Citizen-based Monitoring of Frontline Service Delivery Toolkit

This Toolkit was produced by **Afesis-corplan** for Freedom House Southern Africa.
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Forward

The new system of government in South Africa, the developmental system, allows for active participation and involvement of citizens in development. Promotion of community participation ensures that development plans and services are more relevant to local needs and conditions. Quite often the need to ensure that development projects and processes are sustained demands that communities be capacitated by being involved in the required activities around the projects.

Local government is the third sphere of government tasked with a developmental mandate. Along with the rest of government, it must implement its development mandate in an inclusive manner. It must do this in context in which the country's economy has grown at an increasingly slow pace, where the inequality gap has widened and wealth seems to circulate within the political or class elite. Local government is also the most heavily regulated sphere of government in a country where intergovernmental coordination has not worked very well. By 2014, close to 63% of municipalities were 'dysfunctional or almost dysfunctional and in need of serious reform in order to meet the minimum standards for basic proficiency'[1].

It is not surprising that there has been an increase in service delivery protest as many citizens are fast becoming impatient with the slow pace of service delivery. The trends largely point to a breakdown in the service delivery contract between citizens and the state. More and more organised communities advocate for improvements in the quality and quantity of services delivered by local government to the poor. There is a growing need for tools and mechanisms aimed at facilitating improved engagements between citizens and the state around basic service delivery.

This toolkit is developed with an aim of offering organised community groups with basic tools to use to organise, mobilise and engage - in a structured and meaningful manner- in service delivery. In this toolkit, service delivery is understood in a somewhat linear manner that includes three stages: pre-decision, decision-making and post-decision making stages. There is an offering of tools herein for organised groups to use at each stage of this service delivery continuum.

This toolkit was developed by Afesis-corplan for Freedom House Southern Africa and tested in sixteen sites where Freedom House was implementing its Combating Drivers of Xenophobic Violence Program. Afesis-corplan wishes to thank Freedom House Southern Africa for the opportunity to participate in this programme in this manner, a special thanks goes to the peace-building teams in each of the sixteen sites who assisted in testing and review the tools. Special thanks go to Mbumba Development Services, for their role in the project.

[1]CoGTA (2014) Back to Basics: available at http://www.cogta.gov.za/cgta_2016/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/The-Presidential-Local-Government-Summit.pdf

Contents

Introduction

What is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is developed in support of **citizen-driven initiatives** to engage **local government** with a view to improving **service delivery.** The toolkit has been developed in response to a **social and political context** that has frequently seen **service delivery protests escalate into violence** including the destruction of **public facilities** and **xenophobic attacks**. In developing this toolkit, Freedom House acknowledges that there are legislated mechanisms set out to enable citizens to engage government on the one hand, while there are also innovative citizen-initiated platforms in which citizens have successfully engaged government over service delivery. The toolkit therefore seeks to strengthen citizen engagements with government, be it in the legislated/ regulated spaces or the innovative mechanisms developed by autonomous civil society structures.

In South Africa, local government is responsible for the delivery of a number of important basic services including water, sanitation, electricity and solid waste management. To achieve this, **local government is empowered to plan, budget and deliver these services in a manner that is participatory and responsive to its citizen's needs**. The breakdown in the relationship between communities and local government is caused by the failure in service delivery, poor governance by municipal councils, and power-brokering within local political elites and civil society. As a consequence, dialogue between local government and communities has often broken down or been discredited. This has led to very low levels of trust in the structures and procedures of local governance.

Research also shows that with the increasing number of foreign nationals in South Africa, there is growing contestation in poor communities over scarce resources and job opportunities. In the absence of effective mechanisms to engage municipalities and leverage better services and employment, citizens have frequently misdirected their anger and frustration towards foreign nationals, a phenomenon widely known as 'scapegoating'.

This toolkit offers **tools that citizens can use to mobilise, gather crucial information for planning and action and present their case in a compelling manner to local government.** The toolkit also accepts the premise that effective remedies to the weakness in local governance often lie outside of the regulated spaces and procedures. It is nonetheless important that civil society organisations are fully informed about **government's planning cycles and planning processes** in order to plan their engagements in a timely and strategic manner.

How will this toolkit help you?

This toolkit is intended as a basic guide to engaging local government on service delivery issues. It does not claim to offer a solution to every service delivery failure or conflict but it should help you to:

- understand the local government planning cycle and opportunities for engagement in the cycle;
- understand basic legislation that empowers you to engage on service delivery;
- strategise better on how to engage local government on specific service delivery issues using relevant tools at relevant times;
- analyse the municipal budget in better understanding service delivery issues;
- draft and follow up submissions made to the municipality;
- explore the structure of the municipality and locate the department or section that is relevant to your service delivery issue; and
- better understand a service delivery problem and frame an appropriate form of community mobilisation or engagement

Research (outlined in the Literature Review that accompanies this toolkit) has identified a number of drivers of violent service protest that are not within the ambit of this toolkit. These include:

- factional conflicts within political parties;
- power-broking by local political elites with a view to accessing state resources or positions of influence;

- basic economic jealousy or ethnic/ cultural prejudice manifesting as xenophobia often with a criminal or partly criminal element;
- deeply entrenched corruption or irregularity in the management of municipal finance and expenditure - often experienced by communities as a lack of accountability and transparency; and
- inequality and perceptions thereof, frequently the cause of anger among youth and especially young men who experience various levels of alienation

How is this guide structured?

This is not a step-by-step manual. Each tool may be selected and used independently, depending on the specifics of the service issue/ conflict being dealt with. The dynamics and the context in each community need to be carefully considered before a tool is selected and deployed.

The toolkit begins by giving on overview of the legislative framework supporting citizen participation in local government followed by the basics of the planning cycles and key planning processes in local government. It moves on to presenting the basics of community organising, this is because organised communities stand better chances of influencing government decisions than those that are not. The fourth section presents tools that communities could use to better understand and package their service delivery concerns in preparation for meaningful engagements with government. The fifth section deals with the basics of municipal budgeting and procurement while the last 2 sections really provide key insights in engaging local government.

The structure of the toolkit flows from the brief and intent to provide a one-stop shop and a comprehensive package and reference kit for communities wanting to engage local government on service delivery. Below are the sections captured herein summarised.

SECTION 1: The legislative and conceptual framework supporting community participation - An overview

SECTION 2: Local government planning cycle

SECTION 3: Active Citizenship

SECTION 4: Mapping the context

SECTION 5: Local government budget and procurement

SECTION 6: Engaging local government

SECTION 7: Strategies and tactics

1

The legislative and conceptual framework supporting community participation - An overview

SECTION 1

The legislative and conceptual framework supporting community participation – An overview

This section identifies the laws and policies, values and core principles that guide community participation in local government.

The Community defined

Section 1 of the Municipal Systems Act No 32 of 2000 defines a "local community" or "community", in relation to a municipality, as that body of persons comprising:

i. the residents of the municipality;
ii. the ratepayers of the municipality;
iii. any civic organisations and non-governmental, private sector or labour organisations or bodies which are involved in local affairs within the municipality; and
iv. visitors and other people residing outside the municipality who, because of their presence in the municipality, make use of services or facilities provided by the municipality;

This definition includes, more specifically, the poor and other disadvantaged sections of such body of persons."

This definition must be read with section 2 (b) of the Systems Act. This section reads as follows:

“A municipality consists of -

i. the political structures and administration of the municipality; and

ii. the community of the municipality.”

