes in their communities and under Makhado Local Municipality, while there were sixteen respondents who strongly agreed with the statement. Lastly, there are nine respondents who amounted to 9% and they have strongly disagreed that they are aware of the programs that are undertaken by LED in the communities under Makhado Local Municipality. Based on the evidence portrayed in the table above, it can be concluded that most of the community members under Makhado Local Municipality are not aware of the specific programmes that are conducted by LED in the communities, and they cannot identify if the programme is for LED or not.

Table 4.9: There is a lack of resources and support for LED initiatives in Makhado Local Municipality communities.

	Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1	Strongly Agree	22	9%
2	Agree	15	15%
3	Not Sure	50	50%
4	Disagree	13	13%
5	Strongly Disagree	11	11%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

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(Own Source, 2025)

Table 4.9 indicates that there were fifty respondents, which is a half of total selected respondents (50%) who were not sure as to whether there is a lack of resources and support for LED initiatives in Makhado Local Municipality communities while there were twenty two respondents, who contributed 22% of the respondents who strongly agreed that there is lack of support and resources for LED initiatives in the communities under Makhado Municipality. The table above also indicated that fifteen respondents who contributed 15% of the selected respondents agreed to the statement, while there were thirteen respondents who contributed 13% of the total respondents who disagreed that there is a lack of resources and support for the initiatives of LED in the communities under Makhado Local Municipality. Lastly, the table indicates that there were only eleven participants who contributed 11% of the total sample size, while they strongly disagreed that there are resources and support for LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. Based on the information demonstrated by the table above, it can be concluded that several people under the Makhado Local Municipality communities are not sure if LED initiatives are well-resourced and adequately funded, so they can progress in the communities.

4.2.2.2. The Key Barriers to Effective Community Participation in LED Initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality

The subsection presents the key barriers to effective community participation initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. Data will be presented in this subsection through tables with information and it will be followed by a short interpretation.

Table 4.10: Lack of information about LED programmes is a significant barrier to community participation at Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	48	48%
2	Agree	24	24%

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3	Not Sure	06	6%
4	Disagree	13	13%
5	Strongly Disagree	09	9%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Table 4.10 reflects that there were forty-eight respondents who contributed 48% of the study sample size, who strongly agreed that lack of information about LED initiatives is a significance barrier to community participation in Makhado Local Municipality while there were twenty-four who made the sum of 24% respondents of the study who also agreed that lacking information about LED initiatives is a significant barrier to effective community participation. The above table also indicated that there were thirteen respondents who made the sum of 13% who disagreed to the negative effect of lack of information about LED in Makhado Local Municipality while the table also indicate that there were nine respondents who contributed 9% of the study has strongly disagree that lack information about LED initiatives is a significant barrier to effective community participation in Makhado Local Municipality. Lastly, there were six respondents who made up 6% of the total sample size, who were not sure that the lack of information about LED initiatives is a significant barrier to effective community participation in Makhado Local Municipality. Based on the above information, it can be concluded that a lack of information about LED initiatives is a significant barrier to effective community participation in Makhado Local Municipality, considering that most respondents have strongly agreed that a lack of information is indeed a barrier to community participation.

Table 4.11: Insufficient communication from the local authorities prevents effective community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

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	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	38	38%
2	Agree	26	26%
3	Not Sure	16	16%
4	Disagree	07	7%
5	Strongly Disagree	13	13%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Based on table 4.11, there are thirty-eight respondents who contributed the total of 38% who strongly agreed that insufficient communication from the local authority prevents effective community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality while there were twenty-six respondents who contributed 26% of the total sample size who agreed that ineffective communication from the local authorities affects negatively, the participation of community members. The table above also reflects that there were sixteen respondents who were not sure about the impact of lack of information provision by local authorities while there were also thirteen respondents who contributed 13% of the study who strongly disagreed that insufficient communication from local authorities prevents community members from participating in LED initiatives in the communities under Makhado Local Municipality. Lastly, there were six respondents who also contributed 6% of the study and who disagreed that the ineffective communication from local authorities prevents communities from participating in LED initiatives. Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the issue of ineffective communication by the local authorities is a significant limitation to effective community participation in the LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality, as the majority has strongly agreed to it.

Table 4.12: Limited access to resources and support hinders community

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involvement in LED initiatives in Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	40	40%
2	Agree	31	31%
3	Not Sure	04	4%
4	Disagree	16	16%
5	Strongly Disagree	09	9%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Based on the table above, the information indicated that forty respondents, who made up to 40% of the respondents in the study, has strongly agreed that limited access to resources and support hinders community participation in LED initiatives while there were also thirty-one (31%) respondents maintained the statement by agreeing that indeed limited access to resources and support hinders community participation in LED initiatives. The table also indicated that there were sixteen respondents who contributed 16% who disagreed that limited access to resources and support leads to poor participation by community members in LED initiatives in Makhado Local Municipality, while there were nine (9%) respondents who strongly disagreed with the same statement. Lastly, the table indicated that there were only four participants who contributed 4% of the study sample size, and they were not sure if limited resources and support had an impact on the participation of community members in Makhado Local Municipality. It can be concluded based on the data provided by the respondents under Makhado Local Municipality, that there are limited resources and support, which leads to a poor level of community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

Table 4.13: The lack of awareness about the benefits of participating in LED

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initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	46	46%
2	Agree	29	29%
3	Not Sure	5	5%
4	Disagree	9	9%
5	Strongly Disagree	11	11%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Table 4.13 indicates that there were forty-six respondents who contributed the majority, which was the sum of 46% of respondents who had strongly agreed that lack of awareness about the benefits of participating in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality, while there were also 29 respondents who contributed 29% who agreed with the statement as well. Based on the table above, there were eleven respondents who contributed 11% of the total study sample who strongly disagreed that lack of awareness about the benefits of participating in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality, while there were also nine (9%) respondents who also disagreed with the statement. Lastly, the table shows that there were five respondents who contributed 5% of the study, who were not sure if a lack of awareness about the benefits of participating in LED initiatives in Makhado Local Municipality is a barrier to community participation. It can be concluded based on the data projected by the table above that when there is a lack of awareness about the benefits of participating in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality, it becomes a significant barrier to community participation in LED.

Table 4.14: Lack of time and other personal commitments prevent community members from participating in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

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	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	30	30%
2	Agree	26	26%
3	Not Sure	14	14%
4	Disagree	19	19%
5	Strongly Disagree	11	11%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Table 4.14 presents that there were thirty respondents who contributed 30% of the sample size who strongly agreed that lack of time and other personal commitments prevented community members from participating in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality, while there were twenty-six respondents who contributed 26% who also agreed to the same statement. There were also nineteen (19%) respondents who disagreed that lack of time and other personal commitments prevent community members from participating in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality, while there were fourteen (14%) respondents who were not sure with the same statement. Lastly, there were eleven respondents who contributed 11% of the study population sample size, who tend to disagree that lack of time and personal commitments prevent the community members from participating in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. Based on the table above, it can be concluded that a lack of time and personal commitments prevent community members from participating effectively in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

4.2.2.3. Evaluation of the Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in Facilitating Community Participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality

This subsection presents data collected about the evaluation of the role of Non-Governmental Organisations in facilitating community participation in LED at Makhado

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Local Municipality. Data will be presented in this subsection through tables with information, and it will be followed by a short interpretation.

Table 4.17: NGOs play a crucial role in promoting community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	14	14%
2	Agree	23	23%
3	Not Sure	32	32%
4	Disagree	24	24%
5	Strongly Disagree	07	7%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Table 4.17 indicates that there are thirty-two respondents who contributed 32%, and they were most of the sample size. These respondents were not sure as to whether NGOs played a role in promoting community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality, while there were twenty-four respondents who disagreed with the statement. The table also indicated that there were 23 (23%) respondents who agreed that NGOs plays a role in promoting community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality while there were fourteen respondents who contributed 14% of the total sample and they strongly agreed that NGOs plays a role in promoting community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. Lastly, there were only seven respondents who contributed 7% of the total sample size who strongly disagreed that NGOs play a role in promoting community participation towards LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipalities. Based on the table presented above, it can be concluded that most of the community members and municipality officials under Makhado Local Municipality are not sure that NGOs play a role in

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promoting community participation towards LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

Table 4.18: NGOs effectively communicate information about LED initiatives to the communities under the Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	14	14%
2	Agree	10	10%
3	Not Sure	30	30%
4	Disagree	31	31%
5	Strongly Disagree	15	15%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Table 4.18 reflected those thirty-one respondents, who contributed 31%, disagreed that NGOs effectively communicate information about LED initiatives to the community, while there were thirty respondents, who contributed 30%, who were not sure if the NGOs are communicating effectively to the communities about LED initiatives. There were fifteen respondents who were forming 15% of the study population and they strongly disagreed that NGOs are effectively communicating the initiatives of LED to the communities while there were fourteen respondents who contributed 14% of the study population and they strongly agreed that NGOs are playing role communicating to the communities about the LED initiative in Makhado Local Municipality. Lastly, there were 10 respondents, or 10% of the study, who agreed that NGOs are effectively communicating with the communities about the LED initiatives. It can be concluded based on the information that is gathered from the respondents that the NGO structures under Makhado Local Municipality are not communicating effectively with the community members about the LED initiatives in

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their communities.

Table 4.19: The support provided by NGOs enhances community participation in LED initiatives under Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	10	10%
2	Agree	18	18%
3	Not Sure	23	23%
4	Disagree	30	30%
5	Strongly Disagree	19	19%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

The table above shows that there were thirty respondents who contributed 30% of the population size who disagreed that the support which is provided by NGOs enhances community participation in LED initiatives under Makhado Local Municipality while there were also 23 respondents who contributed 23% in the sampled respondents who were not sure about the contribution of NGOs in their participation in LED initiatives. The table also demonstrates that there were 19 (19%) respondents who strongly disagreed that NGOs have an impact on their participation in LED initiatives, while there were 18 respondents who contributed 18% and they agreed that NGOs also have an impact on their participation in LED initiatives. Lastly, the table shows that there were 10 respondents who were contributing 10% of the study population and they strongly agreed that the support provided by NGOs enhances community participation in LED initiatives under Makhado Local Municipality. With the evidence demonstrated on the table above, the conclusion may be drawn that the support which is provided by the NGOs does not enhance community participation in LED initiatives at the Makhado Local Municipality.

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Table 4.20: Non-Governmental Organisations provide valuable resources and training to community members for participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	08	8%
2	Agree	04	3%
3	Not Sure	12	12%
4	Disagree	34	34%
5	Strongly Disagree	42	42%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Based on the demonstration of the table above, there were forty-two respondents who contributed 42% of the sample size, strongly disagreed that the NGOs provide valuable resources and training to community members for participation LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality while the table also indicates that thirty-four (34%) respondents has disagreed with the statement. The table above also indicated that there were 12 respondents who contributed 12% who were not sure if the NGOs were providing support with resources and training to community members in support of community participation towards LED in Makhado Local Municipality while there were eight respondents who contributed 8% and they strongly supported that they were getting resources and training from NGOs in supporting community participation. The table lastly demonstrated that there were only four respondents who contributed 4% to the sample size, and they agreed that the NGOs provide valuable resources and training for community members so they can properly participate in LED initiatives. Based on the table above, checking the majority indication, it can be concluded that the NGOs at Makhado Local Municipality do not provide valuable resources and

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training for community members to suitably participate in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

Table 4.21: Non-Governmental Organizations helps to address barriers to community participation in LED initiatives in Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	08	8%
2	Agree	11	11%
3	Not Sure	30	30%
4	Disagree	32	32%
5	Strongly Disagree	19	19%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

The table above reflects that there were thirty-two respondents who also contributed 32% of the sample size and they disagreed that NGOs helps address the barriers to community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality communities while there were 30 (30%) respondents who indicated that they are not sure about the contribution of NGOs in battling the barriers to community participation. The table also indicated that there were nineteen respondents who strongly disagreed that NGOs assist the community in reducing the constraints to community participation in LED initiatives, while the table also indicated that there were eleven (11%) respondents who agreed with the statement. And lastly, there were eight respondents in the table above who strongly agreed that NGOs indeed help to address the barriers to community participation in LED initiatives in Makhado Local Municipality. Based on the evidence demonstrated in the table above, it can be concluded that most respondents believe that the NGOs under the Makhado Local Municipality are not helpful in addressing the barriers that the municipality faces in terms of community

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involvement in the LED initiatives.

4.2.2.4. Assessing the Inclusivity of Current LED Initiatives in Terms of Community Participation at Makhado Local Municipality

This subsection presents data collected about assessing the inclusivity of current LED initiatives in terms of community participation at Makhado Local Municipality. Data will be presented in this subsection through tables with information and it will be followed by a short interpretation.

