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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE UGU DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

By

Ntombenhle Precious Ngwane

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Management, University of Witwatersrand, in 50% fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Management in the field of Public Policy

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ABSTRACT

Successfully translating policy intentions to desired policy outputs has been identified as a challenge that most developing countries and emerging democracies are faced with. In the early 1970s theorists and researchers realised that in part the problem is not paying enough attention to policy implementation. As a result, more research effort was put into understanding policy implementation and what factors contribute towards or impede a successful implementation of policies.

This research is aimed at exploring the factors that contribute to successful implementation of policies in South African Local Government. Focus has been put on institutional provisions that are put in place by these local government institutions to support the implementation of policies. The policy used for the purposes of this study is the National Policy Framework on Public Participation (NPFPP) and the area of focus is the Ugu District.

The study followed the qualitative method and nineteen (19) in-depth interviews were held with members of government, civil society and community members and representatives. Municipal documents were analysed for purposes of validating information received from interviews.

The study found that there are structural and systemic challenges that contribute to low levels of success in implementing the NPFPP in the Ugu district. This is mainly due to the fact that there are inadequate and ineffective provisions for public participation in the district. Issues identified include lack of capacity within municipalities, both in terms of understanding policy requirements and the number of staff available to implement the policy. Furthermore, there was no perceived involvement of all the strategic units within the municipality to implement the policy. The external structures put in place by the municipalities in accordance with the provisions of the policy, that is, ward committees and IDP processes, proved inadequate and ineffective. The study also found that communities were unaware

of their right and responsibility to participate in municipal matters. However, willingness and eagerness to work with the municipalities was displayed by both communities and civil society organizations.

The study concluded by making recommendations for implementation of the NPFPP in local government generally and also recommendations for the specific area of interest.

DECLARATION

I declare that this report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management in the field of Public Policy in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

Ntombenhle Precious Ngwane

22 June 2017

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all those who have had to swim against the tide to achieve something for themselves in life. Those who have pushed boundaries to prove background does not determine one's future. Continue to inspire!

My son, Ntokozo Bayanda Ngwane, my constant reminder that quitting is not an option, friends and family, this one is for you to take forward!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge with appreciation all the participants who made this research possible. Without your assistance and willingness to provide the information required, this work could not have been completed.

To my supervisor, Dr MDJ Matshabaphala, thank you for your guidance and supervision.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ..... **I**

DECLARATION ..... **III**

DEDICATION ..... **IV**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... **V**

TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... **VI**

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ..... **IX**

LIST OF TABLES ..... **X**

LIST OF FIGURES ..... **X**

CHAPTER 1 ..... **1**

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND **1**

1.1 INTRODUCTION 1
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY 2
1.2.1 Analysis of the National Policy Framework on Public Participation *5*
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT 7
1.4 KNOWLEDGE GAP 8
1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY 9
1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES 9
1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS 9
1.8 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS 10
1.9 CONCLUSION 12

CHAPTER 2 ..... **13**

LITERATURE REVIEW **13**

2.1 INTRODUCTION 13
2.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW IN RESEARCH 13
2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION 14
2.3.1 Top-Down perspective *15*
2.3.2 Bottom-Up perspective *17*
2.3.3 Power relations in policy implementation *18*
2.3.4 The political environment of policy implementation *20*
2.3.5 Network approach to policy implementation *22*
2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK 23
2.4.1 Institutional arrangements for policy implementation *23*
2.5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT 25
2.5.1 Legislative and policy framework *26*
2.5.2 The value of public participation *28*
2.5.3 Challenges with public participation *31*
2.6 CONCLUSION 33

CHAPTER 3 ..... **35**

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY **35**

3.1 INTRODUCTION 35
3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM 35
3.3 RESEARCH METHODS 37
3.3.1 Quantitative method 37
3.3.2 Qualitative method 38
3.3.3 Mixed method 40
3.4 SCOPE 41
3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN 41
3.5.1 Sampling 41
3.5.2 Data collection methods 42
3.5.3 Data presentation 42
3.5.4 Data analysis and interpretation 43
3.6 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY 45
3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY 45
3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS 46
3.9 CONCLUSION 47