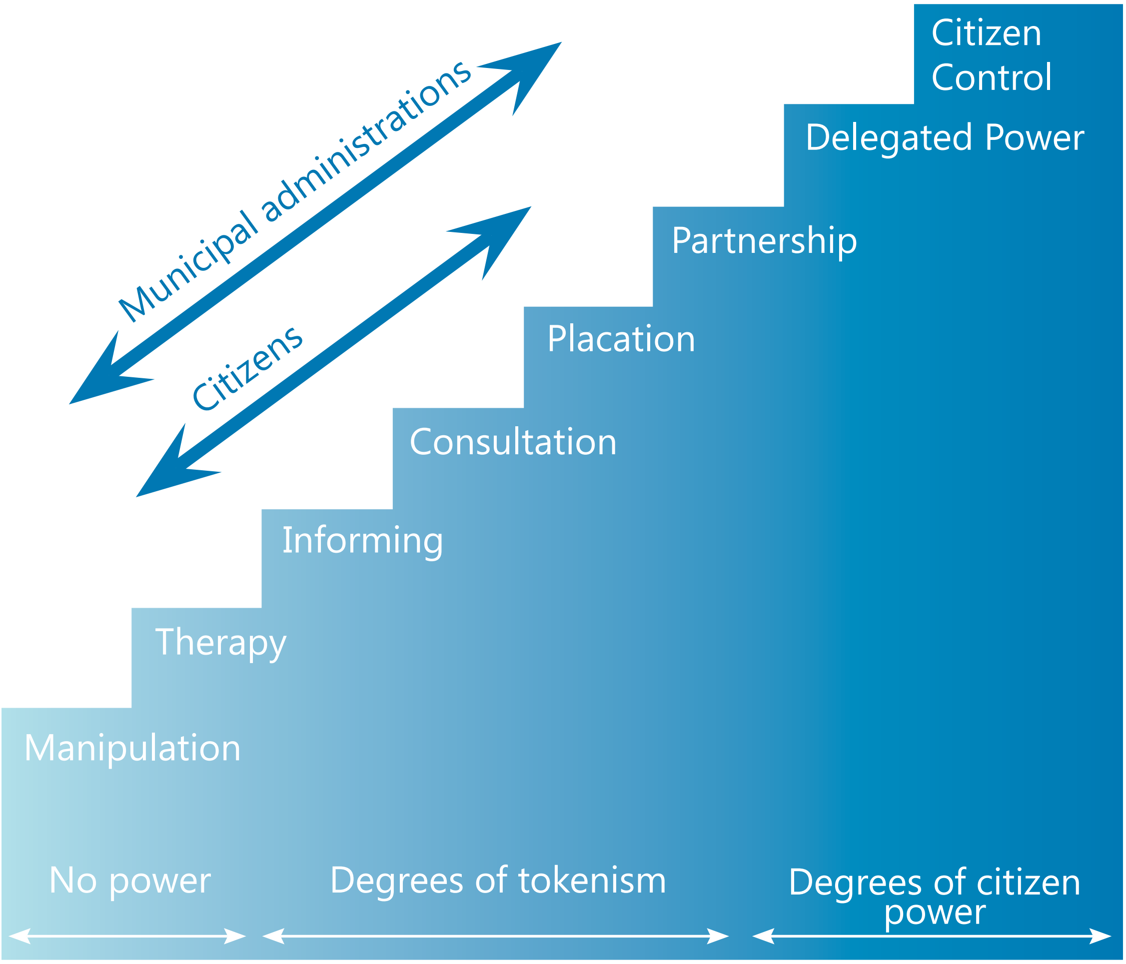
Community participation as an empowering process

The South African Constitution asserts the need for the realisation of a participatory democracy which calls for the active involvement and participation of the citizenry as well as more defined interest groups. Public participation processes serve to strengthen institutions of representative democracy by democratising those institutions. In the most pragmatic sense, in a participatory democracy, the public is actively involved in the decision-making processes of the government. Within this system, two forms of key public ‘actors’ exist: the citizenry, as represented by parties, and interest groups or stakeholders. In this model, public participation involves a meaningful exchange between the public actors and government.

There is a difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated and programs are operated. In short, power is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society. Participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the powerholders to claim that all sides were considered, but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit.

The ladder of participation presented below (adopted from Sherry Arnstein's seminal article[2]) is merely an indication of who has power when important decisions are being made.

Ladder of participation



[2]Sherry R. Arnstein's "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," Journal of the American Planning Association, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224

Core values and prinicples underpinning public particpation

The core values and principles below have been derived and adapted from a number of sources, and have been adopted by South African law and policy makers:

Core Values and Principles

- Those affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- Includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- Promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers.
- Seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- Seeks input from participants in deciding how they participate.
- Provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- Communicates to participants how their input affected the decision (feedback).
- Includes all relevant perspectives.
- Engages community members in learning and understanding community issues, and the economic, social, environmental, political, psychological, and other impacts of associated courses of action.
- Incorporates the diverse interests and cultures of the community in the development process, and avoids any action that adversely affects the disadvantaged members of a community.
- Works actively to enhance the leadership capacity of community members, leaders and groups within the community.
- Utilises a community's diversity to deepen shared understanding and produces outcomes of long-term benefit to the whole community or society.

Community participation as a right

Section 5 of the Municipal Systems Act No. 32 of 2000, presents community participation as a right in this manner:

"5. Rights and duties of members of local community

1. Members of the local community have the right -
   a. through mechanisms and in accordance with processes and procedures provided for in terms of this Act or other applicable legislation to
      i. contribute to the decision-making processes of the municipality; and
      ii. submit written or oral recommendations, representations and complaints to the municipal council or to another political structure or a political office bearer or the administration of the municipality

   b. to prompt responses to their written or oral communications, including complaints, to the municipal council or to another political structure or a political office bearer or the administration of the municipality
   c. to be informed of decisions of the municipal council, or another political structure or any political office bearer of the municipality, affecting their rights, property and reasonable expectation
   d. to regular disclosure of the state of affairs of the municipality, including its finances
   e. to demand that the proceedings of the municipal council and those of its committees must be -
      i. open to the public, subject to section 20
      ii. conducted impartially and without prejudice; and
      iii. untainted by personal self-interest".

Section 5 is complemented by section 6 of the same Act, which reads as follows

"6. Duties of municipal administrations

1. A municipality's administration is governed by the democratic values and principles embodied in section 195 (1) of the Constitution.

2. The administration of a municipality must -
   a. be responsive to the needs of the local communities
   b. facilitate a culture of public service and accountability amongst staff
   c. take measures to prevent corruption
   d. establish clear relationships, and facilitate co-operation and communication, between it and the local community
   e. give members of the local community full and accurate information about the level and standard of municipal services they are entitled to receive; and
   f. Inform the local community how the municipality is managed, of the costs involved and the persons in charge.".

The following are other pieces of legislation that give communities powers to engage in local governance:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;
- Municipal Structures Act No. 117 of 1998;
- Municipal Systems Act No. 32 of 2000;
- Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations, 2001;
- Municipal Performance Regulations for Municipal Managers and Managers Directly Accountable to Municipal Managers, 2006;
- Municipal Finance Management Act No. 56 of 2003;
- Municipal Budget and Reporting Regulations, 2008;
- Asset Transfer Regulations, 2008;
- Municipal Property Rates Act No. 6 of 2004;
- Disaster Management Act No. 57 of 2002;
- Disaster Management Volunteer Regulations, 2010;
- National Disaster Management Framework, 2005;and
- Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act No. 16 of 2013.

Access to information legislation

Without relevant information, citizens are unable to exercise or defend their constitutional right. Section 32(1) of the Constitution states that everyone has the right of access to "any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights". Section 32(2) provides that national legislation must be enacted to give effect to the right of access to information. That legislation is the Promotion of Access to Information Act No. 2 of 2000 (PAIA).

The purpose of PAIA is to ensure that people can exercise their constitutional right of access to any information held by:

- the State; or
- another person that is required for the exercise or protection of any right.

Communities and/ or individuals may request access to all documentation and records held by any government department, its officials or any other public body. It does not matter when that information came into existence. These include:

a. personal records held by a government department or a public body;
b. third party information or records: only with permission from the relevant third party, especially if the documents contain confidential or private information;
c. information to which access is not restricted by the Promotion of Access to Information Act;
d. the records of Cabinet and its committees;
e. records that relate to the judicial function of a court; and
f. information:
   i. obtained by a special tribunal that was established in terms of the law
   ii. held by a judicial officer of such a court or tribunal
   iii. held by an individual member of parliament or of a provincial legislature.

The Promotion of Access to Information Act should not be used in the following instances:

- when the record is requested to be used in criminal or civil proceedings; or
- a criminal or civil proceeding has already commenced.

However, the Access to Information Act overrules any other act or legislation that may prohibit you or restrict you from having access to any information.

NOTE:

Every municipality or government department has an information officer and requests for information should be directed to this officer. This information should be displayed on the municipality's website and if it is not, you have every right to contact the municipality and ask who the relevant information officer is.

To access a step-by-step guide on how to access and fill in the PAIA forms visit this website:
www.justice.gov.za

Promotion of administrative justice legislation

Research shows that on many occasions frustration over service delivery is aggravated by lack of administrative justice. Section 33 of the Constitution guarantees that administrative action will be reasonable, lawful and procedurally fair and it makes sure that people have the right to ask for written reasons when administrative action has a negative impact on them.

The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act No. 3 of 2000 (PAJA) does the following:

- it ensures that administrative procedures are fair;
- it gives people the right to ask for reasons; and
- it gives citizens the right to have administrative action reviewed by the courts.

In general, PAJA makes sure that the administration works in a way that is fair and transparent and it holds the administration accountable for its actions. It also makes sure that decisions are carefully considered and the public is involved in decision-making that affects them.

The Act says that all administrators must:

- follow fair procedure when making a decision and clearly explain any decisions taken;
- allow relevant parties to voice their opinion before making any decision that might affect their rights;
- inform people about any redress mechanisms in their department. If there is no internal appeal system, they must tell citizens of their right to ask the courts to review the decision; and
- tell people that they have the right to ask for the reasons for any decision taken to be given to them in writing.

Citizens can expect the administration to tell them in advance (where possible) of any intended decision that may affect their rights. Everybody can expect to be given a chance to voice their view before the decision is taken. A person can expect to be told of the outcome of the decision and must be told that they have the right to appeal the decision and ask for reasons for the decision.