Table 4.22: Local Economic Development in Makhado Local Municipality provide equal opportunities for all community members.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	15	15%
2	Agree	22	22%
3	Not Sure	36	36%
4	Disagree	16	16%
5	Strongly Disagree	11	11%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

With regards to the statement that says LED in Makhado Local Municipality provides equal opportunities for all community members, the majority, which was thirty-six (36%) respondents, were not sure if the municipality provides equal opportunities or not. The study indicated that there were 22 respondents who contributed 22% of the sample size and agreed that LED provides equal opportunities, while there were sixteen (16%) who disagreed with the statement. The table above indicates that fifteen respondents who contributed 15% of the study strongly agreed that LED in Makhado Local Municipality provides equal opportunities for all community members, while

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there were eleven (11%) respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement. Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the majority, 36 (36%), were not sure about how equal the LED in Makhado Local Municipality distributed the opportunities in the communities.

Table 4.23: Efforts are meant to ensure that LED initiatives are accessible to people with disability.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	12	12%
2	Agree	26	26%
3	Not Sure	44	44%
4	Disagree	11	11%
5	Strongly Disagree	07	7%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

The table above shows there were forty-four respondents who contributed 44% of the study population, who were not sure whether efforts are meant to ensure that LED initiatives are accessible to people with disability or not. There were twenty-six (26%) respondents who agreed that the municipality makes efforts to include people living with disability, while there were eleven (11%) respondents who disagreed with the statement. There were twelve respondents who contributed 12% of the study sample who strongly agreed that people who have disability are included in the LED initiatives at Makhado Local municipality, while there were seven (7%) of the respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement. It can be concluded based on most respondents (44%) that people cannot tell whether people who are living with disability are included in the initiatives of LED at Makhado Local Municipality.

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Table 4.24: Local Economic Development initiatives consider the diverse needs and perspectives of distinct cultural and ethnic groups.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	12	12%
2	Agree	18	18%
3	Not Sure	36	36%
4	Disagree	19	19%
5	Strongly Disagree	15	15%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Table 4.24 shows that thirty-six (36%) respondents were not sure if the LED initiatives considered the diverse needs and perspectives of diverse cultural and ethnic groups. The table also indicates that there were nineteen (19%) respondents who disagreed that the LED initiatives consider the diverse needs and perspectives of distinct cultural and ethnic groups, while there were 18 (18%) respondents who disagreed with the same statement. There were fifteen respondents who contributed 15% of the sample size who strongly disagreed, while there were also twelve (12%) respondents who strongly disagreed. Based on the majority, which was 36%, it can be concluded that respondents were not sure if the LED initiatives considered the diverse needs and the perspectives of distinct cultural and ethnic groups.

Table 2.25: Women have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage

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1	Strongly Agree	16	16%
2	Agree	21	21%
3	Not Sure	34	34%
4	Disagree	14	14%
5	Strongly Disagree	15	15%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

The table above shows that there were thirty-four respondents who contributed 34% who were not sure whether women have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. The table also indicates that there were twenty-one respondents who contributed 21% of the study who agreed that women have an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality, while there were fourteen (14%) respondents who disagreed with the statement. According to the table above, there were sixteen (16%) respondents who strongly agreed that women have equal opportunities to participate in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality, while there were 15 (15%) respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement. Based on the majority (34%), it can be concluded that people are not sure if the LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality equally have the opportunity for women to participate.

2.26: Youth are encouraged to and supported to participate in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1	Strongly Agree	18	18%
2	Agree	21	21%

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3	Not Sure	06	6%
4	Disagree	32	32%
5	Strongly Disagree	23	23%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Table 2.26 indicates that there were thirty-two respondents who contributed 32% who contributed to the sample size, who disagreed that youth are encouraged and supported to participate in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality, while there were twenty-one (21%) who agreed with the statement. The table also indicated that there were 23 (23%) respondents who strongly disagreed that youth are encouraged and supported to participate in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality, while there were 18 (18%) respondents who strongly agreed with the statement. The study also indicated that there were only six respondents who contributed 6% of the study who also indicated that they are not sure whether youth are encouraged and supported to participate in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that the majority (32%) of the youth under Makhado Local Municipality are not encouraged and supported to participate in the LED initiatives.

4.2.2.5. Identifying Recommendable Strategies that Can Be Used to Improve Community Participation in LED Initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality

This subsection presents data collected about identifying recommendable strategies that can be used to improve community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. Data will be presented in this subsection through tables with information and it will be followed by a short interpretation.

Table 2.27: Providing more information and education about LED initiatives would improve community participation.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage

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1	Strongly Agree	38	38%
2	Agree	34	34%
3	Not Sure	10	10%
4	Disagree	08	8%
5	Strongly Disagree	10	10%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

The table above shows that there were thirty-eight respondents who contributed 38% of the study sample who strongly agree that providing more information and education about LED initiatives would improve community participation, while there were also ten (10%) respondents who strongly agree with the statement. The table also shows that there were thirty-four (34%) respondents who agreed that if people are provided with information and education about LED initiatives, it can help to improve community participation, while there were also eight (8%) of the respondents who disagreed with the statement. It is also demonstrated in the table above that there were ten (10%) of respondents who were not sure whether providing information and education about LED initiatives can help improve community participation at Makhado Local Municipality. It can be concluded based on the majority (38%) that if Makhado Local Municipality can provide community members with information and education regarding LED initiatives, it can assist in improving community participation.

Table 2.28: Increasing the frequency of community meetings and workshops would enhance engagement in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1	Strongly Agree	28	28%

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2	Agree	36	36%
3	Not Sure	20	20%
4	Disagree	10	10%
5	Strongly Disagree	06	6%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Table 2.28 indicates that there were thirty-eight respondents who contributed 38% of the population sample who agreed that increasing the frequency of community meetings and workshops would enhance engagement in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality, while there were ten (10%) respondents who disagreed with the same statement. The table also indicates that there were twenty-eight (28%) respondents who strongly agreed with the statement, while there were six (6%) respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement. The above table also indicated that there were twenty respondents who contributed 20% of the sample size, who were not sure whether increasing the frequency of community meetings and workshops would enhance community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. Based on the above evidence, it can be concluded that, based on the majority (38%), community participation in LED initiatives can be enhanced by increasing the frequency of community meetings and workshops that are aimed at educating community members about community participation in LED initiatives.

Table 2.29: Offering financial incentives and support would motivate more community members to participate in LED initiatives and the Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	36	36%

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2	Agree	28	28%
3	Not Sure	17	17%
4	Disagree	09	9%
5	Strongly Disagree	10	10%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Table 2.29 shows that there were thirty-six respondents who contributed 36% of the study's sampled population who strongly agreed that offering financial incentives or support would motivate community members to participate in LED initiatives, while there were 10 respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement. The table also presents that there were twenty-eight (28%) respondents who agreed with the statement, while there were also nine (9%) respondents who disagreed with the statement. The table also indicated that there were seventeen (17%) respondents who were not sure whether offering financial incentives or support can motivate more community members to participate in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality or not. Based on the majority (36%) displayed on the table above, it can be concluded that if the community members at Makhado Local Municipality can be offered financial incentives and support, the table demonstrates that it can motivate more community members to participate in the LED initiatives under this municipality.

Table 2.30: Developing partnerships with local businesses and NGOs would strengthen community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	27	27%
2	Agree	35	35%

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3	Not Sure	19	19%
4	Disagree	13	13%
5	Strongly Disagree	06	6%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

Table 2.30 shows that there were thirty-five respondents who contributed 35% of the study sample size who agreed that developing partnerships with local businesses and NGOs would strengthen community participation in LED initiatives in Makhado Local Municipality, while there were thirteen (13%) respondents who disagreed with the statement. The table also represented that there were twenty-seven (27%) respondents who strongly agreed with the statement, while there were six (6%) who strongly disagreed with the statement. The table also demonstrated that there were nineteen (19%) respondents who were not sure whether developing partnerships with local businesses and NGOs would strengthen community participation in LED initiatives or not. Based on the majority (35%) of respondents, as the table refers, it can be concluded that if the municipality can foster a good partnership with the local businesses and NGOs would strengthen community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

Table 2.31: Providing leadership and skills training would empower community members to take an active role in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	29	29%
2	Agree	28	28%
3	Not Sure	16	16%

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4	Disagree	17	17%
5	Strongly Disagree	10	10%
	Total	**100**	**100%**

(Own Source, 2025)

The table above demonstrates that there were twenty-nine respondents who contributed 29% of the sample size for the study who strongly agreed that providing leadership and training would empower community members to take an active role in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality, while there were ten (10%) respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement. The table also indicates that there were twenty-eight (28%) respondents who agreed with the statement, while the table also shows that there were seventeen (17%) respondents who disagreed with the statement. The table shows that there were sixteen (16%) respondents who were not sure whether providing leadership and skills training would empower community members to take an active role in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. Based on the table above, it can be concluded that providing leadership and skills training would empower community members to take an active role in the LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

4.2.3. SUMMATION OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRES

The study included most male respondents (53%) compared to female respondents (43%). Most participants were aged between 36 and 49 years (37%), followed by those in the 18 to 35 age range (31%), while individuals aged 50 years and above made up the smallest group (26%). This trend is unsurprising, as the predominant age group is more likely to be informed about the topic under investigation. The respondents included a variety of roles, such as Ward Councillors, Traditional Leaders, IDP Officials, LED Officials, Community Development Coordinators, Civic Engagement Coordinators, Youth Engagement Coordinators, and selected community members. Additionally, most participants held either a degree or a diploma. The researcher

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aimed to involve educated individuals, believing they would provide valuable insights into the complex topic being explored.

Most respondents disagreed that there is a clear understanding of what LED at Makhado Local Municipality means. Furthermore, the study revealed that most of the respondents strongly disagreed that community members are familiar with the goals and objectives of LED initiatives in Makhado Local Municipality. It was discovered that most of the participants were not sure that the LED initiatives benefited the communities under the Makhado Local Municipality. Most respondents were not sure that community members were aware of the specific LED programs currently being implemented in Makhado Local Municipality. The study found that most of the respondents were not sure that there is a lack of resources and support for LED initiatives in Makhado Local Municipality communities.

The findings revealed that most of the respondents strongly agreed that the lack of information about LED programs is a significant barrier to community participation at Makhado Local Municipality. Additionally, most of the respondents strongly agreed that insufficient communication from the local authorities prevents effective community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. The study found that most respondents strongly agreed that limited access to resources and support hinders community involvement in LED initiatives in Makhado Local Municipality. Furthermore, most of the respondents strongly agreed about the lack of awareness about the benefits of participating in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. It was discovered that most of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of time and other personal commitments prevent community members from participating in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

The study shows that most of the respondents were not sure about the crucial role that NGOs play in promoting community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. Additionally, most of the respondents disagreed that NGOs effectively communicate information about LED initiatives to the communities under the Makhado Local Municipality. The findings revealed that many of the respondents disagreed that the support provided by NGOs enhances community participation

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initiatives under Makhado Local Municipality. Most of the respondents disagreed that NGOs provide valuable resources and training to community members for participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. Furthermore, most of the respondents disagreed that NGOs help to address barriers to community participation in LED initiatives in Makhado Local Municipality.

The findings revealed that most of the respondents were not sure that the LED in Makhado Local Municipality provides equal opportunities for all community members. Additionally, most of the respondents were not sure that efforts are meant to ensure that LED initiatives are accessible to people with disability. The study also demonstrated that most respondents were not sure about LED initiatives, considering the diverse needs and perspectives of diverse cultural and ethnic groups. Furthermore, it was discovered that most of the respondents were not sure that women have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. Most of the respondents disagreed that youth are encouraged and supported to participate in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

The study revealed that most of the respondents strongly supported the notion that providing more information and education about LED initiatives would improve community participation in the implementation of LED within the Makhado Local Municipality. the study found that most respondents agreed with the idea that increasing the frequency of community meetings and workshops would enhance engagement in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. The study discovered that most of the respondents strongly agreed with the idea that offering financial incentives and support would motivate more community members to participate in LED initiatives and Makhado Local Municipality. The findings revealed that most of the respondents agreed that developing partnerships with local businesses and NGOs would strengthen community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. Lastly, it was discovered that most of the respondents strongly agreed with the notion that providing leadership and skills training would empower community members to take an active role in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

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4.3. QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS OF DATA

This section presents data that was collected through interviews, which were conducted by the researcher with the participants. The researcher used open-ended interviews to collect data, and the data will be presented narratively. Every participant was interviewed depending on the time available for them. Data collection was analysed through interview questions from ten (10) participants. Data collection was analysed through interviews, and participants were recognised as participants A, B to J. The information is presented in a narrative form.