CHAPTER 4 49

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS 49

4.1 INTRODUCTION 49
4.2 OVERVIEW OF THE AREA OF INTEREST 50
4.2.1 Ugu District Municipality 50
4.3 PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS 53
4.3.1 Government officials 53
4.3.2 Civil society organisations 54
4.3.3 Community members and community representatives 55
4.4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS 56
4.4.1 INTERVIEWS WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS 56
4.4.1.1 Existence of a regulative framework for public participation in the municipalities 56
4.4.1.2 Spaces of public participation 57
4.4 1.3 Network configurations/ stakeholder relations 59
4.4.1.4 Monitoring and evaluation 60
4.4.1.5 Challenges in the implementation of the policy 61
4.4.1.6 General remarks 62
4.4.2 Interviews with civil society 63
4.4.2.1 Relationship between the civil society organizations and the municipalities 63
4.4.2.2 Communication between the municipality and the organizations 65
4.4.2.3 Perceptions of willingness by municipalities to receive and utilise input from organizations 66
4.4.3 Interviews with community members and representatives 68
4.4.3.1 Understanding the concept of public participation 68
4.4.3.2 Community meetings 69
4.4.3.3 Ward Committee Meetings 70
4.4.3.4 Communication strategies 72
4.5 EXAMINATION OF RECORDS FOR CROSS-VALIDATION 72
4.5.1 Annual reports 73
4.5.2 Public participation strategies/policies 77
4.5.3 Ward and Forum Committee meetings minutes 79
4.6 CONCLUSION 80

CHAPTER 5 82

INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS 82

5.1 INTRODUCTION 82
5.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT 83
5.3 INSTITUTIONALISING THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION 83
5.3.1 Available spaces for public participation, their effectiveness and adequacy 83
5.3.2 Internal configurations and information flow to aid policy implementation 87
5.3.3 Capacity-related issues in policy implementation 90
5.3.4 Monitoring and evaluation in policy implementation 94
5.4 CONCLUSION 95

CHAPTER 6 96

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 96

6.1 INTRODUCTION 96
6.2 CONCLUSIONS 96
6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS 99
6.3.1 General recommendations 99
6.3.2 Recommendations specific to Ugu district 100
6.3.3 Possible future research questions 100

REFERENCES 102

APPENDICES 107

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION 107
APPENDIX B: QUESTIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTATIVES 108
APPENDIX C: QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES 109

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COGTA	Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DPLG	Department of Provincial and Local Government
NPFPP	National Policy Framework on Public Participation
SALGA	South African Local Government Association

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Advantages of Public Participation 32

Table 2: Disadvantages of Public Participation 34

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Map of the Ugu District 50

Figure 2: Unemployment rates in the Ugu District 51

Figure 3: Literacy levels in the Ugu District 52

Figure 4: Settlements in the Ugu District 53

Figure 5: Recommended Process Flow for Public Participation 94

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Public policy implementation is one of the critical steps in the policy life cycle. It is responsible for translating policy intentions into desired policy outputs. Policy implementation is a challenge that many countries in the world are trying to understand and ultimately solve. South Africa is no exception. What remains obvious is the fact that in order to successfully translate policy intentions to actions, a clear understanding of how implementation should be done is of vital importance.

In a democratic society like that of South Africa, policy implementation requires participation of all sectors that stand to be affected by it. Public participation has come to be understood as a tool for deepening and consolidating democracy. It allows for citizens to have a voice on issues of governance that affect them. It also allows for government to clearly understand the needs of the people and thus work towards satisfying those needs.

Local government is the particular sphere of government that is in direct contact with the citizens. It is therefore at this level that robust and meaningful public participation should happen. It is also at this level where policy implementation through service delivery takes place. This, therefore, makes it the level where a clear understanding of public participation should be achieved and used in implementing policies.

This research explores how the implementation of the national policy framework on public participation (NPFPP) is undertaken at local government level. This is done by way of a case study using the Ugu District Municipality and the six local municipalities that it consists of. These municipalities are based in the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal. More focus will be put on the structure and effectiveness of the

institutional arrangements made available by the municipalities in question that assist in properly implementing the policy.