NOTE:

Anybody can ask for reasons for a decision that affects them negatively, and they can ask for these reasons to be given to them **in writing within 90 days** of the decision being made. According to PAJA, administrators must give “adequate” reasons for the decision taken. This means that they must explain exactly how the decision was reached, and although the person does not have to be convinced by their argument, the reasons stated should be satisfactory and not based on a personal viewpoint. If the person has any questions about the decision, these must be addressed.

If a person is still dissatisfied with the decision, he or she can make use of a department’s **internal appeal procedure** (if there is one). To access more information on PAJA visit **www.justice.gov.za**

Local Government Planning Cycle

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SECTION 2

Local Government Planning Cycle

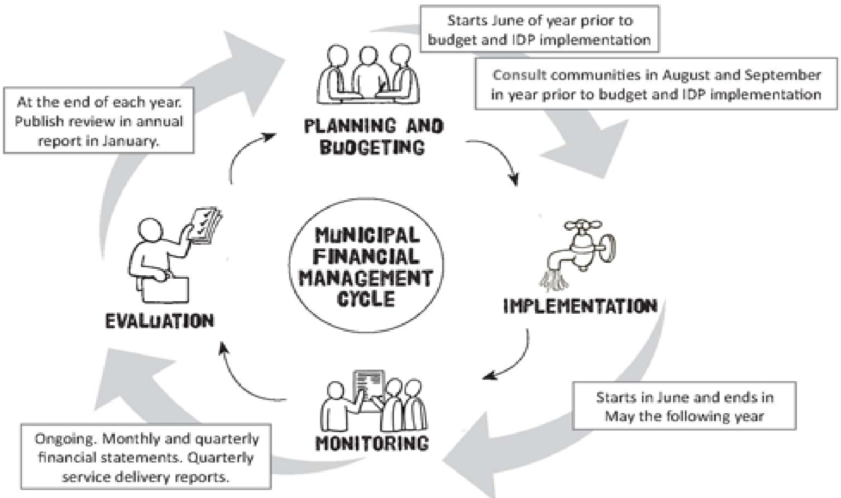
The Municipal Systems Act No. 32 of 2000 requires that each year municipalities review their Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and budgets. This process is also covered by the Municipal Finance Management Act No. 56 of 2003 (MFMA) and starts in June of the year before the municipality will implement its IDP and spend its budget on service delivery. The budget is the municipality's financial plan and indicates how much money will go towards each of the activities outlined in the IDP. The budget should outline where the municipality is getting its money from, how much it will receive and how much will be spent on things like salaries, goods and services, infrastructure and equipment. Furthermore, the law requires the municipality to consult the community when setting its priorities, developing its plans and allocating resources to priorities through the budget

The finance management processes in a municipality follow an annual cycle that includes four broad activities:

- planning and budgeting;
- implementation and spending;
- monitoring of services and spending; and
- evaluation of services and spending.

Each of these activities provides community members with opportunities to participate in monitoring budget expenditure, making sure that the municipality is using the money available to it in the best interest of the community, and the manner planned for and captured in the IDP. The diagram below summarises the municipal financial management cycle.

Municipal planning and financial management/ budget cycle



There are numerous guides and summaries available on the internet to assist communities to understand municipal planning better. Afesis-corplan has developed an animated story of Thandi (Thandi's Story) towards this end. To access the story of Thandi visit **www.afesis.org.za** (this story is also included in the CD that came with this toolkit).

Tips for communities in engaging in the municipal finance management cycle for service delivery

As the story of Thandi will show, there are key moments of engagement and key principles for communities to keep in mind if they want to influence municipal decision-making. These are summarised below:

i. Get consensus from your community on the priority service delivery issues that you want to engage the municipality on;
ii. Do your homework:

- Are your service delivery issues also priorities identified by the municipality?
- What is the municipality's plan for service delivery in your area in the current budget?
- Analyse the municipal budget to see if it is under-spending on the service issues you have identified?

iii. Make a submission to your ward committee meeting first to lobby for support and prioritisation of your service delivery issues;
iv. Attend meetings organised by the municipality for IDP and budget review and make a submission in support of your service delivery issues;
v. Make a formal written submission to the municipality in support of your service delivery issues;
vi. Write to the municipality and ask for your community representative(s) to be included in the IDP Representative Forum and when they are there they must lobby support for your service delivery issue of concern;
vii. If in the draft IDP (which the municipality needs to publish), your service delivery issues have not been addressed or planned for, write to the municipality in terms of PAJA and ask for detailed reasons why this is the case and ask when the municipality plans to address your service delivery issues of concern.

Other strategies and tactics that communities can use in engaging the municipality around service delivery are discussed in other parts of this toolkit.

What is a municipal financial year end?

A financial year end is the 12 months on which government budgets are based. The financial year for municipalities runs from **01 July to 30 June** of the following year. The financial year for national and provincial government is different - it runs from **01 April to 31 March**. A financial year end is also sometimes called a fiscal year.

Active Citizenship

3

SECTION 3

Active Citizenship

Active citizenship is the process of engaging communities to identify community priorities, resources, needs and solutions in such a way as to promote representative participation, good governance, accountability and peaceful change.

With Active citizenships, participation is about meeting the interests of the whole community. When every member of a community has the chance, directly or through representation, to participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of community-level initiatives, there is a higher likelihood that the program accurately reflects their real needs and interests. The approach takes into consideration the different experiences, needs and capabilities of various groups in a community – women and men, youth and the elderly, persons with disabilities and the able bodied, ethnic/religious/language minorities and majorities.

Community Facilitation table

Community Facilitation is...	Community Facilitation is not...
• Fostering collective power	• Using power over others
• Systematic	• One-off activities
• Multi-faceted	• Ad hoc or done without a plan
• A process	• Done with one strategy
• A struggle for social justice	• A project
• About fostering activism	• A technical quick-fix
• Requiring a range of people, groups and institutions	• About implementing activities
• Going beyond individuals to influence groups	• Focused only on individuals
• Building social networks or capital fostering alternative values	• Dividing individuals or groups
• Stimulating critical thinking	• Providing only information and facts telling people what to think
• Holistic and inclusive	• Limited to specific individuals or groups
• Based on principles of human rights	• Based on benevolence or protectionism
• Positive and supportive	• Blaming and shaming
• Democratic	• Hierarchical
• Changing norms	• Changing just specific behaviors possible with individuals acting in isolation
• Collective: everyone must work together for change	• Punitive
• Benefits-based	• Focused on manifestations of violence
• Focused on root cause (power imbalance)	

Where there is community mobilisation there is no room for imposing external solutions that may not be in harmony with the community patterns of beliefs or organization. The community that is properly mobilized should not feel coerced or forced into making certain decisions. They should be part and parcel of all the decisions made and actively involved in every step made. In mobilizing communities, experts are open to learning and listening to community ideas and interpretations of information utilizing a language of communication that is understood and accepted.

Key steps in community mobilisation

- Create awareness of the service delivery issues;
- Motivate the community through community preparation, organizational development, capacity developments and bringing allies together;
- Share information and communication; and
- Support community, provide incentives and generate resources.

Examples of some basic tools

We recommend the use of participatory tools and techniques in community mobilization. Some of the tools that work best are the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools. There is a lot of information on the internet on how to facilitate participatory rural appraisal tools. Below we share a few that we think are the simplest and most commonly used tools.

a. A social map

A social map is a map that is drawn by the residents which shows the social structures and institutions found in an area. It can also provide information about social and economic differences between households. This is a tool that the community could use to better understand the distance between the social services that it needs to access and what the social fibre of the community looks like. This information is useful in mapping out who the critical stakeholders are that must be engaged.

Afesis-corplan Social map for Chris Hani Park 1 and 2

Some of the key questions to ask in developing the map are:

1. **What are the approximate boundaries of the community with regard to social interaction and social services?**
2. **How many households are found in the community and where are they located?**
3. **Is the number of households growing or shrinking?**
4. **What are the social structures and institutions found in the community?**
5. **What religious, ethnic, racial groups are found in the area?**
6. **Which are the female headed households and where are they are located?**
7. **Where are the municipal offices?**
8. **Where are the shared social services, like communal taps, high mast lights, etc**

The questions and the features you will zoom into in the map should largely be influenced by the service delivery issue of concern to the community

How to facilitate social mapping

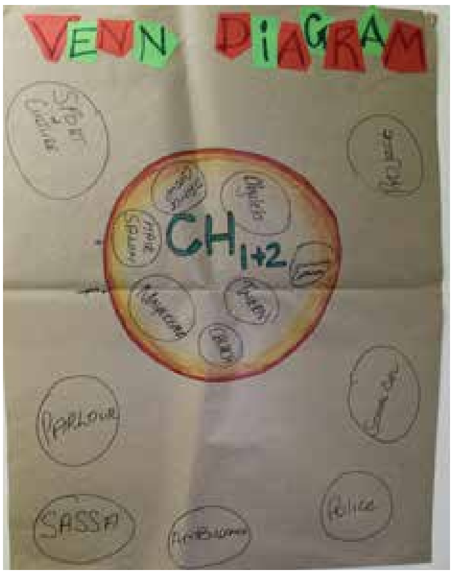
Ask the participants to draw a map of the community, showing all the features noted above. For orientation it will be helpful to draw roads and significant spots in the community into the map first. During the whole process, take care that once somebody has given a statement, you ask the others whether they agree, disagree or want to add something. The purpose of the social map must be very clear to all participants, make sure that the participants do not have wrong expectations. For example they might think that the poor households will get food donations, which is completely wrong.

