

## **A PROCESS RECORD OF THE DDP CIVIL SOCIETY WORKSHOP ON SOCIAL JUSTICE HELD AT DDP FROM 03 – 04 JULY 2010**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This workshop was as a result of the new focus the Local government desk has taken which involves roping in civil society organizations for greater efficacy in citizen's involvement in advocacy matters. The idea was largely borne out of the organisation's involvement in the structure called Civil Society Budget Watch. The activities of this structure involved monitoring eThekweni Municipal Budget as well as following up on the Service Delivery Plans and Annual reports of the city. Issues pertaining to the communities need to be given focus. The best way to do that was to work with specific communities in their localities. The first workshop mainly comprised of SANCO members with a few ordinary citizens.

### **BENEFICIARY COMMUNITIES**

- Umzinyathi
- Mpumalanga/Hammersdale
- Umlazi
- KwaMashu
- Lamontville
- Nanda
- Ntuzuma
- Cato Manor

### **PRIMARY OBJECTIVES**

The primary objective as per plan was to take social justice education as close as possible to the people. Targeted, was COMBOCO, YMCA, SANCO and any other group that might be working closely with the communities on the related activities. There was a slight diversion on the plan to the fact that for more ripples we needed a larger team. The organisations involved agreed to change the workshop into a training of trainers (TOT). The idea was to skill the group in facilitation as well as needs assessment and information gathering.

### **CONTENT SPECIFIC OUTPUT**

#### **Problematic Issues**

- Housing
- Unemployment
- Lack of Information
- Corruption/ Crime
- Drugs
- Recreational facilities
- Skills development
- Slow pace of development
- Lack of communication between communities, the councilor and officials

- Nepotism
- Accessibility of medication – HIV/Aids challenges
- Child headed households/poverty
- Teenage pregnancy
- Discrimination
- Literacy challenges/ Education/ Skills
- Transport
- Dumping zones
- Illegal connections
- Political affiliations/ interference
- Projects
- Imbalance in societies
- Centres/ community halls
- Water/sanitation/electricity
- Community participation practice

## CONCERNS AND CLARITIES SOUGHT

### The “Federation”

One participant raised the concern over the Metro’s attitude towards this structure. It was fortunate that other members were conversant as well as in touch with the structure and therefore provided clarity on its relationship with iTheku and why some projects were stopped.

Discussions around this project made it possible for the introduction of concepts like **LAMS** (Land Management Systems Act), the **Slums Act** and **PMS** (Performance management Systems). It became evident that there seem to be a lack in information dissemination not only from the top down but also across as other members of the same structure seemed to be better updated and some knowledgeable on current trends.

### Demarcation Act

About three participants in the room displayed strong feelings against this act. One saw it as separating communities and relatives, the other saw it as a political tool to perpetrate power dynamics, the other saw it as poor planning with major oversight on the impact this has on the communities involved. Whilst some of these arguments could be true but further scrutiny revealed that keeping old boundaries was also not going to be beneficial to the development trend and transformation agenda. As facilitators we made use of this opportunity to explain the transformation journey of the country and why there was a need for transformation. This explained the need for the establishment of the Demarcation Act, the board and the like. It is arguably true that some revision in terms of the new borders still need a rethink.

### Oversight Structures

In the midst of the debate on Community participation and the oversight role communities need to play, one participant raised the involvement in the **SGB’s** (School governing bodies) as well as the extent of power one has as a member in such structures. What the participant wanted to put across was the domination by principals and the forced submission to be quiet about mismanagement or corrupt practices by the principal and the chair of the structure. Such debate led to the introduction to all areas where communities need to play oversight roles. Some such

areas were the **IDP's** (Integrated Development Plans), Municipal **Budgets**, **PMS** (Performance Management Systems), **SDBIP** (Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plans) and Municipal **Year end reports**.

#### Performance Management System

Some explanation on what PMS is and where, when and how it should be applied was explained. An area that received more focus was the projects, be they community or municipal ones. Some clarity was made in terms of the request people make for certain projects whilst similar projects lie in waste in the same ward. Some parallels were drawn between this term i.e. PMS and **good governance**. Good governance was further unpacked to clarify its applicability both to those that govern and those that are governed.

#### Promotion of Access to Information Act

The acronym to this act is PAIA as explained to participants. As discussions ensued a lot of gaps were identified in terms of information that people need to have. Again as rightly identified by participants in their report backs, it became important that this concept was also revisited. Lack of information and even lack of correct information was identified as one of the problematic areas. The fact that communities do not participate is because they did not know it's their right to participate. They also do not raise issues regarding the quality of services particularly with housing because they are told half truths or false information about why they need to be thankful of what they are getting. It was also important to drown such information to the participants and particularly those in leadership to share information with communities or people in their structures. This was because it was clear that in the room were people with different levels of information and therefore what we ask of leadership outside the structure should be what is practiced internally.

#### Slow pace of development

Mention was made of the pace with which development is going. Some sighted the sporadic protests they have observed and some they had been part of and are still willing to be part of should the change not be effected. Participants needed clarity on who exactly is local government; where or how does a district fit in; why are they referred somewhere where water or electricity issues are concerned. Confusion was also created by why two areas separated by the road will take different forms of development worse even, where one will remain undeveloped for years while the other is progressing.

An explanation was given of who or what forms local government. The differentiation was made regarding the Metro, the District and the local municipality. This also presented an opportunity to talk about intergovernmental relations (IGR); their interdependency, interconnectedness and interrelatedness and how these should be understood when looking at service delivery.

### Political Difference/intolerance

This discussion brought in issues of human imbalances or discrimination or socio economic imbalances.

Experiences on the ground are that one gets service or benefit based on the relationship with the councilor. Issues of concern have no platform for if you raise them you must be the opposition to the ruling party in that area. Tensions are running high and the councilors who should be the people's servant are islands if not mountains which people cannot access. Polarization, people claim is caused by the electoral system which does not give people power over direct appointment of their candidate coupled by over exertion of power in the spaces where such could be negotiated. Another element that was criticized was the tendering system which continuously benefits one and the same people. The ward committee system as well as the CLO's (Community Liaison Officers) also received criticism due to the political nature some of these structures have been.