4.3.1. Question 1: What is the level of understanding of LED among community members in Makhado Local Municipality?

Participant A

Based on the level of understanding of LED among community members in Makhado Local Municipality, Participant A stated that LED is about growing the local economy by supporting small businesses and creating jobs for people in the community. The participants have seen some and been involved in initiatives in our area aimed at helping entrepreneurs.

Participant B

Regarding the question above, the participant indicated that he had had no idea what LED is and had never heard of it before. Participant B added that LED-related matters are only discussed with business owners and municipality internal workers and not ordinary people like me.

Participant C

with regards to the question on the level of understanding of LED, participant C indicated that she is not sure about LED objectives and what it really means. The participant also indicated that LED is supposed to be something good for the communities.

Participant D

Responding to the above question, participant D stated that they understand LED is a

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policy about local authorities collaborating with the community to create jobs and attract investments. The participant also indicated that it is a good strategy and tool to reduce unemployment.

Participant E

With regard to the question above, Participant E stated that LED has something to do with the government helping businesses. Still, the participant also reflected that it is not certain how it affects communities directly. The participants also added that if there are initiatives, communities must be informed about such so they can have a better understanding of LED and how it works.

Participant F

Regarding the question above, participant F indicated that people talk about LED, and the participant hears people discuss LED in day-to-day life, but the participant does not know much about it or how it is supposed to help the communities in detail.

Participant G

Based on the question about the level of understanding of LED, participant G stated that LED has to do with developing the economy in our Local communities. The participant also added that LED has been explained well to the communities to enhance the understanding of the community members.

Participant H

With regard to the question above, participant H indicated that LED is about improving local businesses in the communities. The participant also indicated not knowing how Makhado Local Municipality is implementing it in its respective communities.

Participant I

Based on the question above, participant I indicated that LED is a way for the municipality to promote economic opportunities for residents, like improving infrastructure and supporting local businesses.

Participant J

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Regarding the first question, participant J indicated that LED is about bringing investment to the area, but the participant does not know how the community members participate in LED initiatives.

The understanding of Local Economic Development (LED) among community members in Makhado Local Municipality varies significantly, as reflected in participants' responses. Some individuals demonstrate a clear grasp of LED, linking it to local economic growth, support for small businesses, job creation, and attracting investments. For instance, Participant A views LED as a tool to assist small businesses and create jobs, while Participant D highlights its potential to reduce unemployment through collaboration between the community and local authorities. Participant I also underscore the role of LED in promoting economic opportunities and supporting local businesses. Additionally, Participant G believes the concept has been well communicated to the community, enhancing overall understanding.

Conversely, a notable number of participants reported limited or no awareness of LED. Participant B, for example, confessed to having no knowledge of LED and speculated that it might only be discussed among business owners and municipality employees. Similarly, Participant C expressed uncertainty about the objectives of LED, albeit recognizing its potential benefits for the community. Other participants, such as Participant F and Participant H, were aware of LED but lacked detailed information about its implementation or its direct impact on their communities. This indicates a significant gap in awareness and understanding, particularly among ordinary community members.

The responses highlight the necessity for improved communication and awareness initiatives to enhance the understanding of LED among community members. While some individuals have a general understanding of LED's benefits, there is still a lack of clarity regarding the implementation of LED initiatives and their direct effects on the community. Therefore, it is essential for the Makhado Local Municipality to prioritise clear communication strategies that inform all community members about LED initiatives, their objectives, and how they can actively participate. This approach could help bridge the knowledge gap and ensure that LED initiatives are more inclusive and

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impactful for all community members.

4.3.2. Question 2: What are the challenges and barriers to effective community participation in LED initiatives with Makhado Local Municipality?

Participant A

Regarding the question about the challenges and barriers to effective community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality, participant A stated that one major challenge is the lack of proper communication from the municipality. Participant A further indicated that people are not informed about meetings or opportunities to get involved in LED initiatives. Participant A further stated that this creates a gap between the municipality and the community, which becomes a barrier to community participation in LED initiatives.

Participant B

Regarding the question above, participant B stated that poor infrastructure and transportation make it difficult for people in rural areas to attend meetings or workshops about LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. Participant B further stated that this excludes a large part of the community from participating in LED initiatives, which is a challenge at Makhado Local Municipality. And lastly, participant B indicated that improving access could boost involvement.

Participant C

In responding to the question above, participant C stated that people in the community are often left out of the planning process. The participant proceeded to state that they only hear about projects after they have started, which makes it hard to give input. Participant C suggested that early involvement could help improve outcomes.

Participant D

Regarding the above, participant D stated that many people do not participate because they do not understand what LED is. Participant D further stated that the information shared is often too technical, which makes it hard for ordinary people to follow. Participant D also recommended that simplified explanations could make a significant

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difference.

Participant E

In responding to the question above, participant E stated that sometimes meetings are held at inconvenient times, making it hard for working people to attend. Participant E further asserted that it feels like the planning does not consider everyone's schedule. Participant E suggested that adjusting the timing could increase attendance.

Participant F

Participant F responded to the question above by stating that there is a lack of follow-up on ideas that the community shares. The participant proceeded to state that it feels like our input is collected, but we never hear what happens next or the feedback on the input collected. Participant F concluded by saying that this lack of feedback discourages community participation, which is a challenge for implementing LED, which has community involvement.

Participant G

In responding to the question, participant G was not aware of the challenges of LED in Makhado Local Municipality. Participant G stated that community members are not aware of the benefits that come with participating in LED under the Makhado Local Municipality. The other challenge, according to participant G, is that community members want to participate in LED is just a waste of time. Participant G suggested that highlighting successful projects could motivate more involvement of community members at Makhado Local Municipality.

Participant H

Participant H responded to the question by stating that there is a lack of trust between the community and the municipality at Makhado Local Municipality. Participant H continued to state that people feel like their opinions do not matter, and that discourages them from participating in the affairs of LED within the Municipality.

Participant I

Regarding the question above, participant I stated that the challenge is that the municipality does not involve enough community leaders who are interested in

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promoting LED and community members. Participant I further stated that they should use local leaders to get more people interested in promoting LED and community involvement.

Participant J

Participant J responded to the question by saying that funding is a big issue in LED at Makhado Local Municipality. Participant J stated that even when people want to participate, there are not enough resources to support their ideas or projects. The participant also recommended that more financial support could encourage better engagement and community participation.

The responses from participants highlight various challenges and barriers to effective community participation in Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. One prominent issue raised is the poor communication from the municipality. Participants A, C, and D emphasised that many community members are not informed about meetings, opportunities, or even the planning process for LED initiatives. This lack of information creates a gap between the municipality and the community, making it difficult for residents to contribute meaningfully. Additionally, Participant D pointed out that when information is shared, it is often too technical for ordinary people to understand, suggesting that simplified communication could enhance participation.

Another major challenge is accessibility. Participant B noted that inadequate infrastructure and transportation hinder people in rural areas from attending LED-related meetings and workshops, effectively excluding a substantial portion of the community. Similarly, Participant E highlighted that meetings are often scheduled at inconvenient times, making it difficult for working individuals to attend. These logistical barriers prevent broader community engagement in LED initiatives. Participant F added that a lack of follow-up on community input discourages participation, as residents feel that their voices are neither heard nor acted upon.

Trust and motivation also play crucial roles in limiting participation. According to Participant H, there is a significant lack of trust between the community and the

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municipality, with many residents believing that their opinions do not matter. This perception discourages active involvement in LED initiatives. Participant G noted that community members are often unaware of the benefits of participating in LED and may see it as a waste of time. To address this, they suggested displaying successful projects to motivate more people to engage. Additionally, Participant I pointed out that the municipality does not involve enough community leaders who could serve as bridges between the government and the public, which could encourage greater participation.

Finally, financial constraints were cited as a significant barrier. Participant J indicated that a lack of funding limits participation in LED projects, as residents do not have the necessary resources to bring their ideas to life. Increased financial support and investment in community-led projects could enhance participation and engagement in LED initiatives. In conclusion, the findings suggest that improving communication, making LED initiatives more accessible, fostering trust, engaging community leaders, and increasing financial support are essential steps to overcoming barriers to community participation. If Makhado Local Municipality addresses these issues, it could promote broader involvement and ensure that LED initiatives effectively benefit the entire community.

4.3.3. Question 3: What is the role of Non-Governmental Organisations in facilitating community participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality?

Participant A

In responding to the question above, participant A stated that NGOs play a key role in educating the community about LED and how they can get involved. Participant A further stated that they often provide training programs and resources to empower residents around some of the communities under the Makhado Local Municipality.

Participant B

Participant B responded to the above question by stating that they function as a bridge between the community and the municipality by ensuring that the voices of the people are heard. Participant B further said that NGOs help to advocate community needs in

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LED initiatives so that these initiatives can advocate well for the diverse needs of communities.

Participant C

Regarding the question about the role of NGOs in LED, participant C responded by stating that one of the main roles of NGOs is to provide funding and technical support for small projects, which, under the Makhado Local Municipality, is failing to provide. According to Participant C, NGOs should enable community members to participate in LED activities more effectively by giving community members knowledge and approaches on how they participate effectively.

Participant D

In responding to the question, participant D stated that NGOs engage in helping with LED. Still, the participant was not aware of any instance where the NGO had helped with the LED initiative before. The participant assumed that the NGOs in place are the ones that assist with organising events or meetings in communities that talk about LED.

Participant E

Regarding the role of NGOs in LED questions, Participant E stated that NGOs work with the community. Still, the community members do not have any known occasions where the NGOs have a role in LED initiatives and community participation in LED.

Participant F

With Regards to the question about NGOs providing a role in LED initiatives, Participant F indicated not to know of any NGO that is available at Makhado Local Municipality and the community which seeks to promote community participation in LED initiatives. The participant indicated that if there are NGOs, it should mean they are not functional and they are not assisting the communities.

Participant G

In responding to the question above, participant G did not know exactly what role NGOs play in LED initiatives since there are NGOs assigned to those that are known. Participant G also indicated to have never interacted with any NGO in our community

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or municipality which was about LED and the initiatives.

Participant H

In responding to the question above, participant H indicated that NGOs might help with planning and organising LED projects. Still, as it stands, Makhado Local Municipality does not have NGOs in place to organise such meetings and some logistics to promote community participation and LED. Still, the participant was not certain how involved they were with the community directly with regards to LED and community participation.

Participant I

Regarding the question above, Participant I stated that NGOs offer some support, like funding or resources, organising meetings, and educating people with regards to community LED initiatives. Furthermore, the participant stated that the impact of the NGOs in place that are aimed at enhancing community participation in LED initiatives is unknown since there are few in the communities under the Makhado Local Municipality.

Participant J

With regards to the question above, Participant J indicated not to be aware of any NGOs that are enhancing community participation regarding LED, participant J further indicated that the municipality has not engaged in a journey of teaching community members about LED and how they should participate in LED in Makhado Local Municipality.

The responses from participants reveal a mixed understanding of the role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in facilitating community participation in Local Economic Development (LED) at Makhado Local Municipality. While some participants recognize the contributions of NGOs to LED, others are either unaware of their involvement or believe that NGOs are not actively participating in LED initiatives within the municipality.

Participants who were aware of the contributions of NGOs identified several key roles they play in LED. Participant A emphasised that NGOs are crucial for educating the

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community about LED and providing training programs and resources to empower residents. Similarly, Participant I noted that NGOs assist by offering funding, organising meetings, and educating people on community-led LED initiatives. Participant B further highlighted that NGOs serve as intermediaries between the community and the municipality, ensuring that local voices are heard and that LED initiatives align with community needs. Another significant role mentioned was the provision of financial and technical support. Participant C pointed out that NGOs provide funding and technical assistance for small projects, addressing resource gaps where the municipality is unable to help. This support enables community members to participate more effectively in LED activities. Additionally, Participant H suggested that NGOs might assist in planning and organising LED projects, though their level of direct involvement remains uncertain.

However, a notable number of participants expressed scepticism or a lack of awareness regarding the involvement of NGOs in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. Participants D, E, F, G, and J stated that they had never encountered an NGO actively promoting LED in their communities. Some, like Participant F, speculated that if NGOs existed in this area, they would be either non-functional or not effectively assisting the communities. Similarly, Participant J noted that the municipality itself has not actively engaged in educating community members about LED and their role in it, suggesting a gap in both municipal and NGO efforts.

In conclusion, while NGOs theoretically play a crucial role in facilitating community participation in LED through education, advocacy, funding, and project support, their impact in Makhado Local Municipality appears to be limited or unrecognized by many community members. There is a need for greater visibility, engagement, and collaboration among NGOs, the municipality, and local communities to enhance participation and ensure that LED initiatives are more inclusive and effective.

4.3.4. Question 4: To what extent does community participation contribute to the success or failure of LED projects in Makhado Local Municipality?

Participant A

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In response to the question, participant A stated that community participation is crucial for the success of LED. When people are actively involved, they take ownership of the projects, which increases their chances of success.