NOTE:

If drawing on the ground, use soft ground, sticks and local material for symbols, or if drawing on a paper, use a big sheet of paper, pencils, and different colour markers to mark the different features.

b. The Venn diagram

The Venn Diagram of Institutions shows institutions, organisations, groups and important individuals found in the community, as well as the community's view of their importance. Additionally the diagram explains who participates in these groups in terms of gender and wealth. The Institutional Relationship Diagram also indicates how close the contact and cooperation between those organisations and groups is.



Afesis-corplan Venn diagram for Chris Hani Park 1 and 2

Some of the key questions to ask in developing the diagram are:

1. **Which organisations/institutions/groups are working in or with the community?**
2. **Which institutions/groups does the community regard as most important, and why?**
3. **Which groups are addressing critical development issues of concern to the community?**
4. **Which organisations work together?**
5. **Are some particular groups or kind of people excluded from being members of or receiving services from certain institutions?**

c. Income and Expenditure Matrix

The Income and Expenditure Matrix is a tool that helps us to identify and quantify the relative importance of different sources of income and expenditures. The tool also helps us to understand how secure or how vulnerable certain groups of people's incomes are. In the Expenditures Matrix, we can see if all, most or only some of people's total income is spent to meet basic needs - food, water, clothing, shelter, health care, education. We can also ask whether people have any money left over to save or to invest in saving schemes. This is especially important for groups that are considering establishing savings schemes like the Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor's model and approach to access to decent shelter.

Some of the key questions to ask in developing the matrix are:

Income matrix:

1. What are the most important sources of income in the community, both cash and in kind?
2. Who has only a few sources of income?
3. Who has many sources of income?
4. How do poor people's sources of income compare to rich people's?
5. How do women's sources of income compare to men's?

Expenditure matrix:

1. How are expenditures spread out over the year?
2. Which expenditures are common to almost everyone?
3. For each social group, what proportion of income is spent on basic needs like food, clothing, housing, health care and education?
4. Who can save?
5. Who can buy equipment, tools, agricultural inputs, or other things that help improve their work?
6. How do women's expenditures compare to men's?

NOTE:

A PRA facilitator's guide is included as an appendix in this toolkit.

4

Mapping the local government context / Understanding how change will happen

SECTION 4

Mapping the local government context/ Understanding how change will happen

In Section 2, we began to talk about municipal planning processes. This section explores the following questions:

- What does government think the community's service delivery needs are?
- What has government committed to deliver in order to address those needs?
- What is the budget allocation for delivering these services?
- What money has already been spent on these services?

Three municipal documents are key in searching for answers to these questions:

1. The Integrated Development Plan (IDP)
2. The Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP)
3. The municipality's budget

Whenever you are looking for information about municipal planning and budgeting, it is advisable to read these documents together.

Summary of the three documents

IDP	SDBIP	Municipal Budget
Is a five year development plan	Similar to the IDP but is a one year plan	Explains where the municipality gets its money, how much it is getting and what the money will be spent on
Outlines how the municipality will spend its budget and its development priorities	It gives a clear picture of what will happen in the current financial year	Usually contains tables, graphs and charts as well as written information
It is a lengthy document with the municipal vision	Its aim is to make sure that the IDP is aligned to the municipal budget	A municipality is legally required to consult citizens in drafting and finalising it
A municipality is legally required to engage citizens in drafting and finalising it	It also gives information on how government plans to measure its progress	The municipality is legally required to make it publicly accessible
The municipality is legally required to make it publicly accessible	The municipality is required to make it publicly accessible	

The IDP and the budget have been explained in detail in Section 2. Let us spend a bit of time here discussing the SDBIP.

Understanding a service delivery and budget implementation plan

The SDBIP serves as a contract between the administration, the Council and the community, expressing the objectives set by the Council as quantifiable outcomes that can be implemented by the administration over the next twelve months. The SDBIP facilitates the process of holding management accountable for their performance. It provides the basis for measuring performance in the delivery of services. The SDBIP is a detailed one year plan approved by the mayor of a municipality in terms of section 53(1)(c)(ii) of the MFMA for implementing the municipality's delivery of municipal services and its annual budget. It must include the following:

"(a) Projections for each month of :-

i. Revenue to be collected by source; and
ii. Operational and capital expenditure by vote.

(b) Service delivery targets and performance indicators for each quarter; and
(c) Any other matters that may be prescribed and includes any revisions of such plan by the mayor in terms of section 54(1)(c) of the MFMA."

These documents, and the information they contain are critical in the analysis of the services the municipality plans to spend money on. Most municipalities publish these documents on their websites, while others, whose websites are poorly maintained, make these documents available upon request. When perusing these documents, you may find that the municipality uses technical language or jargon when talking about the services you are interested in. If you are looking for information about water for example, you may find words like ‘reticulation’ and ‘abstraction’. If you are looking for information about electricity delivery you may see terms such as ‘substation’ and ‘pylons’.

You may also pick up that the process of delivering water from the source to a tap, or toilet in a household, involves a number of steps that can include different stakeholders. For example, a municipality might be responsible for getting the water to the tap, but not for the source that the water comes from. These details are relevant to budget analysis which is discussed in Section 5 of this toolkit. One therefore needs to know which parts are relevant to their service delivery issue so that they can identify which budget allocations are of interest to them.

NOTE:

It is important to speak to someone knowledgeable about the technicalities and technical terms related to the service delivery issue of concern to you. In the delivery of water for example, terms like bulk water supply, reservoir, potable water, grey water, etc are all important for one to understand in connection with the water delivery process that is in line with their service delivery issue, if their service delivery issue has something to do with water.

Mapping key municipal departments to engage

Once you have accessed the three key documents that you need and have taken time to analyse and understand them, you need to map a picture of the various departments and divisions within the municipality that will help you find answers to the following questions:

- **Which parts of the municipality are involved in the delivery of this service?**
- **Who in the municipality is involved in the delivey of this service?**

Municipalities are complex institutions, it is not always clear who is responsible for what. Figuring this out, with a focus on your specific service delivery issue is important preparation for your engagements with the municipality at a later stage and will help you read the budget and link it to certain structures, departments and divisions within the municipality.

Understanding the basic structure of a municipality

A municipality is made up of the political and the administrative structures. The political structure is made up of the following structures:

- The mayor (the executive or mayoral committee);
- The speaker;
- The municipal council; and
- Portfolio and oversight committees.

The administrative structure is made up of the functional parts of the municipality that implement the core work and deliver on key responsibilities. For example:

- Community Services Department.
- Engineering Department
- Development and planning Department.
- Finance Department.
- Corporate Services Department.

When gathering information, keep in mind that across municipalities, there can be different titles for the same job or different names for divisions with the same responsibility. For example, in one municipality you may have a mayoral committee while in another it may be called an executive committee.

Why do all of this?

When you are advocating for improvements in the service delivery issue of concern that you have identified with your community, you want to make sure that you are engaging with people within the municipality who play a role in the delivery of the service. More importantly, you want to engage people in the municipality who make key decisions regarding the service, as well as people who have oversight responsibilities.

Identifying these people early is good because, if you know who has the power to address your service delivery issue and how they are connected to one another, you can already start thinking about what tactics you might use to engage them.

What does it mean for a municipality to be placed under administation?

The diagram below presents the various pieces of legislation that call for intervention from various bodies in cases where a municipality is unable to perform its function. This is generally known as 'being placed under administration'. A municipality is placed under administration when it demonstrates an inability to carry out its legal and constitutional duties. This means that the provincial government will play an intervening role in the running of the municipality whilst it supports the municipality to 'stand on its feet again'. This is generally seen as a last resort measure and is only implemented when a municipality has proven to be in severe trouble. For example, if a municipality is unable to spend the grants it receives from national government, is not paying its debt, not implement its IDP or if other crucial duties are not being carried out.

Communities have sometimes called for their municipality to be placed under administration in the hope that it will unlock better service provision and curb corruption and irregular expenditure. Experience to date suggests that this step does not necessarily resolve the problem in full but may serve to reduce the worst examples of poor governance and financial misconduct. In some cases like Makana, administrators have agreed to work with local civil society coalitions to address their concerns.