This chapter of the report is mostly concerned with providing the background that necessitated this study. In doing so, the researcher starts with analysing the policy in question and then goes on to explain the problem statement, the purpose of the research, the research objectives and the research questions, and concludes with the outline of the chapters of the report.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

It has been over two decades since South Africa transitioned from the apartheid governance system that encouraged segregation, ill-treatment and disregard of the basic right of specific groups to be fully functional members of society. The transition was not an easy one as it involved going against the then government policies and procedures, sometimes in rather unconventional ways. A lot of effort in planning and executing ways in which the challenges inherent in the apartheid system could be overcome was needed. Some of the strategies that were utilised and that assisted in accelerating the overthrow of the apartheid government system was that of mass involvement of citizens in boycotting the way in which government worked. There are many examples that demonstrate how mass involvement assisted the struggle against the apartheid regime, such as, but not limited to, the march of the students of 1976 in protest against the use of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in schools and the march of the women in 1956 against pass laws.

Emerging from that kind of governance system and transitioning to a democratic state meant that South Africa had to recognise and appreciate what public participation and involvement can achieve. As a consequence, legislation that was drafted thereafter ensured that the right to participation is featured and protected at all costs from the national down to the local spheres of government.

Public involvement in decision-making in South Africa is encouraged in all spheres of the government. This means that efforts must be made to involve citizens and community organizations to express their views at any given point and on any given situation. Innes and Booher (2004), however, observe that honest and genuine public participation does not always occur:

> "Legally required methods of public participation in government decision- making through public hearings and review and comment procedures in particular, do not work. They do not achieve genuine participation in planning or other decisions; they do not satisfy members of the public that they are being heard; they seldom can be said to improve the decisions that agencies and public officials make; they do not incorporate a broad spectrum of the public." (Innes & Booher, 2004, p.419).

Further to that, legislation and policy in South Africa strongly advocate for improved public participation through local government. This means that communities must be involved from strategizing, planning and budgeting to execution of the service delivery initiatives in municipalities. This is due to the fact that local government is the sphere that is closest to the people. Regular interactions between the people and government happen at the municipal level through the provision of basic services to local communities and through generally engaging on day-to-day matters of municipal governance.

There are structures, such as ward committees and council meetings, legislated in policy that are meant to ensure that public participation does take place in local government. Such structures have proved functional in some areas and less or non-functional in others. There are varying reasons for this. Lack of establishment of proper institutional arrangements, coordination, integration and accountability mechanisms to ensure the implementation of the policy are some of the reasons.

There are a number of policy documents in South Africa that clarify the requirements for municipalities to engage with communities. One such policy document is the Municipal Systems Act, 33 of 2000. The Act requires local

government to "...encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of local government". The shortcoming, however, is that the Act does not prescribe exactly how this is to be done and this means that the municipalities have a high degree of discretion in how they do this.

In trying to mitigate these challenges faced by local municipalities, and which prevent them from complying with the requirements of the policies on public participation, the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG), currently known as the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), in 2007 developed a National Policy Framework for Public Participation (NPFPP). The policy framework recognizes the need to "...deepen the involvement of local communities in local governance by incorporating ward committees and the community at large in consultation around key municipal processes like integrated development planning (IDP), the budget, performance management as well as service delivery" (NPFPP, 2007, p. 6).

The primary aim of the NPFPP is to lay a foundation for a structured participation process that municipalities can follow in order to comply with the obligations of the Systems Act. The policy framework does this by identifying three minimum requirements that municipalities must meet in order to fulfil the obligations of the Act. These requirements are discussed below.

The Ugu District Municipality is one such local government structure that is expected to adhere to the regulations of the Act as well as the NPFPP. The municipality is situated in the lower south coast region of KwaZulu-Natal Province in South Africa. The population is predominantly rural with only 16% semi-urban areas. The district municipality oversees six local municipalities, each with their established structures of participation. The district municipality presents itself as an ideal structure for a case study as it is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Policy Framework for Public Participation on the six local municipalities within it.