Participant B

In relation to the above question, Participant B stated that community participation plays a key role because the community understands its needs better than anyone else. Their input helps in designing projects that are relevant and impactful.

Participant C

Participant C responded to the question by indicating that without community participation, LED initiatives are likely to fail. Involving the community ensures that resources are used efficiently and that projects align with local priorities.

Participant D

Participant D *stated,* “I think participation is important, but I do not know how much it influences the success or failure of projects. Maybe it depends on how the municipality manages it.*"*

Participant E:

Participant E responded to the question by indicating, "I’ve heard that community participation helps, but I don’t know to what extent. It seems like it’s one factor among many others."

Participant F:

Participant F acknowledged that community participation could have influence but remained uncertain about the extent of its impact. "I think it makes a difference, but I’m not sure how big of a role it plays. It might depend on the specific project," the participant noted.

Participant G:

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Participant G expressed uncertainty about the impact of community participation, suggesting that factors such as resources and leadership may play a more significant role in local economic development. "I don't really know if participation has a big impact. It is more about the resources and leadership than just community involvement," the participant stated.

Participant H:

Participant H recognized that community participation could contribute to success but emphasized the importance of other factors, such as funding and government support. "Participation might contribute to success, but I think there are other factors like funding and government support that matter more," the participant explained.

Participant I:

Participant I acknowledged that community participation has some impact but remained uncertain about its overall significance. "I believe it contributes to some extent, but I'm not sure how much. It works best when the community and the municipality collaborate effectively," the participant stated.

Participant J:

Participant J expressed uncertainty but highlighted the importance of community participation in aligning projects with the needs of the people. The participant indicated that community participation is important for ensuring that projects meet the actual needs of the people.

Community participation is widely recognized as a crucial factor in determining the success or failure of Local Economic Development (LED) projects in the Makhado Local Municipality. Participant A emphasised that when community members are actively involved, they take ownership of the projects, which increases both their sustainability and effectiveness. Similarly, Participant B noted that the community understands its own needs better than anyone else, making their input essential in designing projects that are relevant and impactful. Participant C reinforced this view

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by arguing that without community participation, LED initiatives are likely to fail, as involving the community ensures that resources are used efficiently and that projects align with local priorities.

However, some participants expressed uncertainty about the extent to which community participation directly influences the outcomes of LED initiatives. Participant D acknowledged that participation is important but was unsure how much it affects success or failure, suggesting that this might depend on how the municipality manages the process. Likewise, Participant E mentioned having heard that community participation is beneficial but was uncertain about the extent, viewing it as just one factor among many. Participant F also believed that participation makes a difference but questioned the magnitude of its impact, suggesting that its effectiveness might vary depending on the specific project.

Other participants expressed even more scepticism, suggesting that funding and resources may be more critical than participation itself. Participant G questioned whether participation has a significant impact, arguing that leadership and resources might be more important than community involvement alone. Participant H shared a similar perspective, recognizing that while participation may contribute to success, factors such as funding and government support are likely to have a greater influence. Participant I believed that participation is beneficial but noted that it is most effective when there is collaboration between the community and the municipality.

Despite the differing opinions on the extent of its influence, most participants agreed that community participation remains an essential element in LED initiatives. Participant J concluded that while they were unsure of the exact impact, community participation is vital for ensuring that projects meet the actual needs of the people. However, for participation to be truly effective, it must be complemented by strong municipal support, adequate funding, and effective project management.

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4.3.5. What are the recommendable strategies that can be implemented to improve community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality?

Participant A

In responding to the question about the recommendable strategies that can be implemented to improve community participation in LED initiatives, participant A indicated that Makhado Local Municipality should hold regular workshops and community meetings to educate people about LED and how they can participate. The participant further stated that this will create more awareness and interest.

Participant B

With regards to the question above, participant B stated that improved communication channels, like using social media and local radio, can help ensure everyone is informed about LED initiatives and opportunities to participate. Participant B further indicated that the other way of improving community participation in LED initiatives is also to educate the community leaders and to establish forums that will educate people in relation to that.

Participant C

In relation to the question above, participant C indicated that collaborating with local leaders and NGOs to reach more people is essential and can play a significant role in improving community participation in LED initiatives in Makhado Local Municipality. Participant C further indicated that these groups could function as a link between the municipality and the community, making participation easier.

Participant D

With regards to the questions on recommendable strategies, Participant D indicated that organising more events that will be about the advancement and the improvement of community participation in LED could help. Participant D further indicated that people would participate more if there were incentives or rewards for attending meetings so maybe this can also be implemented to encourage people to participate in these initiatives.

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Participant E

participant E responded to the question by stating that providing transport to meetings in rural areas could improve participation. Participant E also indicated that the municipality must ensure that the meetings that are discussing the issues that relate to LED initiatives, different communities are included, or they are represented during such assemblies.

Participant F

Participant F responded to the question by indicating that the municipality could use posters and pamphlets to inform people about LED projects. This strategy can help instruct people and notify them about the events that are ongoing in the LED initiatives.

Participant G

Participant G indicated that the municipality should assist the communities in forming interest groups and NGOs that are focused on teaching people about LED and they should create more programs that involve young people in LED initiatives. Participant G added that this might encourage more participation in LED initiatives.

Participant H

With regards to the above questions, participant H indicated that setting up community committees to represent different areas could help improve participation across all the communities under Makhado Local Municipality. Participant H further added that these committees will serve as organizations that will also give feedback to the municipality and to the communities about all the interactions that will take place in LED initiatives.

Participant I

participant I indicated that the municipality should increase the funding for small community-led projects could motivate more people to participate. Participant I further indicated that when community members see tangible results from their small projects, they will want to get more involved through such motivation.

Participant J

Participant J indicated that having more transparent processes could encourage people to trust the municipality and participate more. Participant J further indicated

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that the municipality must ensure that the views of the communities are taken into consideration when working with LED initiatives, which will encourage people to participate more with motivation.

The feedback from participants regarding strategies to improve community participation in Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality reveals several key themes. Many participants emphasised the importance of awareness creation and education as essential strategies. For instance, Participant A suggested organising regular workshops, while Participant B highlighted the need to educate community leaders. Participant C and Participant G supported this notion by recommending collaboration with local NGOs and forming interest groups focused on LED education. These responses indicate a shared belief that increasing community knowledge will enhance participation.

Another common theme is the need for improved communication channels. Participant B proposed utilising social media and local radio, while Participant F recommended the use of posters and pamphlets to reach a broader audience. These suggestions align with the recognition that making information widely accessible will encourage greater engagement. Similarly, collaboration with local stakeholders was emphasized by Participant C, who advocated working with local leaders and NGOs, and Participant H, who suggested forming community committees. These ideas underscore the importance of structured engagement mechanisms to facilitate interaction between the municipality and residents.

Some participants also highlighted the role of incentives and support mechanisms. Participant D proposed offering rewards for attending meetings, while Participant I recommended increased funding for small, community-led projects to motivate participation. These views reflect the understanding that financial and material support can encourage active involvement. Additionally, transparency and inclusivity were mentioned by Participant J, who stressed the need for transparent processes to build trust, and Participant E, who suggested providing transportation for rural residents to ensure inclusive participation.

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In conclusion, while participants proposed various methods, their responses collectively indicate that improving community participation in LED initiatives requires a multi-faceted approach. Education and awareness, better communication, stakeholder collaboration, incentives, and transparency all contribute to fostering greater engagement. By implementing these strategies, Makhado Local Municipality can enhance the effectiveness of LED initiatives and encourage more meaningful community involvement.

The study highlights a diverse understanding of Local Economic Development (LED) among community members in the Makhado Local Municipality. While some participants view LED as a tool to support small businesses, create jobs, and attract investment, others demonstrate limited or no awareness, often seeing it as relevant only to business owners and municipal officials. Even among those who are familiar with LED, there is uncertainty regarding its implementation and direct impact on their communities. This indicates a significant gap in awareness, underscoring the need for better communication strategies to foster broader community engagement and inclusivity in LED initiatives for effective local economic growth.

Interview data further reveals several challenges that hinder community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. Poor communication from the municipality, including inaccessible or overly technical information, prevents meaningful engagement. Accessibility issues, such as inadequate infrastructure, inconvenient meeting times, and a lack of follow-up on community input, further discourage participation. Additionally, mistrust between residents and the municipality, low awareness of the benefits of LED, and limited involvement from community leaders weaken motivation. Financial constraints also pose barriers, as many residents lack the resources needed to participate effectively. Addressing these issues through improved communication, better accessibility, trust-building, leadership engagement, and financial support could enhance community involvement in LED initiatives, leading to broader economic benefits.

The interview data also revealed a mixed understanding of the role of NGOs in facilitating community participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality. While some

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participants recognize NGOs' contributions in education, funding, and advocacy, others are either unaware of their involvement or believe NGOs are inactive in LED initiatives. Recognized roles for NGOs include providing training, along with financial and technical support, and serving as intermediaries between the community and the municipality. However, many participants reported never encountering NGOs in LED efforts, indicating limited visibility and engagement. Strengthening collaboration among NGOs, the municipality, and local communities could enhance participation and make LED initiatives more inclusive and effective.

The study underscores the crucial role of community participation in the success of LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality, though opinions on its exact impact vary. Many participants emphasized that active involvement fosters project ownership, sustainability, and alignment with community needs, ensuring efficient resource use. However, some expressed uncertainty about its direct influence, suggesting that its effectiveness depends on municipal management. Others argued that funding and leadership may be more critical than participating alone. Despite differing views, there was a consensus that community participation is essential but must be supported by strong municipal backing, adequate funding, and effective project management to maximise its impact.

Finally, several key strategies for enhancing community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality were identified. Participants stressed the importance of education and awareness campaigns, improved communication channels through social media and local radio, and stronger collaboration with local leaders and NGOs. Additionally, incentives such as funding for community-led projects and rewards for participation were suggested to encourage engagement. Transparency and inclusivity, including clear processes and logistical support for rural residents, were also highlighted as crucial factors. A multi-faceted approach that combines these strategies can foster greater participation and improve the effectiveness of LED initiatives.

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4.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the data collected through a combination of questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire consists of two sub-sections. The first sub-section provides the biographical details of the respondents, while the second sub-section includes data gathered from the questionnaire items distributed to and collected from the respondents by the researcher. To effectively present the collected data, the researcher used graphical tables, along with frequencies and percentages. Each table is accompanied by a brief discussion of the findings. Additionally, this chapter includes data gathered from interviews conducted by the researcher with participants, and this data is presented in narrative form. A total of ten participants were interviewed using open-ended questions. The following chapter will discuss the findings and offer recommendations on the importance of community participation in local economic development within the Makhado Local Municipality.

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CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented, analysed, and interpreted data collected through questionnaires and interviews. Its main purpose was to analyse and interpret these data, focusing on the responses of the sampled population. In this chapter, the researcher offers a synthesised discussion of the findings and provides recommendations regarding the importance of community participation in the implementation of local economic development in Makhado Local Municipality, ending with conclusions of the study.

5.2. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The study focused on the importance of community participation in the implementation of local economic development in Makhado Local Municipality. Makhado Local Municipality is in the Limpopo province. The study was conducted to answer the research questions that arose from assessing the level of understanding among community members about LED at Makhado Local Municipality, identifying the key barriers to effective community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality, To evaluate the role of Non-Governmental Organizations in facilitating community participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality, assessing the inclusivity of current LED programs in terms of community participation at Makhado Local Municipality, and identifying recommendable strategies that can be used to improve community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality. The researcher reviewed literature which is relevant to the importance of community participation in the implementation of local economic development in Makhado Local Municipality. The study used mixed methods to gather data, employing both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The researcher employed structured questionnaires and an interview schedule to collect data from the participants.

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

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- To assess the level of understanding among community members about Local Economic Development (LED) at Makhado Local Municipality
- To identify the key barriers to effective community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality
- To evaluate the role of Non-Governmental Organizations in facilitating community participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality
- To assess the inclusivity of current LED programs in terms of community participation at Makhado Local Municipality
- To identify recommendable strategies that can be used to improve community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality

The study also had some critical research questions, which were as follows:

- What is the level of understanding of LED among community members in Makhado Local Municipality?
- What are the challenges and barriers to effective community participation in the LED programs within Makhado Local Municipality?
- What is the role of non-governmental organisations in facilitating community participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality?
- To what extent does community participation contribute to the success or failure of LED projects in Makhado Local Municipality?
- What are the recommendable strategies that can be implemented to improve community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality?