Municipal Systems Act flow chart

- Municipal Systems Act: section 105 of MSA
- MEC for LG to establish mechanisms processes and procedures in terms of section 155 (6) of the Constitution to:
- (a) monitor municipalities in managing their
- own affairs, exercising their powers and performing their functions
- (b) monitor the development of local government capacity in the province;
- and;
- (c) assess the support needed by municipalities
- to strengthen their capacity to manage their own
- affairs, exercise their powers and perform their functions

Provincial Monitoring of LG (Section 105 of Municipal Systems Act 2000 (MSA)

Municipalities in cooperative governance - (section 154; 155(7) of the constitution (1996) and section 3 (3) of the MSA

1. The National and provincial government, by legislative and other measures, must support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities to manage their own affairs.
S155/(7) National and Provincial government
2. have a legislative & executive authority to oversee the effective performance of LG in matters listed in schedule 4 & 5, by regulating the sector (LG)
3. Effective co-operative government and organised local governement

NB not to be confused with the constitutional prescripts of the application of section 139 of the Constitution

- As part of the monitoring and support process.
- (1) If the MEC has reason to believe that a municipality in a province cannot or does not fulfil a statutory obligation binding on that municpality or that maladministration, fraud, corruption or other serious malpractise has occured or is occuring in a municipality in the province:
- (a) the MEC must by written notice to the municipality, request the municipal council or MM to provide the MEC with information required in the notice, or
- (b) if the MEC considers it necessary, designate a person or persons to investigate the matter
- If an investigation is issued by the MEC in terms of subsection (1)(b), a written statement must be submitted to the NCOP motivating for such action/investigation

Non-performance and maladministration (section 106 of MSA)

The application of provincial interventions in local government (section 139 of the constitution)

(1) When a municipality cannot or does not fulfill an executive obligation in terms of the Constitution or legislation, the relevant provincial executive may intervene by taking any appropriate steps to ensure fulfillment of that obligation.
(4) When a municipality fails to approve the budget or any revenue raising measures to give effect to the budget;
(5) If a municipality, as a result of a crisis in its financial affairs, is in serious or persistent material breach of its obligations to provide basic services or to meet its financial commitments, or admits that it is unable to meet its obligations or financial commitments.

Understanding municipal budgeting and procurement

5

SECTION 5

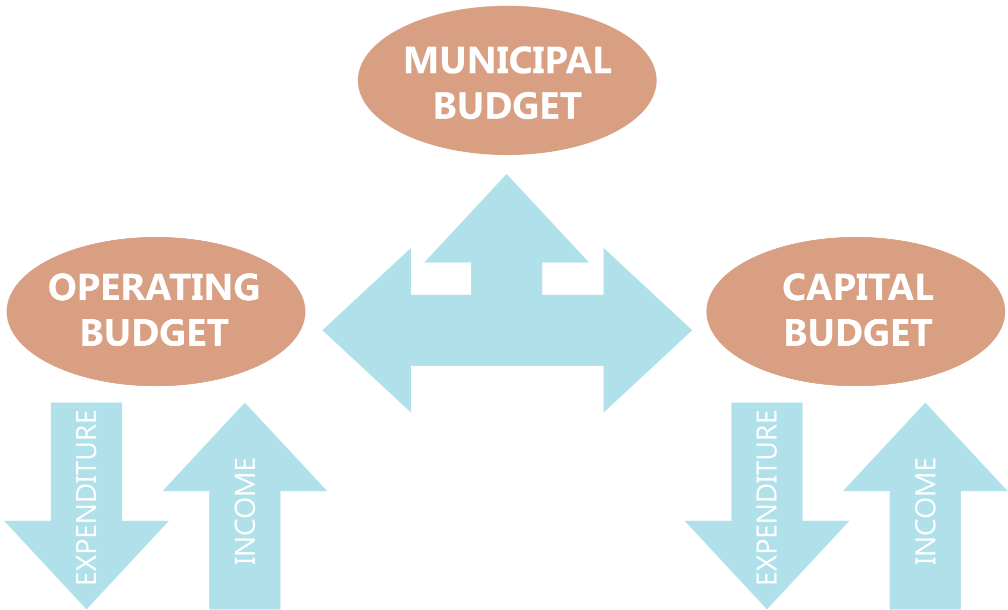
Understanding municipal budgeting and procurement

Many service delivery issues necessitate that you engage with the municipal planning documents (including the budget) in the manner described in Section 3 and 4 above, while others are procurement issues, and require that you understand the municipal procurement processes and identify opportunities for influencing procurement decisions. This section briefly discusses municipal budgeting and procurement.

Capital and operating budgets explained

A municipal budget is made up of two parts, an operating budget and a capital budget. An operating budget deals with the day-to-day expenses of a municipality such as salaries, purchase of bulk electricity and water, spending on contracted services; and the revenue or income used to fund these expenses. The capital budget on the other hand, deals with expenditure on things with a relatively long lifespan such as land, buildings, vehicles, and the pipes used to distribute water; as well as the revenue or income for this type of expenditure.

Structure of a Municipal budget



Sources of Operating and Capital Revenue

Sources of Operating Revenue	Sources of capital Revenue
Services and charges	Government grants
Property rates	Loans
Operational transfers from government	Internally generated funds
Other own revenue	Public contributions and donations

Overview of the municipal budgeting process

The municipal budget process is made up of the following five important steps:

i. Strategic planning;
ii. Municipal-wide budget preparation;
iii. Tabling the draft budget;
iv. Public consultation and external assessments; and
v. Tabling the final budget.

Together, these five stages form what is generally known as the annual budget process. Below we briefly discuss each of the five steps.

i. Strategic planning

The strategic planning for the following financial year usually starts soon after the start of a financial year. This means that planning for the 2018/19 financial year will start soon after 01 July 2017 (the start of the 2017/18 financial year). Between July and August, a series of strategic planning sessions are organised to set priorities for the following financial year's budget. The priorities are based on how the municipality's budget performed in the past as well as the present economic situation in the municipality.

ii. Municipal-wide budget preparation

This process starts around August and involves the development of a budget model for the municipality as a whole, as well as internal budgeting processes within different departments and directorates. During this stage, departments prepare budget proposals of their relevant directorates to submit to the municipality's overall budget. It is very difficult to find information on how departments really put together their budget proposals.

At the same time, the Finance Services Directorate develops a budget model for the whole municipality and as part of this process, it will determine how much money the municipality will have to spend to fulfil its functions and how much revenue or income it will need versus how much it thinks it is going to generate. Assumptions about other factors such as economic growth and inflation are also taken into account in the modelling exercise and different budget scenarios are developed and presented to the Budget Steering Committee. Between January and March the detailed draft (capital and operating) budgets are finalised.

iii. Tabling the draft budget

Municipalities generally table their draft budgets in the council between the end of February and the end of March.

iv. Public consultation and external assessments

As indicated in Section 2 above, the official public participation process usually takes place during April. After the draft budget has been tabled and made publicly available, the public has an opportunity to make written submissions or comments on the draft budget. At the same time, the draft budget is submitted to Provincial (and sometimes National) Treasury for review.

NOTE:

This is a critical moment of engagement for communities on service delivery issues. A community can make a submission on the budget on their service delivery issue in response to the draft budget once it is made publicly available. By law, a municipality must publicly announce the release of a draft budget and must invite comments using local media.

v. Tabling of the final budget

Comments and inputs from both the public and external bodies are taken into consideration and the budget is revised and finalised. This usually happens in about May. The final budget is then tabled in the council at the end of May, where the council votes to approve it (or not, depending). Once the final budget has been approved by council, it is then implemented at the start of the financial year (01 July).

The International Budget Partnership (now with an office in South Africa) has developed a number of basic tools and guides to support ordinary citizens in reading and analysing municipal budgets. These can be accessed and downloaded on this website: **www.internationabudget.org**

SCENARIO:

A community of Zimele in East London travels long distances to fetch water from the only communal stand pipe available in the area. They then decide to strategically engage in the upcoming Municipal planning and budgeting process. They collected information including the current IDP, budget and SDBIP, the Annual reports for the past 3 financial years, they ask their children who are Engineers and Quantity Surveyors to give them technical advice on where the stand pipes may be located, what the travelling distances involved, where the municipality could connect from its existing bulk infrastructure, etc. Furthermore, the community leadership committee conducts a detailed social profile of the community, highlighting that many of the households were either child or women headed; highlighting the dangers this vulnerable group was exposed to while travelling to fetch water on a daily basis.

Their analysis of the municipality's SDBIP, budgets and annual reports pointed to the fact the municipality was under spending on its capital budget for water and sanitation provision. They then made a submission to the municipality requesting that, since it was already under spending on water and sanitation service provision, that it must consider funding the installation of communal water standpipes to this community. They presented the technical reports from the engineers and quantity surveyors which indicated that this would be possible. They made their submission in an Open Council day of the municipality, in the presence of both the political and administrative leaders. Thereafter they made regular enquiries on their submission. Eventually, a decision was made by the municipality to install the communal standpipes and this was reflected in the new budget, IDP and SDBIP.

Overview of the basics of public procurement

The term public procurement refers to the buying of goods and services by the government from the private sector. When public procurement is not working as it should, service delivery is compromised, resulting in goods and services that are of poor quality, delivered late or not delivered at all. A typical example of this is the widely publicised textbook fiasco in Limpopo where many learners went without the crucial learning resources they needed for effective learning for a large part of the year. Unfortunately, this still persists.

Public procurement can refer to:

a. Buying of goods: These include things like equipment, furniture, etc
b. Buying of services: where government appoints a company to undertake work that it cannot or does not do itself. Examples are the scholar transport services, trainings of staff, waste removal services, etc
c. Payment for certain public works: These are usually large infrastructure development projects normally involving a mixture of goods and services.