1.2.1 Analysis of the National Policy Framework on Public Participation

The National Policy Framework on Public Participation derives from the Local Government Systems Act, 32 of 2000 (hereinafter Systems Act). As indicated above, the aim of the policy framework is to give guidelines, where the Act is not very prescriptive, on how the policy on public participation can be implemented. It gives minimum requirements that must be followed by municipalities in order to comply with legislation. It leaves room, however, for municipalities to further explore ways in which it can involve communities on matters of mutual interest.

Chapter four of the Systems Act is dedicated to emphasizing the need for public participation in local government. It highlights the obligation of municipalities to involve the citizens in such processes as well as the responsibility of citizens to involve themselves on matters of the municipality that will in turn affect them. It is evident, however, that municipalities still struggle with implementing effective forms of public participation, hence the need for the policy framework.

The policy framework prescribes three strategies that can be employed by municipalities in a bid to ensure public participation. First and foremost, it prescribes for municipalities to formulate clear lines of communication between the municipality and the citizens. This according to the framework should be done through establishing a community complaints management systems. This is a system which will allow community members to voice their complaints on the way the municipality is run in cases of dissatisfaction. The community can also use these communication strategies to report, preferably anonymously, bad service and also challenges within the municipality. The municipality is expected to create innovative ways, such as having anonymous tip-off lines, for this purpose. Another communication strategy, according to the framework, involves drafting and publicizing public participation principles and a citizen participation charter. This will assist in letting the citizens know about their right to be, and responsibility of, being involved in municipal matters. Another communication strategy that can be used is conducting citizen satisfaction surveys periodically to gauge the feelings of

citizens in as far as service delivery and other matters of the municipality are concerned.

Secondly, the framework prescribes for municipalities to create structures of participation, such as ward committees, that will be appropriately empowered and supported in order to meaningfully contribute to the running of the municipality on behalf of the citizens. Ward committees if properly run and resourced can be a very useful way of involving citizens in the matters of the municipality. Research shows, however, that there are many challenges related to the smooth running of ward committees. These include ward committees being areas of conflict in relation topartisan politics to them not being properly resourced and capacitated. The policy framework provides an indication in chapter eight as to how ward committees can be resourced and representatives capacitated.

The last strategy prescribed by the policy framework is for municipalities to empower and support Integrated Development Planning (popularly known as IDP Forums) representative forums wherein they will be involved in municipal development planning, budgeting, performance management, performance assessment as well as service delivery. These forums include civil society organizations, houses of traditional leaders, community development workers, resource people and any other groupings, organized or unorganized, that the municipality thinks can have a positive contribution in its operations. The policy framework further indicates that the municipality may consider developing and maintaining a stakeholder register which includes all of the stakeholders available and stipulate these in policy and by-laws.

The policy framework further makes an important determination that there must be dedicated structures or institutional arrangements within the municipality that is directly responsible for ensuring that public participation is realized. These include offices or officers in the office of the Mayor, Councillor and the Municipal Manager. Preferably, according to the framework, there must be a public participation unit, directly overseen by the Speaker, that further ensures that

coordination and integration between these structures is ensured in order for the participatory function to be realized. Without institutionalising and capacitating a public participation office within the municipality, these efforts may well prove futile.

It is appreciated that the policy framework seeks to regulate and emphasize the need public participation, the current researcher notes that there are concerns relating to the fact that local municipalities have large variations. For example, there are municipalities, like metropolitans, that are well resourced and can easily make funds available to fund the public participation offices and ensure their smooth running. There are also municipalities, like those in rural areas, that cannot afford such funding. There are also other challenges related to the calibre of citizens that constitute the municipality. The levels of literacy within community members can also play an important role in determining whether or not they can meaningfully contribute to the running of the municipality in relation to, for example, budgeting and planning.

The policy framework also falls short in addressing the issue of cooperation and coordination of the network community participating in the affairs of the community. The view is that there should be an indication of how these networks should be configured as well as what can be done if there are shortfalls. The need and responsibility to monitor and evaluate whether public participation obligations are met in the municipality is also not clear in the policy framework.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Government institutions are usually the only agents responsible for the implementation of public policies. Local government in particular is the engine that puts policy objectives into practice. It is therefore of major importance that local government is familiar with the implementation of policy so as to ensure optimal implemenation.