5.3. THE MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The main findings stemmed from the specific objectives of the study, which guided the achievement of the study's aim, and they sought to comprehend; to assess the level of understanding among community members about Local Economic Development (LED) at Makhado Local Municipality, to identify the key barriers to effective

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community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality, to evaluate the role of Non-Governmental Organizations in facilitating community participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality, to assess the inclusivity of current LED programs in terms of community participation at Makhado Local Municipality, and to identify recommendable strategies that can be used to improve community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality.

5.3.1. Major Findings on Assessing the Level of Understanding Among Community Members About Local Economic Development (LED) at Makhado Local Municipality

The data gathered from questionnaires revealed a significant lack of understanding of Local Economic Development (LED) among community members in the Makhado Local Municipality. Most of the respondents indicated that they have a clear understanding of what LED means at Makhado Local Municipality. This suggests that the community members under Makhado Local Municipality are not well educated regarding the implementation of LED in their communities. The research discovered that most respondents are unfamiliar with the goals and objectives of LED initiatives. This highlights a considerable knowledge gap within the community regarding understanding LED and its objectives. The study also found that many of the respondents were not sure about the benefits that are offered by the LED in their communities under Makhado Local Municipality. This indicates a lack of clarity or visible benefits from LED initiatives in the Makhado Local Municipality and the communities under the municipality. The study also discovered that most respondents are unaware of any such programs being implemented, which gave a clear indication that most of the community members are truly less aware of what LED is and how they should participate. This indicates a significant shortfall in community communication and outreach that are educating people about LED initiatives. Lastly, concerning the availability of resources and support for LED initiatives, many respondents expressed uncertainty. This clearly indicated that the municipality had no active reaction to allocating LED resources to the communities.

From the above interviews conducted on an understanding of Local Economic

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Development (LED) among community members in the Makhado Local Municipality. Some participants demonstrated a clear awareness of LED, recognising it as a strategy for economic growth, job creation, and support for local businesses. They understand that LED involves municipalities collaborating with communities to attract investments and enhance economic opportunities through infrastructure development and business support. This suggests that certain community members have been exposed to discussions and initiatives related to LED, allowing them to grasp its core objectives. However, a huge portion of the community remains either unaware or uncertain about LED and its implementation. Some participants reported they had never heard of LED before, while others acknowledged its existence but lacked a clear understanding of its purpose and impact. There is also a perception that discussions about LED are primarily limited to business owners and municipal officials, leaving many ordinary residents uninformed. This indicates a gap in public awareness and engagement, which may hinder community participation in LED initiatives.

Additionally, the study findings revealed that there is a need for better communication and public education regarding LED. Several individuals expressed a desire for more information about how LED initiatives affect their communities and how they can get involved. Many believe that if LED programs exist, municipalities should actively inform and engage residents to encourage broader participation. Some respondents associate LED with attracting investments but are unclear about how community members are included in the process. Others link LED to business support but lack knowledge of specific municipal efforts to implement it. Overall, the data suggests that while some community members have a basic understanding of LED, a substantial knowledge gap remains. The findings emphasise the importance of improving public awareness through targeted communication strategies, community engagement forums, and inclusive decision-making processes. Strengthening these efforts could enhance the effectiveness of LED initiatives and promote greater participation among residents in the Makhado Local Municipality.

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5.3.2. Major Findings on Identifying the Key Barriers to Effective Community Participation in LED Programs at Makhado Local Municipality

The data collected through questionnaires revealed that a lack of information about Local Economic Development (LED) programs is a significant barrier to community participation in the Makhado Local Municipality. Many respondents indicated that insufficient information hinders their involvement in LED initiatives. This highlights poor information dissemination as a key challenge and a lack of proper channels by the LED officials to reach out to the community members. Another major issue identified was ineffective communication from local authorities. The study found that most respondents reported that poor communication from the local authorities prevents active engagement in LED programs. This indicates that the Makhado Local Municipality has not yet had a way of passing the information well to the community members about the initiatives of LED in the communities. This suggests a need for better communication strategies and structured engagement platforms. The data also showed majority of the respondents indicated that limited access to resources and support significantly restricts community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality communities. Most of the respondents have indicated that there is a lack of awareness about the benefits of participating in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. This suggests that the community members at Makhado Local Municipality are unaware of how they can highly benefit themselves and their communities through their participation in LED. The study found that many respondents indicated that a lack of time and other personal commitments prevent community members from participating in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. This shows that the community members at Makhado Local Municipality fail to participate in LED initiatives because some are held up by other commitments, or they prioritise other commitments over participation.

The findings from the interviews highlight several challenges and barriers to effective community participation in Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives within the Makhado Local Municipality. A significant issue identified is the lack of proper communication between the municipality and the community. Many residents feel

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uninformed about LED meetings, opportunities, or projects, creating a disconnect that limits their involvement. Poor dissemination of information leads to low participation rates, as community members are either unaware of LED initiatives or receive information too late to contribute meaningfully. Infrastructure and accessibility challenges also pose significant barriers, particularly for residents in rural areas. Poor roads and limited transportation options make it difficult for individuals to attend LED-related workshops or meetings. Consequently, a substantial portion of the community is excluded from participation, reinforcing disparities in engagement and economic opportunities. Inconvenient meeting schedules further discourage participation, as working individuals struggle to attend sessions that do not accommodate their availability. Adjusting meeting times to be more inclusive could enhance community engagement.

From the interview conducted, it was discovered that many residents feel that they are only informed about projects after they have already begun, leaving them with no opportunity to provide input or influence outcomes. This lack of early involvement fosters a sense of alienation and reduces motivation to participate in future LED initiatives. Furthermore, when participation does occur, there is often no follow-up or feedback from the municipality regarding community suggestions. The perception that community input is ignored discourages further engagement and weakens trust between residents and local authorities. Limited understanding of LED among community members is also a key barrier. Some participants find the information provided by the municipality too technical and difficult to grasp, making it challenging for them to actively engage in LED initiatives. Simplifying explanations and raising awareness about the benefits of LED could encourage greater participation. Additionally, there is a general lack of trust in the municipality, with some residents feeling that their voices do not matter. This distrust further discourages participation, as people perceive LED as an initiative that does not genuinely consider their needs and concerns.

From the above statement, it was discovered that financial constraints and lack of resources also hinder community participation in LED initiatives. Even when

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individuals are interested in contributing to local economic development, there are insufficient funds to support their ideas or projects. Without adequate financial backing, many potential contributors feel discouraged from engaging in LED-related activities. Increased financial support and better resource allocation could provide incentives for greater community involvement. Overall, the findings from interviews indicate that several structural and communication-related challenges prevent effective community participation in LED within the Makhado Local Municipality. Addressing these barriers through improved communication, infrastructure development, inclusive planning, trust-building efforts, and financial support could significantly enhance the level of community engagement in LED initiatives.

5.3.3. Major Findings on Evaluating the Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in Facilitating Community Participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality

The data revealed significant uncertainty and mixed perceptions regarding the role of NGOs in promoting community participation in Local Economic Development (LED) within Makhado Local Municipality. This suggested that many of the respondents were not sure about the impact of the role that is played by NGOs in promoting participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. The Majority disagreed that NGOs effectively communicate information about LED initiatives to the community, which shows that there is a lower level of communication between NGOs and community members. The findings indicated that most of the respondents disagreed that the support provided by NGOs enhances community participation in LED initiatives under Makhado Local Municipality, which served as a clear indication that there is less support for LED initiatives in the communities under Makhado Local Municipality. This shows that the role of NGOs in the Makhado Local Municipality is not well played in terms of addressing the barriers to community participation for LED initiatives. The study shows that many respondents strongly disagreed that the NGOs provide valuable resources and training to community members for participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. This shows that NGOs under Makhado Local Municipality, which are aimed at enhancing community participation, are poorly

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performing when it comes to their primary role. Overall, the results from the questionnaires indicate notable dissatisfaction with the role of NGOs in LED and highlight limited inclusivity in current initiatives. Most respondents were either uncertain or unconvinced about the effectiveness of NGOs and the accessibility of LED initiatives to all community members.

The data collected through interviews reveal a varied understanding of the role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in facilitating community participation in Local Economic Development (LED) within Makhado Local Municipality. While some participants acknowledge the contributions of NGOs, others are unaware of their involvement or question their effectiveness. A significant role identified for NGOs is educating the community about LED and providing training programs and resources to empower residents. This educational function equips individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to engage effectively in LED initiatives. Additionally, NGOs serve as a bridge between the community and the municipality by advocating for community needs and ensuring that diverse voices are heard in the planning and implementation of LED projects.

From the above statement, it can be concluded that NGOs are perceived as potential funders for small-scale projects that the municipality may not be able to support. By offering resources and guidance, NGOs can enhance community participation and promote sustainable LED initiatives. However, some participants expressed uncertainty regarding whether NGOs in Makhado Local Municipality are actively fulfilling this role. Despite these positive attributes, several participants indicated a lack of knowledge about NGOs facilitating LED participation in their communities. Some believe that if NGOs exist, they are either inactive or not visible enough to the public. Others assume that NGOs might assist in organising events, planning LED projects, or providing logistical support, but are unsure of their actual impact. The lack of awareness about NGO activities suggests a need for improved communication and visibility regarding their initiatives. It also highlights a potential gap in collaboration between the municipality, NGOs, and community members in strengthening LED participation. If NGOs are present but not effectively engaging with communities, their

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potential to enhance LED efforts remains underutilised. In summary, while NGOs possess the capacity to play a crucial role in facilitating community participation in LED within Makhado Local Municipality, there appears to be a disconnect between their activities and public awareness. Strengthening partnerships, increasing outreach, and enhancing transparency in NGO-led LED initiatives could improve community engagement and participation.

5.3.4. Major Findings on Assessing the Inclusivity of Current LED Programs in Terms of Community Participation at Makhado Local Municipality

The data collected from questionnaires reveals significant uncertainty regarding the inclusivity of Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives in the Makhado Local Municipality. This may originate because the community members are not so sure about how LED is conducted in the communities and its initiatives; hence many of the members are not sure of what is right with regards to the inclusivity of people with disability in the Makhado Local Municipality. This suggests that although some respondents recognise the inclusion efforts, many remain uninformed or unconvinced. This suggests that many of the respondents who participated were not sure about the consideration of diverse needs since other community members do not even see the impact of LED in their communities, such as Makhado Local Municipality. Perceptions about the participation of women in LED initiatives also revealed mixed responses. This indicates that while some inclusion is recognised, there is room for improvement. Youth participation in LED initiatives emerged as a significant concern. Most respondents believed that youth are neither encouraged nor supported to participate. This highlights a substantial gap in young people's involvement. Overall, the findings from the questionnaires indicate a widespread lack of awareness and clarity regarding the inclusiveness of LED initiatives in the Makhado Local Municipality. Although some respondents acknowledge efforts towards inclusion, the prominent levels of uncertainty and critical perceptions suggest an urgent need for better communication, transparency, and targeted strategies to enhance the inclusivity of LED programs.

The data collected from interviews indicates that community participation is widely viewed as a crucial factor in the success of Local Economic Development (LED)

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projects in Makhado Local Municipality. Many participants emphasised that active involvement fosters a sense of ownership among community members, which enhances both the sustainability and effectiveness of projects. Several respondents pointed out that the community better understands its needs than external stakeholders, making their input valuable for designing relevant and impactful initiatives. Furthermore, there is a strong belief that LED projects are likely to fail without community participation. Engaging the community ensures that resources are used efficiently and that projects align with local priorities. However, some participants expressed uncertainty regarding the extent of community participation's influence, suggesting that while it is important, its impact may depend on how well the municipality manages it.

From the statement above, it was discovered that participants acknowledged the role of community involvement but believed that factors such as funding, leadership, and government support may be equally or even more significant in determining the success or failure of LED initiatives. A few respondents also expressed doubt about the overall significance of participation, recognising its potential benefits but being unsure of its impact. In summary, the findings suggest that community participation is seen as a contributing factor to the success of LED projects. However, there is some uncertainty about its relative importance compared to other key factors such as municipal management, financial resources, and government support. This underscores the need for a well-structured approach that balances community engagement with strong institutional support to maximise the effectiveness of LED projects.

5.3.5. Major Findings on Identifying Recommendable Strategies that Can Be Used to Improve Community Participation in LED Programs at Makhado Local Municipality

The data collected through questionnaires revealed several key strategies to enhance community participation in Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives within the Makhado Local Municipality. The most widely supported strategy was increasing access to information and education about LED initiatives, and most respondents

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believed this would improve participation. The overall sentiment suggests that regular community engagement could play a crucial role in boosting participation. Many respondents did not believe that this would encourage more active involvement in LED. This highlights the view that economic motivation is key to driving community participation. The data collected from interviews reveal that Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) play a critical, yet limited, role in facilitating community participation in Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality. Some participants noted that NGOs contribute by educating community members about LED, providing training programs, and offering resources to empower residents. Others highlighted the role of NGOs as intermediaries between the community and the municipality, ensuring that community voices are heard in LED initiatives. Additionally, some participants mentioned that NGOs offer funding and technical support for small projects, which helps community members engage more effectively in LED activities. However, there was a general concern that the impact of NGOs is not widely felt, as several participants indicated a lack of knowledge about active NGOs involved in LED within the municipality.