There are three main basic steps in a public procurement process:

i. A municipality (or government department) identifies the goods or services that it needs.
ii. The municipality uses a fair and open process to choose the supplier that offers the right goods or services at the best price. The tendering process must be competitive.
iii. The municipality makes sure that the goods or services are delivered at the right place and right time.

There is extensive legislation and a policy framework that regulates public procurement. There are generally three broad sourcing strategies or methods that municipalities might consider in order to procure something:

a. **External sourcing:-** where a municipality decides to purchase goods or services from a supplier that is outside of government.
b. **Transversal contracts:-** when goods and services are needed in large quantities and by a number of municipal departments, then National Treasury negotiates transversal contracts to purchase these collectively, usually after a competitive bidding process. The municipalities would then purchase the related goods and services only from the supplier contracted by National Treasury.
c. **Public Private Partnership:-** some goods and services are procured through joint projects between government departments and private sector companies. There are specific laws that regulate partnerships of the nature.

External sourcing is the most common method used for public procurement in South Africa and generally the estimated value of the goods or services to be procured is used to determine the procurement method to be used. National Treasury has set specific price thresholds, or limits, for each external sourcing method.

Price threshold for external sourcing methods

Price of goods or services	Procurement method to be used	Description
R1 – R2 000	Petty cash	The municipality can use the petty cash for these purchases. This is usually for day-to-day expenses and the accounting officer sets up a system to manage petty cash
R2 001 – R10 000	Compare three quotes	The municipality has to get three quotes from suppliers drawn from the database of registered prospective suppliers. These quotes can either be written or verbal and if verbal, the municipality needs to keep some evidence of having obtained the three verbal quotes.
R10 001 – R200 000	Compare three written quotes	Here the municipality has to request three or more quotes from its database of prospective suppliers. If for some reason the municipality cannot find three written quotes, the reasons have to be written and approved by the accounting officer.
R200 001 +	Competitive bidding	Here a competitive bidding process has to be followed.

Source: National Treasury (2007)

The role of supply chain management in public procurement

Supply chain management (SCM) is a term generally used in discussing and managing procurement. In South Africa, government has set up a supply chain management system that all government departments and municipalities must use for public procurement. Supply chain generally refers to the processes of managing flows of raw material, information, people and goods from their point of origin to where they need to be. SCM, the core component of the public financial management discipline, seeks to ensure the proper flow of goods and services between the supplier and the public sector institutions. These flows need to be in the right quality and quantity whilst still advancing governments development goals, promoting empowerment principles, supplier development, Local Economic Development (LED) and value for money, to ensure expeditious and appropriate service delivery.

SCM undergirds spending on capital projects and operational expenditure, monitoring the manner in which the spending is undertaken, and fostering spending that advances municipal goals. As a financial management tool, SCM seeks to reform and regulate the manner in which public funds are utilised when procuring goods and services, that is responsive to the needs of the society and to curtail any mal-administrative and fraudulent practices in the procurement front.

The International Budget Partnership has developed a reference guide for Monitoring Public Procurement in South Africa: A reference Guide for Civil Society Organisations which is accessible on this website:
www.internationabudget.org

6
Tools for social change

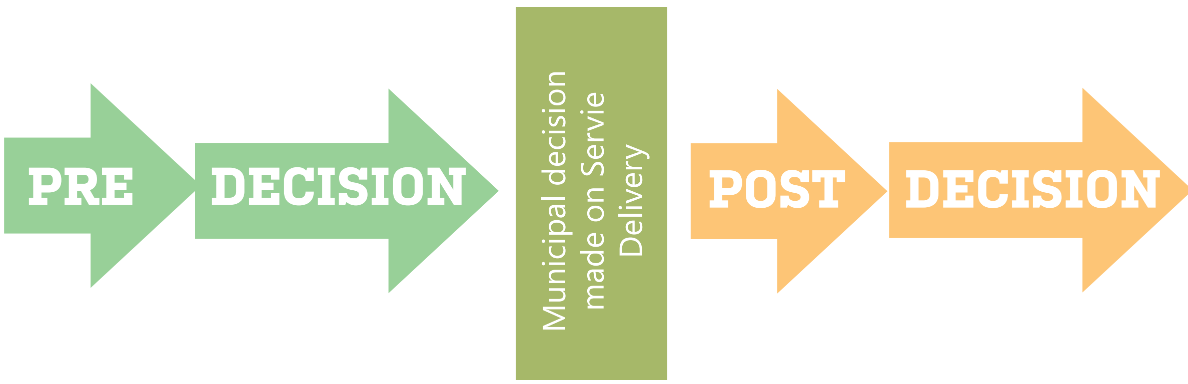
SECTION 6

Tools for social change

Up to this point, information contained in all the previous sections was meant to assist one to prepare to engage in social change action. In this particular context, the aim is to improve and enhance service delivery. The assumption we make in this section is that the community has already identified the service delivery issue(s) it wants to engage government on and that the community leaders have done their 'homework' around this service delivery issue, including mobilizing the community for support, requesting relevant information that will help them understand the facts, and have analysed municipal plans and budgets.

It is our understanding that the major reason why anyone would go to this much effort is to influence the decisions made by the municipality in favour of the service delivery change that the community desires to see. We imagine a continuum of events and activities in which communities participate and actively engage in service delivery. The diagram below presents a graphic representation of this service delivery continuum.

Service delivery continuum



The pre-decision stages of service delivery

As noted in all the sections above, there are numerous opportunities legally provided for the community to influence decisions made by the municipality. These range from decisions about what priorities must be set for development, to decisions about how money will be spent and decisions about procurement. In all these processes, the community must be involved and must position itself to meaningfully engage. To do this it needs to mobilise and organise, get the information it needs and analyse it, talk to knowledgeable technical people that can fill in the gaps if need be, and show up to engage. It is very difficult to dismiss a community grouping that is organised, mobilised and informed.

Some pre-decision making opportunities include:

i. IDP preparation processes;
ii. Opportunities to make budget submissions;
iii. Opportunities to make submissions directly to relevant portfolio and oversight committees;
iv. Opportunities to make submissions to council, this includes requesting to address council;
v. Opportunities to engage departmental heads, etc.

Engaging in pre-decision making processes is far more difficult that engaging after a decision has been made. The pre-decision making processes are about convincing those with power to prioritise and meet your demands. It is a struggle for choice and power and involves communities jostling and laying claim to power. Only the most resolute, informed and organised community groups achieve this.

For now we have been suggesting the use of legislated mechanisms to achieve this. However, in instances where these legislated mechanisms fail to present communities with meaningful opportunities to jostle for power in the manner discussed above, they can create their own means of engaging. These strategies and tactics are discussed in Section 7 of this toolkit.

Some tools to use in the pre-decision making stages

As mentioned above, there are a number of legislated mechanisms for citizens to engage government around service delivery and to influence decision-making. Over and above these legislated spaces, there are some widely accepted tools by government that communities can use to engage in the pre-decision making stages. Here we will mention only two; community based planning and community profiling.

1. Community based planning

Community based planning refers to the participatory process whereby local knowledge is packaged into an action plan. Rather than waiting on government to develop plans for the community, communities lead the initiative by prioritising development interventions, settling disputes and conflicts, and eventually coming up with a comprehensive development plan.

These plans have the potential of bring key stakeholders and role-players around the negotiation table. Some community plans focus on securing tenure - which involves auditing land ownership, brokering alternative solutions to evictions, and negotiating preferred future scenarios - while others upgrade their settlement leading to incrementally securing tenure. Some communities develop layout plans for water and sanitation services; others require the rearrangement of shacks to utilise their living space better and provide space for emergency services in fire and flooding prone areas. Community-initiated plans empower the citizen-resident and sets up possibilities for “co-producing” collaborative approaches to informal settlement upgrading.

There are a number of manuals and handbooks on community based planning and a number of municipalities are open to supporting communities initiate community based planning as an integral part of the IDP process. Many of the tools used in community based planning are drawn from the Participatory

Rural Appraisal research technique, you may want to look at both manuals (the community based planning one and the PRA one) when engaging in community based planning. A guide to community based planning has been included as an appendix to this toolkit.

2. Community profiling

Community profiling is a useful way of developing an understanding of the people in a geographical area or a specific community of interest. This understanding can assist in the development of a community engagement plan and influence who the key stakeholder groups are and how a project develops. Profiles can illustrate the makeup of a community and could include information about the diversity within the community, their history, social and economic characteristics, how active people are (i.e. the groups and networks used) and what social and infrastructure services are provided. A community profile can also provide information on the level of interest community members may have in being actively involved in a project and their preferred method of engagement.

