

Excerpts from the Pilot Project on Partners in Transformation, Umkhanyakude District, 2008

Introduction

Partners in Transformation workshops were piloted at Umkhanyakude District in all the 5 Local Municipalities, Jozini, Mtubatuba, Big 5, Hlabisa and Umhlabuyalingana. The workshops were run and organized by Democracy Development Programme in conjunction with the all five Municipality Speakers. The primary notion of having these forms of workshops in place were to deepen the culture of active participation, partnership or cooperative governance in order to address the issues disabling service excellence, development and transformation within the broad scope of Local Government.

The targeted workshop participants were all the stakeholders involved or that should be involved in the Municipal decision-making processes, i.e. Izinduna, Ward Councilors, Municipal Speakers, Church Leadership, Business representatives, Ward Committees, Youth forum, Community Policing forum, CDW's as well as interest groups. Case Studies and exercises were effectively incorporated in the way that systematically reached the desired outcomes through extracting information and feedback that the workshop was targeting. Sometimes the participants were asked to draw pictures, build egg carrier models or sing for the purpose of showing or simulating cooperative nature of governance.

Highlights from each Local Municipality

Hlabisa Municipality

What stood out in this session was the fact that one Induna, Mr Mkhwanazi gave back word for word what the proceedings of the previous day was. He would quote the exact questions posed and say by whom and the answer as given by each individual participant. This defeated the wider belief in their literacy levels and or confirmed for the facilitators that the Content, process and methods applied in the workshop did allow the participants to actively participate without any intimidations rising from the different levels of education.

What also formed highlights of this session was the patience and willingness of the CDW's in explaining what they are about. The clarity with which they did this brought a consensus to everybody to assisting them in being accepted. The house unanimously agreed they are quite informed, has the resources and contacts in higher places of which is a plus in the development of the area.

Mtubatuba Municipality

It was also quite encouraging to see the youth so committed in being involved and taking issues of the youth forward. There was also quite a fair representation of the pastors and

their participation and input was quite commendable. They were clear in terms of knowing that it is not politics that will bring about an effective, efficient, transparent, democratic and accountable local government but the pulling together of all stakeholders.

Challenges faced by Mtubatuba Municipality & Pastors in particular

- To identify capable white people that can work with the municipality in bringing about change.
- To have the white communities & farmers workshopped since they do not participate in any of municipal meetings or activities
- Interventions to close the gap or lack of relationship between pastors from other religions and races within the municipality.

Jozini Municipality

Challenges

- The youth are of the popular impression that Chiefs (izinduna) and the meetings are for elderly people, therefore they attend meetings at later stages when they are much older and therefore do not take part in decisions and activities.
- Councilors do not bring their families along to meetings they leave them at home but tell everyone to come to the meetings.
- People do not follow up on projects or even monitor their progress but are quick to judge ward committees and councilors.
- People lack general skills even when opportunities or projects are introduced.
- The distant nature of structures providing basic needs poses a problem for the communities.
- Teachers and principals do not attend meetings yet the school by virtue of its nature can be resourcefull.

Umhlabuyalingana Municipality

Sample observations made by participants from the introductory activity/exercise as seen below:

- The web is symbolic of the ways that people connect or can connect
- The rope reflects the possibility that people can coexist peacefully.
- The rope symbolizes a team and the spirit that exist within it.
- The web reflects respect, humility, forgiveness and love(one across and on top of the other)



Lessons drawn:

- We can be as solid as a rock if we can live/ behave as the picture given by the rope
- We can build our nation if we behave as each strand of the rope that exist alongside the other peacefully
- Real democracy and freedom can be achieved if we behave as one
- We can be far apart but if one in spirit we can succeed

Big 5 False Bay Municipality

It happened that especially with Big 5 Municipality there was lot of events booked around the same dates demanding the presence of the same people that were sent as representatives in this workshop. We therefore experienced a lot of coming and going in odd times which was not conducive for a workshop of this nature. We however have these statements made by the Mayor during our pledging ceremony which despite the above is binding.

Mayor/Speaker's pledge

- I will pay attention towards the matter of launching ward committees as it is a possible move to address the non recognition of them in the communities.
- As the municipality, we will manage to buy ward committees the cell phones after redesigning our policy and worked out the budget.
- We can initiate a strategy that each municipality would discuss if there are potential businesses and the manner in which businesses can contribute towards employment.
- We will ensure the measures to strengthen the communication channels, clarify the point as to when and how do we communicate.

- “Misunderstanding and tension does not mean that there must be no communication and people should understand that they need not necessarily love one another to work together but should operate above personal likes and dislikes.”