From the above statement, it can be concluded that despite the potential of NGOs to enhance LED initiatives, many participants expressed uncertainty about their effectiveness in Makhado Local Municipality. Some stated that while NGOs might be involved in LED, their presence is not evident in community activities. Others noted that they had never interacted with an NGO focused on LED, leading them to question whether these organisations are functioning effectively or playing a meaningful role in fostering community participation. This suggests a disconnect between the work NGOs may be doing and the awareness or involvement of community members in those initiatives. Furthermore, some participants assumed that NGOs might only participate in organising events or meetings related to LED, yet there was uncertainty about their direct impact on the community's participation in economic development projects.

Most respondents suggested several key strategies to address the challenges of community participation in LED. Some emphasised the importance of regular

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workshops and community meetings to educate residents about LED and raise awareness. Others recommend improving communication channels such as social media, local radio, and pamphlets to ensure all community members are informed about LED opportunities. Additionally, some participants highlighted the need for collaboration between the municipality, local leaders, and NGOs to bridge the gap between government initiatives and the community. Suggestions for improving participation included providing transport for residents in rural areas and forming community committees to represent different areas. It was discovered that increasing funding for small community-led projects would encourage greater involvement in LED initiatives. Some expressed that transparent municipal processes would help build trust and motivate residents to engage actively in economic development projects. Additionally, establishing youth-focused LED programs and forming interest groups dedicated to educating the community about LED were recommended. Offering incentives for attending LED meetings, such as rewards or recognition, was also mentioned as a potential motivator. Overall, these strategies highlight the need for greater inclusivity, improved communication, and enhanced collaboration to foster meaningful community participation in LED initiatives at Makhado Local Municipality.

5.4. SYNTHESIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The key points from the structured questionnaires can be summarised as follow:

- There is a lack of clear understanding regarding what LED entails in Makhado Local Municipality, which may contribute to low community engagement and ineffective program implementation.
- Community members are unfamiliar with the goals and objectives of LED initiatives, making it difficult for them to actively participate and benefit from these programs.
- Many people are uncertain about whether LED initiatives provide tangible benefits to communities, which may indicate a gap between policy intentions and actual outcomes.

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- Awareness of specific LED programs currently being implemented in Makhado Local Municipality is low, suggesting ineffective communication strategies by local authorities.
- There is uncertainty regarding the availability of resources and support for LED initiatives, which could impact the sustainability and effectiveness of these programs.
- The lack of information about LED programs is a significant barrier to community participation, as people are unable to engage in initiatives they do not fully understand.
- Poor communication from local authorities limits effective community participation, highlighting the need for better engagement strategies and transparency in LED activities.
- Limited access to necessary resources and support restricts community involvement, making it difficult for individuals and businesses to contribute meaningfully to LED initiatives.
- A lack of awareness about the benefits of participating in LED initiatives discourages community involvement, indicating a need for educational campaigns and outreach efforts.
- Many community members are unable to participate in LED initiatives due to personal time constraints and other commitments, which suggests the need for more flexible participation models.
- The role of NGOs in promoting community participation in LED initiatives is unclear, raising concerns about the effectiveness of their interventions in supporting local development efforts.
- NGOs are not effectively communicating information about LED initiatives, which could limit their impact on fostering community participation.

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- The support provided by NGOs does not appear to significantly enhance community participation, pointing to potential weaknesses in the way NGOs engage with local communities.
- NGOs do not provide sufficient resources and training to community members, which may be a missed opportunity in building local capacity and ensuring sustainable participation.
- NGOs are not effectively addressing the barriers to community participation in LED initiatives, indicating the need for a more coordinated effort between local government and non-governmental organisations.
- There is uncertainty about whether LED initiatives in Makhado Local Municipality provide equal opportunities for all community members, suggesting potential issues with inclusivity.
- Efforts to ensure that LED initiatives are accessible to people with disabilities are unclear, which may indicate that these programs are not fully accommodating diverse community needs.
- It is uncertain whether LED initiatives consider the diverse needs and perspectives of distinct cultural and ethnic groups, raising concerns about equitable development.
- The extent to which women have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from LED initiatives is unclear, pointing to gender disparities in local economic development programs.
- Youth participation in LED initiatives is limited, suggesting a need for targeted interventions that encourage and support young people to get involved in economic development efforts.
- Providing more information and education about LED initiatives would improve community participation, ensuring that residents are well-informed and equipped to engage in these programs.

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- Increasing the frequency of community meetings and workshops could enhance engagement, creating more opportunities for residents to voice their concerns and contribute to LED initiatives.
- Offering financial incentives and support could motivate more community members to participate in LED initiatives, particularly those who may face economic barriers to involvement.
- Developing partnerships with local businesses and NGOs could strengthen community participation in LED initiatives, fostering a more collaborative approach to local economic development.
- Providing leadership and skills training would empower community members to take an active role in LED initiatives, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and abilities to contribute meaningfully to development efforts.

The key points from the research interview can be summarised as follows:

- The study reveals varying levels of understanding of Local Economic Development (LED) in the Makhado Local Municipality, with some residents seeing it as a tool for business growth and job creation, while others lack awareness or see it as only relevant to business owners and municipal officials.
- Community participation in LED initiatives is hindered by poor communication, inadequate infrastructure, mistrust, low awareness, limited involvement from leaders, and financial constraints.
- There is a mixed understanding of the role of NGOs in facilitating LED participation, with some recognising their contributions while others see them as inactive or invisible in local efforts.
- Community participation is crucial for the success of LED initiatives, but its impact is debated, with some emphasising the need for municipal backing, funding, and effective management to ensure its success.

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- Strategies to enhance community participation in LED include education campaigns, improved communication, stronger collaboration with local leaders and NGOs, and offering incentives, transparency, and logistical support.

5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

This section presents the recommendations of the study. These recommendations arose from the major findings on assessing the level of understanding among community members about Local Economic Development (LED) at Makhado Local Municipality, identifying the key barriers to effective community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality, evaluating the role of Non-Governmental Organizations in facilitating community participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality, assessing the inclusivity of current LED programs in terms of community participation at Makhado Local Municipality, and identifying recommendable strategies that can be used to improve community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality.

5.5.1. Recommendations on Assessing the Level of Understanding Among Community Members About Local Economic Development (LED) at Makhado Local Municipality

The study recommends that the Makhado Local Municipality implement targeted public awareness campaigns using local radio stations, social media platforms, and community meetings to educate residents on LED. It is recommended that the municipality conduct door-to-door LED awareness initiatives to directly engage with residents who may not attend public meetings or have access to digital information. The study suggests that community LED ambassadors be appointed to serve as intermediaries between the municipality and residents, ensuring that LED information is effectively disseminated. It is recommended that LED concepts and initiatives be integrated into local school curricula and adult education programs to enhance long-term community understanding. The study advises that public engagement forums be held regularly, allowing community members to voice their concerns, ask questions, and contribute ideas to LED planning. It is suggested that the municipality simplify LED

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communication by translating key messages into local dialects and using accessible formats such as visual infographics, short videos, and storytelling methods.

The study recommends the introduction of community training workshops focusing on business skills, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship to equip residents with the necessary skills to participate in LED initiatives. It is recommended that the municipality provide mentorship programs for small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs to help them navigate LED opportunities effectively. The study suggests that LED initiatives be promoted through community events such as exhibitions, local markets, and economic fairs to display opportunities available for local businesses. It is advised that municipalities collaborate with traditional leaders and local influencers to enhance the credibility and acceptance of LED initiatives within communities. The study recommends that the municipality establish LED information centres in easily accessible locations where residents can obtain details on LED programs, available funding, and business support services. It is recommended that the municipality improve transparency by publishing regular progress reports on LED initiatives, including updates on funding allocations, achievements, and plans. The study suggests that a digital LED portal or mobile app be created to provide real-time updates, application processes for funding, and educational resources for local businesses and residents. It is advised that inclusive decision-making structures be established, such as LED advisory panels that include representatives from youth groups, women's associations, and business forums.

The study recommends that municipalities actively seek partnerships with private sector investors to create job opportunities and support local businesses as part of their LED strategy. It is recommended that skills development programs be tailored to align with LED objectives, ensuring that local training institutions equip residents with skills relevant to the region's economic development needs. The study suggests that incentives be provided for businesses that contribute significantly to local job creation, infrastructure development, and sustainable economic growth. It is advised that municipalities conduct ongoing research and surveys to assess community perceptions of LED and identify gaps in awareness, participation, and program

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effectiveness. The study recommends that LED officials undergo specialised training to improve their ability to engage with communities effectively and implement LED initiatives successfully. It is recommended that a robust monitoring and evaluation framework be established to track the impact of LED initiatives, identify challenges, and adjust strategies accordingly for better outcomes.

5.5.2. Recommendations on Identifying the Key Barriers to Effective Community Participation in LED Programs at Makhado Local Municipality

The study recommends that Makhado Local Municipality develop a comprehensive LED communication strategy to ensure the timely and clear dissemination of information. It is recommended that community outreach programs, such as roadshows and public meetings, be intensified to enhance awareness of LED initiatives. The study suggests that local authorities establish a digital platform, including a mobile app or website, where residents can access LED-related information and updates. It is advised that LED awareness campaigns be conducted in local languages to ensure inclusiveness and broader reach among community members. The study recommends that printed newsletters and flyers be distributed in public places such as schools, churches, and shopping centres to improve LED awareness. It is recommended that LED officials engage with local radio stations to broadcast LED programs and announcements, making information more accessible. The study suggests that LED forums and workshops be held at times convenient for working individuals to improve participation. It is advised that the municipality create LED community liaison officers to serve as a bridge between residents and local authorities.

The study recommends that an LED advisory board be established, including representatives from different community groups, to ensure inclusive decision-making. It is recommended that participatory planning sessions be conducted where residents can contribute ideas before LED projects are launched. The study suggests that follow-up mechanisms be introduced, ensuring that feedback from community meetings is addressed and communicated back to residents. It is advised that transport assistance be provided to residents in remote areas to improve access to

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LED meetings and events. The study recommends that simplified, non-technical explanations of LED initiatives be used to enhance understanding among community members. It is recommended that financial support programs, such as microloans or grants, be introduced to assist community-led LED projects. The study suggests that private sector partnerships be encouraged to provide resources and funding for LED initiatives. It is advised that trust-building initiatives, such as open dialogues and community-led monitoring, be introduced to strengthen relationships between the municipality and residents.

The study recommends that targeted training programs be introduced to equip residents with skills relevant to LED projects, including entrepreneurship and financial literacy. It is recommended that a mentorship program be established, pairing experienced business owners with emerging entrepreneurs to support LED development. The study suggests that community involvement in LED should be incentivised through recognition programs or economic benefits for active participants. It is advised that LED projects be continuously monitored and evaluated, ensuring that challenges are addressed promptly and that participation levels improve over time. Implementing these recommendations could significantly enhance community participation in LED programs and contribute to sustainable economic development in Makhado Local Municipality**.**

5.5.3. Recommendation on Evaluating the Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in Facilitating Community Participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality

The study recommends that Makhado Local Municipality improve the dissemination of information about Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives through multiple communication channels, including social media, local radio, and community meetings. It is recommended that local authorities establish structured communication platforms to ensure that community members receive timely updates on LED programs and opportunities. The study recommends the introduction of dedicated LED awareness campaigns to educate the community on the benefits and opportunities available through LED initiatives. It is recommended that Makhado Local Municipality

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develop training programs to enhance community members' knowledge and skills related to LED participation. The study recommends that the municipality increase financial and technical support for community-led LED projects to encourage broader participation. It is recommended that public-private partnerships be strengthened to provide additional resources and funding for LED initiatives.

The study recommends that community meetings be scheduled at convenient times to accommodate working individuals and those with personal responsibilities. It is recommended that rural communities be prioritised for infrastructure development, such as better roads and transport services, to enhance accessibility to LED programs. The study recommends that local authorities actively involve community members in the planning and decision-making processes of LED projects to promote inclusivity. It is recommended that follow-up mechanisms be introduced to ensure that community input is acknowledged and incorporated into LED strategies. The study recommends the implementation of targeted LED programs for women, youth, and people with disabilities to ensure inclusive economic participation. It is recommended that NGOs enhance their visibility and actively engage with communities to improve their role in LED facilitation.