Many municipalities have supported ward committees to undertake community profiling in the past, however the approach used by ward committees was largely extractive, lacking the participatory and empowering element that a participatory research approach would have had. So, in conducting community profiles, one can use conventional research methods, i.e. develop a questionnaire and send ward committee members to go door-to-door to administer it, punch the data in a computer and generate graphs. Or, one can use tools such as PRA and go on a fact-finding journey with the community to assist them to collectively uncover their profile. In this way, communities will also begin to find ways of initiating change processes and addressing, on their own, some of the glaring social ills uncovered by the research. This approach is particularly empowering.

One would use some of the PRA tools, already discussed in other parts of this toolkit, in profiling a community.

The post decision making stages of service delivery

Once the IDPs and budgets are approved by council and SDBIPs are produced, government implements these plans. The legislative framework in South Africa allows for spaces for citizen participation in this stage of service delivery, in fact, it even goes as far as allow for community participation in discussions on the annual report, as well as the review of key performance indicators, and performance targets of municipalities. Citizens have to be pro-active and position themselves to play a meaningful role in the implementation of basic services.

If in the IDP for example, Ward A is scheduled to have a road tarred in year 1, residents of Ward A need to be pro-active in asking for information pertaining to the road construction process, i.e. when will the project commence, how many people will be employed at what rate, how will the procurement of the contractor be conducted, what is the expected end date of the project, will the service delivery standards of the project be shared with the community, what role does the municipality envisage them playing in the process, will they need to sign off on each payment certificate submitted by the contractor as proof that they are happy with each stage of the work, etc.? It is the duty of the community of Ward A to arm themselves with relevant information to enable them to participate meaningfully in the road construction project. If they do not, those who are better organised will take up the space.

The same can be said for any other development intervention irrespective of which sphere of government implements it. When the community is involved in their own development, it guards against poor workmanship and slow pace of delivery and is able to highlight irregularities before the project is severely compromised. Government on the other hand, saves money by guarding against poor workmanship and the slow pace of delivery.

The active involvement of citizens in the post decision-making processes is a relatively underdeveloped phenomenon in South Africa. Citizens generally wait for government to define the terms of their engagement in the post decision stages. This leaves room for miscommunication, unmet expectations, misunderstanding, poor workmanship that goes unchecked, increasing cost of delivery and undue project delays.

The intent of the Constitutional provisions is for citizens to be as active as possible in their own development and to define for themselves the supportive role they need to be playing in project implementation and in post implementation.

Some tools to use post implementation

In the same way that there are legislated spaces for citizens to participate in development planning, there are legislated spaces for them to participate during implementation. Over and above these legislated during and post-implementation spaces, there are some tools (widely accepted by government) that communities can use to engage in the post decision making stages. Here we will mention only two: community reports and score cards, and steering committee participation.

1. Community reports and scorecards

Community reports and scorecards are participatory surveys that provide both qualitative and quantititative feedback on user perceptions on the quality, adequacy and efficiency of a public service. They go beyond just being a data collection exercise to being an instrument to exact public accountability through the extensive media coverage and civil society advocacy that accompanies the process. These score cards are used for local level monitoring and performance evaluation of services, projects and even government administrative units by the communities themselves. The community score card (CSC) process is a hybrid of the techniques of social audit, community monitoring and citizen report cards.

Like the citizen report card, the CSC process is an instrument to exact social and public accountability and responsiveness from service providers.

While relatively accepted by the South African government and tested in many parts of the country, citizen score cards have proven to work better to monitor the services rendered by provincial governments, such as health, education, and national services such as police. This is because they tend to focus more on the quantitative aspects of service monitoring than the perception based qualitative side. This in itself is the strength of score cards, because for example, if a clinic is meant to have 3 nurses on duty in a week, and the score card reveals the presence of only one nurse at a particular time of day for many consecutive days, this would be cause for concern as it has a direct impact on the quality and pace of delivery of the health service to those it is intended for.

There are a number of manuals that one can easily download on the internet providing a step by step guide to developing score cards.

2. Steering Committee Monitoring

Steering committees are the most widely used participatory method in service delivery monitoring in South Africa. Most government departments have the establishment of a steering committee as a mandatory step in the delivery of infrastructure projects. However, the role conceptualised for these steering committees is that of one-way information conduits, from the project implementers to the project beneficiaries, or that of satisfying compliance regulations (a tick-box exercise that the community has been engaged). They have no power to meaningfully influence any decisions. For example, in many of the RDP projects across the country where houses are either left incomplete or the workmanship is of appalling standards, there was a steering committee. The committee had little power to influence decisions about the design, material used, or at the very least, sign off on the payment certificate before the contractor gets paid, in many instances for work they had not done.

Steering committees remain a useful mechanism to have and as mentioned before, one that is widely used and accepted. Communities need to claim back power when establishing and participating in these steering committees. They need to lay a claim and craft for themselves a meaningful, but not destructive, role to play that will ensure that they guard the community interest through all the stages of project implementation. This begins with communities demanding to see and comment on the terms of reference for the steering committee. If need be, community members must find knowledgeable people in their midst with some legal background to negotiate a meaningful role to be written in the terms of reference for the steering committee.

Moving out of the box

Up to now, all the tools discussed above are those that are already acceptable and widely used by government. There are, however, other tools for social change that have been tested and used in many parts of the country that are not as widely known (and sometimes not appreciated) by both government and communities that can influence decisions on service delivery. The section below is dedicated to these innovative tools. We will present these tools using the same service delivery implementation continuum or model presented above. We will start with a few tools that can influence decisions made, and end with tools that one can use after a decision has been made and the service is being rendered.

The pre-decision stage innovative tools

1. The Citizen Charter

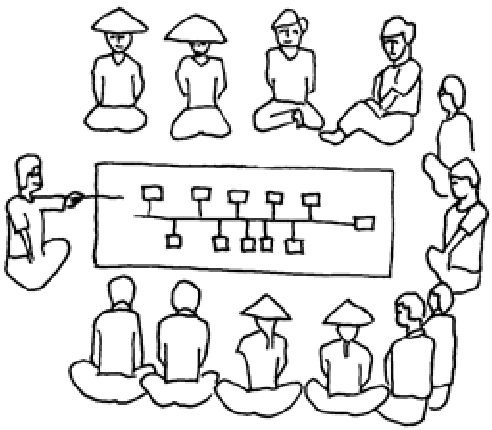
The notion of a charter has a historical ring in South Africa and whenever it is mooted, it signifies an accord, a social compact or a social agreement. A citizen's charter is a document which represents a systematic effort to reaffirm the commitment of a government entity towards the citizens in respects of its functions and services it ought to render. It usually encompassed a common shared vision, values and principles that underpin the relationship between those that enter or signatures to the charter. While citizen charters are excellent for building social cohesion and for creating meaningful moments for co-creation between governments and different structures in society, their weakness is that they are not enforceable by law and therefore are non-justiciable. That being the case though, they still remain a meaningful social contract between citizens and government that if crafted well, can detail what services will be rendered, at what standard and within what timeframes. Usually, the monitoring and recourse mechanisms available to all parties should they not deliver their mandate as captured in the contract are also written in so that they are discussed and agreed upon by all. While these may be written in, they are not always legally enforceable.

2. Citizen Juries

With their origin from the United States of America, citizen juries are a means of ensuring community participation in complex decisions that have immense societal impact. A typical example of a moment in which there should have been a citizen jury organised is a discussion on whether we should build nuclear plants or not. Their effectiveness lies in that representatives in the jury are drawn from the wider community who have no formal alignments or allegiances. They ensure community involvement in the decision-making process by engaging citizens in the discussion of possible approaches or options.

Citizen juries use a representative sample of citizens (usually selected in a random or stratified manner) who are briefed in detail on the background and current thinking relating to a particular issue, and asked to discuss possible approaches, sometimes in a televised group. Citizen juries are intended to complement other forms of consultation rather than replace them. Citizens are asked to become jurors and make a judgement in the form of a report, as they would in legal juries. The issue they are asked to consider will be one that has an effect across the community and where a representative and democratic decision-making process is required.

Citizen juries can be used to broker a conflict, or to provide a transparent and non-aligned viewpoint. Citizen jurors bring with them an intrinsic worth in the good sense and wisdom born of their own knowledge and personal experience. Citizen juries provide the opportunity to add to that knowledge and to exchange ideas with their fellow citizens. The result is a collective one, in which each juror has a valuable contribution to make. There have only been a few cases in South Africa where this model had been tested. It is not a very widely known tool, however, there is ample information on the internet on how one would go about establishing a citizen jury.



Post decision stage innovative tools

1. The social audits

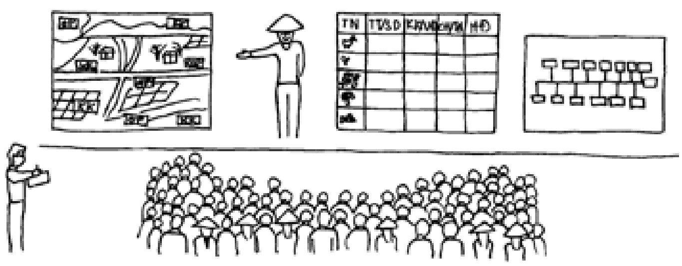
A social audit is a monitoring process through which project information is collected, analysed and shared publicly in a participatory fashion. A relatively new tool that is gaining wide use in South Africa, social audits allow citizens to physically audit the service rendered and paid for by government on their behalf against agreed service delivery standards. They then compile a report from their findings, complete with proof that supports the facts narrated in the report and engage the relevant decision-makers on the findings towards a lasting solution. Social audits may go beyond the oversight of project finances and procurements to examine all aspects of the project, including level of access to information, accountability, public involvement, project outputs and outcomes. Social audits are typically carried out by community volunteers and findings are presented to relevant (those with the power to make decisions) government officials at a public forum/hearing.