The study recommends that NGOs strengthen their advocacy efforts to ensure that marginalised groups are included in LED initiatives. It is recommended that municipalities and NGOs collaborate more effectively to bridge communication gaps and improve LED participation. The study recommends that LED information be simplified and communicated in local languages to improve understanding among community members. It is recommended that trust-building initiatives between the municipality and the community be introduced to address scepticism and encourage participation. The study recommends that financial assistance programs be expanded to support entrepreneurs and small businesses participating in LED projects. It is recommended that performance monitoring frameworks be introduced to assess the effectiveness of LED initiatives and improve accountability. The study recommends that continuous community engagement workshops be conducted to maintain ongoing participation in LED activities. It is recommended that LED programs be integrated

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with vocational training initiatives to align skills development with local economic opportunities.

5.5.4. Recommendation on Assessing the Inclusiveness of Current LED Programs in Terms of Community Participation at Makhado Local Municipality

The study recommends that the municipality launch extensive awareness programs to address the prevailing uncertainty about LED inclusivity and ensure that all community members are well-informed. It is suggested that the municipality diversifies its communication strategies by incorporating traditional gatherings, digital platforms, and grassroots mobilisation to enhance outreach and accessibility. Findings indicate the need for structured policies that guarantee equitable participation of marginalised groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities, in LED initiatives. It is advisable that transparent governance mechanisms be implemented, including the public disclosure of LED project selection criteria, budget allocations, and performance outcomes. The research suggests that participatory forums be institutionalised to ensure that diverse cultural and ethnic perspectives are integrated into LED planning and execution. It is imperative that targeted youth empowerment programs, such as entrepreneurial training and financial incentives, be introduced to enhance their engagement in LED initiatives.

The study emphasises the importance of establishing LED advisory panels comprised of community representatives to facilitate meaningful participation and decision-making. It is recommended that all LED projects incorporate universal accessibility principles to accommodate individuals with disabilities in both the planning and implementation phases. The research highlights the necessity of strengthening partnerships with civil society organisations and NGOs to leverage additional resources and expertise in LED initiatives. It is advocated that gender-responsive approaches be embedded in LED policies, ensuring that women have equal opportunities in leadership and economic activities. The study suggests that innovative financial instruments, such as community-based savings schemes and microloans, be developed to support local entrepreneurs and small businesses. It is recommended that participatory budgeting be introduced, allowing communities to influence the

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allocation of LED funds in alignment with their local priorities.

The research underscores the value of leadership and capacity-building programs aimed at equipping community members with skills to manage and sustain LED projects. It is crucial that a rigorous monitoring and evaluation framework be established to track the impact of LED projects and ensure continuous improvements based on evidence. The study proposes that public-private partnerships be expanded to attract investment, facilitate knowledge transfer, and enhance the sustainability of LED initiatives. It is suggested that collaboration with academic institutions be strengthened to align LED projects with skill development programs that prepare the workforce for emerging economic opportunities. The findings indicate the need for mentorship programs where experienced business leaders can guide and support aspiring entrepreneurs in the community. It is recommended that traditional leaders and community elders actively engage in LED discussions to foster trust, cultural integration, and social cohesion. The study highlights the importance of financial transparency, advocating for the regular publication of LED-related financial reports to promote accountability and trust. It is proposed that a recognition and incentive framework be developed to acknowledge and reward outstanding contributions by community members in advancing LED objectives.

5.5.5. Recommendation on identifying recommendable strategies that can be used to improve community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality

The study recommends that the municipality enhance the dissemination of information and educational materials on LED initiatives to improve community awareness and participation. It is recommended that regular and more frequent community meetings and workshops be held to facilitate ongoing dialogue and engagement around LED activities. The study suggests that financial incentives be introduced to stimulate greater involvement in LED projects and encourage active participation from the community. It is recommended that partnerships between local businesses, NGOs, and the municipality be developed to strengthen collaborative efforts in driving LED initiatives. The study advocates that leadership and skills training programs be

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implemented to equip community members with the necessary tools to participate meaningfully in LED efforts. It is recommended that NGOs be more visible in their work by increasing their direct involvement in local community activities and LED initiatives.

The study suggests that communication channels such as social media, local radio, and printed pamphlets be utilised to ensure that all community members have access to LED-related information. It is recommended that the municipality collaborate closely with local leaders and NGOs to improve coordination and enhance the effectiveness of LED projects. The study advocates that transport solutions be provided to rural residents to ensure they can easily attend meetings and workshops related to LED. It is recommended that community committees be formed to represent various areas within the municipality, ensuring that diverse community interests are considered in LED planning. The study suggests that the municipality allocate increased funding for small-scale community-driven projects to empower local participants and stimulate economic growth. It is recommended that the municipality ensure greater transparency in its processes to build trust and encourage greater community involvement in LED initiatives. The study recommends that dedicated LED programs for youth be introduced to ensure their active participation in shaping the future of the municipality's economy. It is suggested that community interest groups be formed to provide ongoing education about LED, raising awareness and encouraging participation in local economic development.

The study proposes that incentives such as rewards or recognition be given to individuals who actively participate in LED meetings and workshops, motivating others to engage. It is recommended that a series of seminars and workshops be conducted regularly to further educate the community on the impact and importance of LED programs. The study suggests that NGOs enhance their coordination and collaboration efforts to integrate their work more effectively into local LED initiatives. It is recommended that grassroots organisations be supported and empowered to represent community interests in LED planning and implementation. The study advocates that regular monitoring and evaluation processes be put in place to assess the effectiveness of LED projects and ensure continued community participation. It is

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recommended that a centralized platform for LED-related information be developed, ensuring that all community members can easily access updates and opportunities.

5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

The study recommends the adoption of ethical and effective leadership to support the successful implementation of Local Economic Development (LED) within Makhado Local Municipality. Such leadership is essential for fostering community participation through transparency, integrity, accountability, and inclusivity. By adhering to these principles, municipal leaders can create an environment conducive to sustainable economic growth, infrastructure development, skills enhancement, and strong public-private partnerships, factors that are crucial for driving LED initiatives. The researcher suggests that similar studies should be conducted across various municipalities to identify specific challenges that hinder meaningful community engagement in LED projects. This would enable the development of targeted strategies that empower communities and enhance their role in local development. The findings from such studies could help municipalities refine their participatory mechanisms, ensuring that LED initiatives are responsive to local needs. Active involvement from community members, municipal officials, and relevant stakeholders will be essential in providing comprehensive insights, enabling future researchers to formulate practical recommendations. Moreover, researchers must prioritise ethical considerations, such as confidentiality, to build trust and encourage candid participation. These efforts will contribute to a more inclusive, community-driven approach to LED, strengthening local economies and promoting sustainable development in South African municipalities.

5.7. CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the importance of community participation in local economic development in Makhado Local Municipality. This chapter discusses the findings, recommendations, and conclusions drawn from the research. The findings and recommendations were based on several key areas: assessing the level of understanding among community members about Local Economic Development (LED) at Makhado Local Municipality, identifying the key barriers to effective

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community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality, evaluating the role of Non-Governmental Organizations in facilitating community participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality, assessing the inclusivity of current LED programs in terms of community participation at Makhado Local Municipality, and identifying recommendable strategies that can be used to improve community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality.

The first chapter presented the introduction and background of the study, the problem statement, the aim of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the delimitation of the study, the definition of operational terms, and the organisation of the study. The objectives of the study were to assess the level of understanding among community members about Local Economic Development (LED) at Makhado Local Municipality, identifying the key barriers to effective community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality, evaluating the role of Non-Governmental Organizations in facilitating community participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality, assessing the inclusivity of current LED programs in terms of community participation at Makhado Local Municipality, and identifying recommendable strategies that can be used to improve community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality. The study was conducted to benefit the South African citizens as well as the Makhado Local Municipality and the communities under Makhado.

Chapter 2 of the study has outlined the participatory theory as the theoretical framework supporting the research and its relevance in this context. It has also examined the effects of community participation in Local Economic Development (LED) within South African municipalities. Furthermore, the chapter has highlighted the challenges local governments face in facilitating LED planning and implementation, as well as the mechanisms available to enhance community participation. In conclusion, community participation plays a crucial role in fostering sustainable LED in South African municipalities. However, its effectiveness is hindered by various challenges, including inadequate stakeholder engagement, limited resources, and poor coordination between the government and communities.

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Addressing these barriers requires robust mechanisms such as capacity-building programs, inclusive policy frameworks, and strengthened public-private partnerships to ensure meaningful participation and improved developmental outcomes.

Chapter 3 of the study outlined the methods and procedures that were followed in conducting the research. The study employed a pragmatic research paradigm and applied mixed methods, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The rationale for these methodological choices was also provided. The researcher clearly defined the research design, methodology, study area, population, sampling method and size, data collection process, data collection instruments, data collection instruments, data collection instruments, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations. Data was collected using questionnaires and interviews, ensuring a comprehensive approach to gathering relevant insights.

Chapter 4 of the study presented the data collected through a combination of questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire consisted of two sub-sections: the first provided the biographical details of the respondents, while the second contained data gathered from the questionnaire items distributed and collected by the researcher. To effectively present the collected data, graphical tables were utilised, along with frequencies and percentages. Each table was accompanied by a brief discussion of the findings. Additionally, the chapter included data from interviews conducted with participants, presented in narrative form. A total of ten participants were interviewed using open-ended questions. To this end, the findings highlighted key trends and insights regarding community participation in local economic development within the Makhado Local Municipality.

The concluding chapter of the study presented the findings, recommendations, and conclusion. The aim of the study was to recommend strategies to enhance community participation in Local Economic Development, wherein the objectives were to assess the level of understanding among community members about Local Economic Development (LED) at Makhado Local Municipality, to identify the key barriers to effective community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality, to evaluate the role of Non-Governmental Organizations in facilitating community

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participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality, to assess the inclusivity of current LED programs in terms of community participation at Makhado Local Municipality, and to identify recommendable strategies that can be used to improve community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality. This chapter also presented recommendations for future studies. Lastly, the chapter concludes the study on the importance of community participation in local economic development in Makhado Local Municipality.

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APPENDICES

ETHICAL CERTIFICATE

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ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Mr M Khomola

STUDENT NO:
20000762

PROJECT TITLE: The importance of community participation in the implementation of Local Economic Development (LED): a case study of Makhado Local Municipality.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE NO: FMCL/24/PDN/47/2211

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr L Mbedzi	UNIVEN, Public and Development Administration	Supervisor
Dr MM Nekhavhambe	UNIVEN, Public and Development Administration	Co-supervisor
Mr M Khomola	UNIVEN, Public and Development Administration	Investigator-Students

Type: Masters Research
Risk: *Minimal risk to humans, animals or environment (Category 2)*
Approval Period: November 2024 – November 2025

The Research Ethics Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.

General Conditions
While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following.

- The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REC:
  - Annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project.
  - Within 48hrs in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
  - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the REC. Would there be deviated from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date; a new application must be made to the REC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC retains the right to:
  - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project,
  - To ask further questions; Seek additional information; Require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
  - withdraw or postpone approval if:
  - Any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected.
  - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the REC or that information has been false or misrepresented.
  - The required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
  - New institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions A it necessary

ISSUED BY:
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Date Considered: November 2024

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: Prof TS Mashau

Signature

UNIVERS OF VEND
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
2024 -11- 22
Private Bag X5050
Thohoyandou 0950

University of Venda
PRIVATE BAG X5050, THOHOYANDOU, 0950, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA
TELEPHONE (015) 962 8504/8313 FAX (015) 962 9000
"A quality driven financially sustainable, rural-based Comprehensive University".

PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE SUPERVISOR

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT, COMMERCE AND LAW

To Municipal officials such as Municipal Manager, Mayor, Traditional Leader, LED officials, Ward Councilor and IDP officials

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FOR MASTER'S DEGREE RESEARCH OF MR. KHOMOLA M - STUDENT NUMBER: 20000762.

The above matter refers.

We hereby wish to confirm that Mr. Khomola M (Student Number: 20000762), is a registered student for Master's Degree in the Department of Public and Development Administration at the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, University of Venda. The student is researching on the following topic: "The **importance of community participation in the implementation of Local Economic Development (LED): a case study of Makhado Local Municipality**". In order for him to complete his studies, we request your Institution to provide him with the information that he might need for his study project. As an Institution of Higher Learning, we believe that the research he is undertaking will yield results that might also assist your Institution. We therefore encourage your Institution to assist him with the necessary information that will be collected through questionnaires and interviews. We undertake that the information that will be provided to him will be solely used for this study.

We hope that you find this to be in order and therefore, anticipate your assistance. If any queries, please feel free to contact me at Cell: 078 822 1700 or Email: Langanani.Mbedzi@univen.ac.za

..... **30 November 2024**
.....

Dr. L Mbedzi
Supervisor: Department of Public and Development Administration
Faculty: Management, Commerce and Law

University of Venda

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
PRIVATE BAG X5050, THOHOYANDOU, 0950,
SOUTH AFRICA
TELEPHONE: (015) 962 8639
E-MAIL: Langanani.mbedzi@univen.ac.za

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MUNICIPAL ACCEPTANCE LETTER

MAKHADO MUNICIPALITY

Vision: A dynamic hub for socio-economic development by 2050
Mission: To ensure effective utilization of economic resources to address socio–economic imperatives through mining, agriculture and tourism

PEACE HARMONY PROSPERITY

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

Ref no.: 5/3/1 & 5/4/2
Enquiries: E M Nangambi

TO: THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER

FROM: CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
(HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION)

DATE: 17 OCTOBER 2024

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO ALLOW MR KHJOMOLA M PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH UNDER THE TITLE: THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED) A CASE STUDY OF MAKHADOM LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE
Good Governance and Administrative Excellence.

PURPOSE
To seek approval by the Municipal Manager in respect of Mr Khomola M to be granted a permission to conduct study research based on the subject mentioned above.

DETAILS
Mr Khomola M is currently a registered student for Master Degree in the Department of Public and Development Administration at the faculty of Management, Commerce and Law at University of Venda with student number 20000762. is hereby requesting a permission to conduct research on The importance of community participation in the implementation of Local Economic Development (LED) a case of Makhado Local Municipality. Attached herewith please find her request letter.

COMMENT
It therefore recommended for Mr Khomola M to be granted a permission to conduct the above-mentioned research, subject to best practice and conventions for students that undertake research on council's records viz.

1. Research activities will not disturb the normal operation of the Municipality.
2. Prompt and timeous arrangements must be made with the Departmental Head concern when assistance is required.
3. Copy of the research findings / thesis must be submitted to the Municipality.
4. The Municipality has no power over research conducted with community members and this part will be performed with the community at their own free will.
5. Research will be for a period of six months which can be extended for a further period determined by the Municipal Manager.
6. Confidential records / information must not be reflected in thesis documents.
7. The collection of data for research will be conducted based on prior arrangements to be made before the meeting with the Director Development Planning.

Tel: 015 519 3000 | Fax: 015 516 1195 | E-mail : municipal.manager@makhado.gov.za |
Address : Civic Centre, 83 Krogh Street, Private Bag X2596, Makhado, 0920|
| www.makhado.gov.za | Call Centre : 015 516 2990/ 2994/ 2996

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Creating Future Leaders

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO ALLOW MR KHJOMOLA M PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH UNDER THE TITLE: THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED) A CASE STUDY OF MAKHADOM LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

8. The Municipality is indemnified against any claims for damages by the applicant which may result directly or indirectly from the research activity.
9. Research information may not be used for any form of publication media other than the applicant's studies expect with permission of the Municipality.
10. The Authorization is granted in line with provisions of the Municipality Access to Information Manual read with the Promotion to Access to Information Act, and the National Archives Act and approved by the relevant Head of the Department (HOD) with regards to the classification of information.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
None

POLICY
It's part of Training and Development

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS
None

RISK IMPLICATIONS
None

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS
To promote good Governance.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS
It therefore recommended for Mr Khomola M to be granted a permission to conduct the above-mentioned research.

CONSIDERATION (RECOMMENDATION)
It is therefore recommended that Mr Khomola M be granted to permission to conduct the above-mentioned research.

.....
MR EM NANGAMBI
SENIOR ADMIN CLERK (HR)

17/10/2021
DATE

RECOMMENDED / NOT RECOMMENDED

.....
MR S G MAGUGA
DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES

17/10/2021
DATE

SUPPORTED / NOT SUPPORTED

.....
MR NG RALIPHADA
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

2021/10/18
DATE

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Creating Future Leaders

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO ALLOW MR KHJOMOLA M PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH UNDER THE TITLE: THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED) A CASE STUDY OF MAKHADOM LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

APPROVED / ~~DECLINED~~

.....

.....

.....

MR. K M NEMANAME
MUNICIPAL MANAGER

.....
DATE

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LETTER TO THE RESPONDENTS

LETTER FROM THE STUDENT

Enquiry: Khomola M
Cell : 063 725 7871
Email: 20000762@mvula.univen.ac.za

P O BOX 494
Divhani
0718

15 October 2023

Dear Sir or Madam.

I, Khomola Maluta, am a student at the University of Venda, registered for the Public Administration Masters, under the Department of Public and Development Administration in the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law. I am required to conduct a study in order to complete my study. My research topic is: The role of community participation in the implementation of Local Economic Development: A case study of Makhado Local Municipality.

I humbly request you to be part of the study by participating in my research by providing me with information regarding the above research topic. The information you provide will be solely used for the study.

Thanking you in anticipation.
Yours Sincerely,

....

KHOMOLA M DATE
STUDENT NUMBER: 20000762

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INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

I,....., agree to participate in the research study, titled "**The role of community participation in the implementation of Local Economic Development: A case of Makhado Local Municipality**". By signing this consent form you indicate that you understand the information provided to you by the researcher regarding the study, your question about the research has been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this study. A copy of this signed consent form can be provided upon request:

- The study aims at investigating the role the role of community participation in the implementation of LED at Makhado Local Municipality.
- The information that the participants will provide will be only be used for the purpose of the study.
- Participation in this study is voluntary and that participant can withdraw anytime without any penalty if I feel like doing so.
- The researcher will not write participants in their names in any reports using information obtained from the research instrument and that confidential information will remain secured.
- If you may need any form of information further than provided, you contact my supervisor on his email: Langanani.mbedzi@univen.ac.za or his telephone number: 015 962 8639

_____ _____

Participant signature Date

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RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

INSTRUMENT

INTERVIEW GUIDE

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN MAKHADO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

The study is about the importance of community participation in the implementation of LED in Makhado Local Municipality. I, therefore, request that you form part of the study by means of providing your perspective on the role of community participation in the implementation of Local Economic Development. This is an opportunity for you to participate in the study by completing the following research questions. There is no right or wrong answer. Please participate in by putting a cross **(X)** in front of your selection (Section A). Please assist by answering the following questions in Section B:

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF PARTICIPANTS

1 GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

Male	**1**
Female	**2**
Other	**3**

2 AGES OF RESPONDENTS

18-35	**1**
36-49 years	**2**

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50 years and above	**3**

3 POSITIONS OF THE PARTICIPANT

Mayor	**1**
Municipal Manager	**2**
Ward Councillor	**3**
Traditional Leaders	**4**
IDP Officials	**5**
LED Officials	**6**
Community Development Coordinators	**7**
Civic Engagement Coordinators	**8**
Youth Engagement Coordinators	**9**
Community Members	**10**

4 EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF RESPONDENTS

Grade 12	**1**
Diploma	**2**
Degree	**3**
Honours	**4**
Masters	**5**

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PhD	6

SECTION B: THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY PARTICPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN MAKHADO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

5 What is the level of understanding of LED among community members in Makhado Local Municipality?

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6 What are the challenges and barriers to effective community participation in the LED programs within Makhado Local Municipality?

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7 What is the role of non-governmental organisations in facilitating community participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality?

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8 To what extent does community participation contribute to the success or failure of LED projects in Makhado Local Municipality?

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9 What are the recommendable strategies that can be implemented to improve community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality?

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“THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION”

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QUESTIONNAIRE

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This study is based on the importance community participation in the implementation of LED at the communities under Makhado Local Municipality. I, therefore, request that you form part of the study by means of providing your perspective on the role of community participation in the implementation of Local Economic Development. In this participation, there is no wrong or right answer. Please participate in by putting a cross **(X)** in front of your selection.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF RESPONDENTS

1 Gender of respondents

Male	**1**
Female	**2**
If other specify	**3**

2 Age of respondents

18-35 Years	**1**
36-49 Years	**2**
50 years and above	**5**

3 Position of the respondents

Mayor	**1**
Municipal Manager	**2**
Ward Councillor	**3**
Traditional Leaders	**4**

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IDP Officials	**5**
LED Officials	**6**
Community Development Coordinators	**7**
Civic Engagement Coordinators	**8**
Youth Engagement Coordinators	**9**
Selected Community Members	**10**

4 Educational Qualifications of respondents

Grade 12	**1**
Diploma	**2**
Degree	**3**
Honours	**4**
Masters	**5**
PhD	**6**

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SECTION B: THE MPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AT MAKHADO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

Item No.	To assess the level of understanding among community members about Local Economic Development (LED) at Makhado Local Municipality.	Place an (X) in the box that applies to you				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5.	There is clear understanding of what Local Economic Development (LED) means.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Community members are familiar with the goals and objectives of LED initiatives in Makhado Local Municipality.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	The LED initiatives can benefit my community.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Community members are aware of the specific LED programs currently being implemented in Makhado Local Municipality.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Municipal officials understand the role of the local government in promoting Local Economic Development.	1	2	3	4	5
10	There is lack of resources and support for LED initiatives in my area.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Municipal officials are free to communicate with other community members about LED projects and topics	1	2	3	4	5

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Item No.	To identify the key barriers to effective community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality.	Place an (X) in the box that applies to you				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12	Lack of information about LED programs is a significant barrier to community participation.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Insufficient communication from local authorities prevents effective community involvement in LED initiatives.	1	2	3	4	5
14	There is lack of trust in local government impacts community participation in LED programs.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Limited access to resources and support hinders community involvement in LED projects.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	There is lack of awareness about the benefits of participating in LED initiatives.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Community members face financial constraints that limit their ability to participate in LED programs.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Social and cultural factors are barriers to community participation in LED activities.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Lack of time and other personal commitments prevent community members from engaging in LED initiatives.	1	2	3	4	5

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Item No.	To evaluate the role of Non-Governmental Organizations in facilitating community participation in LED at Makhado Local Municipality.	Place an (X) in the box that applies to you				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
20.	NGOs play a crucial role in promoting community participation in LED initiatives.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	NGOs effectively communicate information about LED programs to the community.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	The support provided by NGOs enhances community involvement in LED activities.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	NGOs provide valuable resources and training to community members for participating in LED projects.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	NGOs serve as effective intermediaries between the local government and the community in LED initiatives.	1	2	3	4	5
25	The involvement of NGOs in LED programs increases community trust and engagement.	1	2	3	4	5
26	NGOs help to address barriers to community participation in LED activities.	1	2	3	4	5

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Item No.	To assess the inclusivity of current LED programs in terms of community participation at Makhado Local Municipality.	Place an (X) in the box that applies to you				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
27.	LED programs in Makhado Local Municipality provide equal opportunities for all community members to participate.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	LED initiatives actively include marginalized and underrepresented groups in the community	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Efforts are made to ensure that LED programs are accessible to people with disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	LED projects consider the diverse needs and perspectives of diverse cultural and ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5
31.	Women have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from LED programs.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	Youth are encouraged and supported to participate in LED activities.	1	2	3	4	5
33	LED initiatives are designed to address the specific needs of low-income community members	1	2	3	4	5
34	Community feedback is regularly sought and incorporated into the planning of LED programs to ensure inclusivity.	1	2	3	4	5

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Item No.	To identify recommendable strategies that can be used to improve community participation in LED programs at Makhado Local Municipality.	Place an (X) in the box that applies to you				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35	Providing more information and education about LED initiatives would improve community participation.	1	2	3	4	5
36	Increasing the frequency of community meetings and workshops would enhance engagement in LED programs.	1	2	3	4	5
37	Offering financial incentives or support would motivate more community members to participate in LED activities.	1	2	3	4	5
38	Developing partnerships with local businesses and NGOs would strengthen community involvement in LED programs.	1	2	3	4	5
39	Implementing targeted outreach efforts to include underrepresented groups would improve inclusivity in LED participation.	1	2	3	4	5
40	Utilizing social media and other digital platforms for communication would increase awareness and participation in LED initiatives.	1	2	3	4	5
41	Providing leadership and skills training would empower community members to take an active role in LED programs.	1	2	3	4	5
42	Creating a feedback mechanism for community members to express their opinions and	1	2	3	4	5

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	suggestions would improve participation.					

"THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION"

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TURNITIN REPORT

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED): A CASE STUDY OF MAKHADO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

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EDITOR'S LETTER



To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam

This is to authenticate that I, **Zitha Innocent**, have proofread and edited a dissertation for a degree of Master of Administration in the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law at the University of Venda entitled **THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED): A CASE STUDY OF MAKHADO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

BY

KHOMOLA MALUTA

STUDENT NUMBER: 20000762

I have meticulously and comprehensively inspected this thesis for consistency, coherence, and correctness of language use, ensuring proper register usage and citations. I have suggested several amendments, which were communicated to the student for consideration and implementation. The student has undertaken to effect these amendments before submitting this thesis.

Date:04/06/2025

BA Hons (English), MA (English), PhD (current studies), Lecturer (English) @ North-West University

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