Social auditing is a tool that is gaining momentum in South Africa to an extent that a Social Audit Network has been established to support any community that would want to conduct a social audit, but does not quite have the skills or the know –how. There is also an extensive body of knowledge on social auditing that is in the public domain. A number of organisations have also published some of their social audit reports an example of which is the audit on janitor services in Khayelitsha, supported by the Social Justice Coalition.

A guide to conducting social audits has also been included in the CD that is part of this toolkit.

2. Good Governance Surveys

Developed by Afesis-corplan, the Good Governance Survey (GGS) is a perception based survey where citizens express their views on the performance of local municipality on good governance. The questionnaire is structured around the eight globally accepted key indicators of good governance including questions around how decisions are made in the municipality, how open and transparent the municipality is, whether there are effective disclosure mechanisms in the municipality, etc. While the intent at the time of its development was for the GGS to be embraced and widely used by local municipalities – as opposed to the limited customer satisfaction surveys, experience has shown that a GGS is far more objective when driven by a municipality with strong support of a civil society partner. The idea behind a GGS is for municipalities to strive for a culture of good governance in its holistic sense. A ‘how to guide to conducting a GGS’ is included in the CD attached to this toolkit.



7

Strategies and tactics

SECTION 7

Strategies and tactics

Change happens in many ways and in most instances, happens when least expected.

A community can have engaged a municipality for a long time over a service delivery issue when a sudden personnel change results in a favourable decision. An election may offer a moment of change (either positive or negative). One needs to be able to read the moment and understand what the leverage of influence is that can lead to positive change. In this section, we present a summary of some of the strategies and tactics one can use in a social change process. This is not a step-by-step list of things to do, but is merely a list of strategies and techniques to explore.

a. Preparation is key

We cannot stress this enough - you need to prepare well. You will need to build a firm foundation for the activities that lie ahead of you. Influencing municipal decisions is one of the most difficult - and one of the most effective - means of changing the community or the society for the better. To do it well, you will have to prepare. Do the necessary research, use the tools that have been provided for you in this toolkit, equip yourself, ask for information to get to know as much as possible about the service delivery issue you want to engage on. Make yourself or your group the acknowledged expert, the one that individuals, groups, and the media contact when they want information on your issue.

b. Plan well

Make sure that your overall strategy makes sense, and that influencing the municipality's decision is a necessary and appropriate part of it: strategic planning is essential. If you haven't yet engaged in a participatory strategic planning process that involves representation from all groups affected by or concerned with the issue, stop, back up, and do so now. It will take time and effort, and may result in you changing some of your ideas, but it will pay huge dividends in the long run.

c. Establish and maintain personal contact

Personal relationships are the key to successful advocacy of all kinds, and influencing municipal decisions and spending is no exception. If you can make a personal connection, not only with key decision makers, but with opinion leaders, and even opponents, you can get your phone calls returned, make your voice heard, keep argument civil, and maintain a level of credibility far greater than you could if you were only a name or a face.

d. Pulse of the community

Take the pulse of the community to understand what citizens will support, what they will resist, and how they can be persuaded. You have a far greater chance of success if you set out to influence municipal decisions on service delivery in ways that the community will support, or at least tolerate, than if you challenge people's basic beliefs. When it's possible, it makes sense to start where the community is. That may mean putting off your final goal, and working toward an intermediate one that the community can support. Many campaigns base their whole strategy on this kind of approach. The worst thing is to finally get invited to make a presentation at a council meeting (the highest decision-making structure in a municipality), only to get there and argue with your fellow community members. Take the pulse of your community often and rally them towards a common goal.

e. Involve as many people in the community as possible

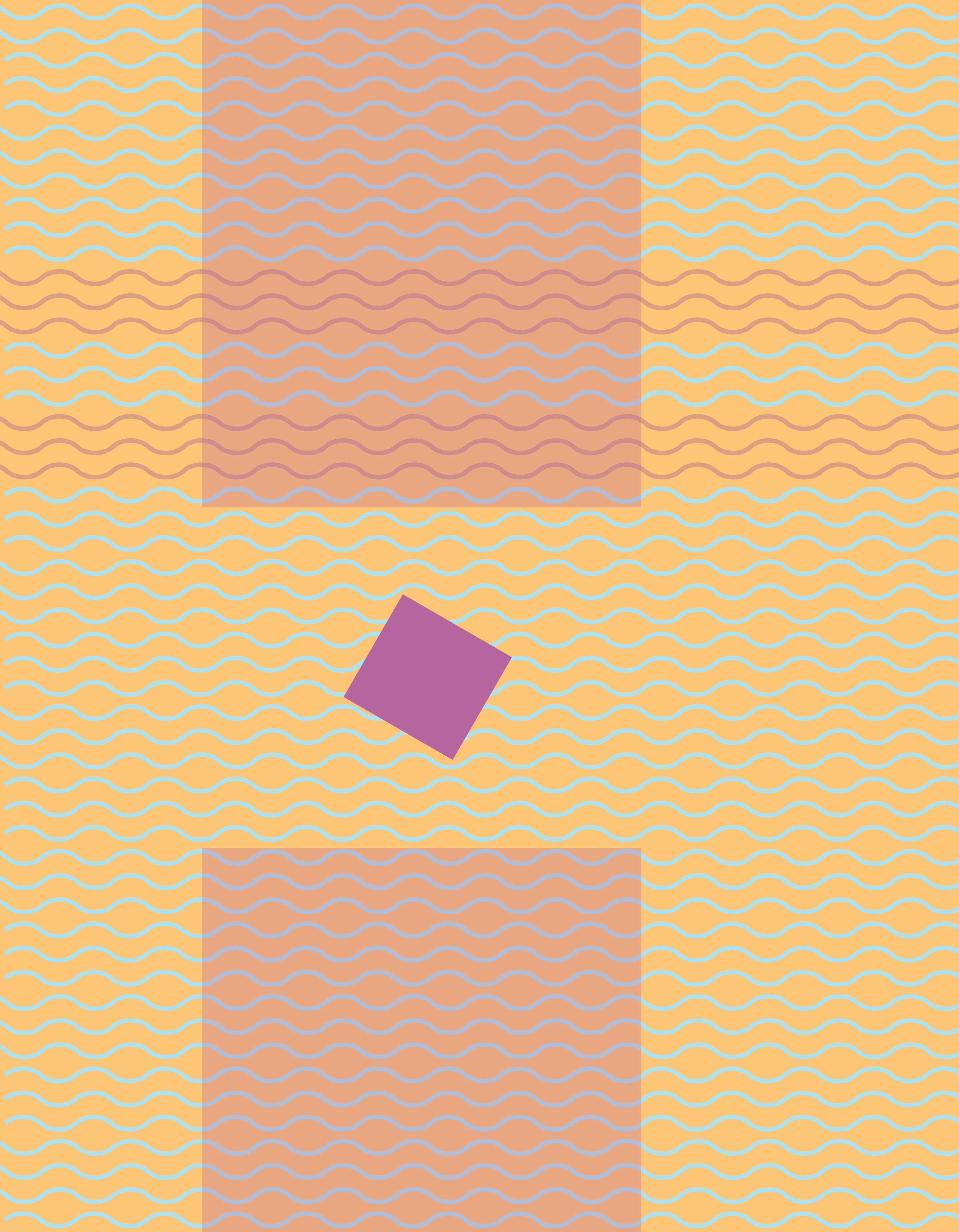
Try to engage key people, particularly - opinion leaders, trusted community figures - but concentrate on making your effort participatory. That will give it credibility, encourage community ownership of the effort, make sure that a wide range of ideas and information are considered in developing a plan and action steps, and encourage community leadership of the effort.

f. Be friends with media (social media, print and radio)

Use the media, the Internet, your community connections, and your imagination both to keep people informed of the effort and the service delivery issues, and to keep a high profile. You want the community to be aware of your social change efforts, to know how and why you are trying to influence municipal planning, and to understand why the action is necessary. You can use everything from straight news stories to community radio, Facebook, petitions and demonstrations to get the message out. Publicity will help you gain and maintain community support, which will greatly increase your chances of success. Remember, when demonstrating or protesting to observe and undertake the necessary legal processes to obtain clearance so that the demonstration and those participating are legally protected.

g. Persistence is golden

Social change can take a long time. You have to monitor and evaluate your action to make sure it is having the desired effect, and change it if it is not. And you have to be prepared to keep at it for as long as it takes if you hope to be successful. As with all advocacy work, influencing municipal decisions require a long-term commitment.



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