Studies have revealed that challenges related to policy implementation in government include, but are not limited to, government institutions not being able to establish proper institutional arrangements that will manage the implementation of the policy (Bain, 1992 & Roux, 2002). Another challenge involves a lack of proper co-ordination and integration within the institutional arrangements set up to implement the policy. Lack of properly pronounced accountability mechanisms that should be in place to enforce policy implementation is also a major contributing factor to the lack of proper policy implementation in local government.

The Ugu District Municipality also appears to be not immune to these challenges. As a result, there are serious perceptions of a municipality not being able to achieve its public participation targets or requirements in accordance with the national policy framework on public participation. This is attributed to inadequate implementation of the policy. This context forms the basis of this research.

1.4 KNOWLEDGE GAP

Most research undertaken on policy implementation presently focuses on the vertical way of policy implementation; that is, top-down and bottom-up approaches. This is concerned with how the policy makers (top) can influence policy implementation (down) rather than how those responsible for implementing (bottom) policies should and can influence policy making (up). Later research focused on merging the two perspectives and into one that incorporates the insights from both perspectives.

The current researcher is concerned with discovering how policy implementation is carried out at the bottom (local level). Special focus is on the institutions that are established and institutional arrangements that are put in place to carry out implementation of policies. Moreover, interrogating the adequacy of those institutions and institutional capacities will give the researcher a chance to make recommendations at the end of this report.

1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The overarching purpose of this study is to analyse and understand how the implementation of the national policy framework on public participation is carried out in the Ugu District Municipality and the six local municipalities under it. The study, as pointed out above, will be limited to analysing the institutional arrangements and the capacity thereof that is put in place to implement the policy.

This study is also aimed at contributing to the literature currently available on the implementation of policies in local government. It is hoped that the results from this particular research study on the implementation of the national policy framework on public participation will provide insights into how the implementation of policy can be better achieved in local government. This will be done through offering both broad and specific recommendations as well as identifying areas of further possible research.

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this research study is to analyse how the policy framework on public participation is implemented in Ugu district and the six local municipalities under it. This will be done through:

- Identifying spaces of participation put in place by the municipality to implement the policy;
- The institutional structures put in place by the municipality to implement the policy;
- The effectiveness and adequacy of those spaces and structures;
- The role of the district municipality in ensuring compliance with the policy through monitoring and evaluation.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question which this study seeks to answer is:

- How is the implementation of the national policy framework on public participation carried out in the six local municipalities under Ugu District Municipality?

The secondary research questions are:

- What institutional provisions are made by the municipalities in order to implement the national policy framework on public participation?
- How effective and adequate are the systems put in place by the municipalities to implement the policy?
- Which monitoring and evaluation techniques are put in place by the district and local municipalities to implement the policy?

1.8 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

This research report is divided into six chapters as described below:

Chapter 1: This chapter serves as an introduction to the research and also provides the background for why the research was done, what it seeks to uncover as well as how this is going to be achieved. The chapter outlines and discusses the problem of the study, the knowledge gap, the purpose, objectives, research questions and also the outline of chapters that comprisethe report.

Chapter 2: The research discusses literature currently available on the study of policy implementation. There is a discussion about the perspectives (top-down and bottom-up) of policy implementation. Furthermore, this section examines the wide array of factors that the literature suggests have a bearing on policy implementation and also discusses the conceptual framework that has been chosen for the purposes of this research. A brief background on the situation of policy implementation in South African local government is also discussed.

Chapter 3: Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology followed by this research. The chapter explains the paradigm that the researcher thinks the study

falls under and then goes on to explain the research methods, the research design, reliability and validity measures as well as limitations of the study. Lastly, the ethical considerations that will be observed are explained because the study involves real persons.

Chapter 4: Chapter 4 examines in some detail the qualitative research undertaken by the study. The researcher first provides a brief background of the area of interest as well as a brief background of the respondents. This, in the researcher's view, helps in giving context and a better understanding of the situation on the ground. Thereafter, the researcher presents findings from all the interviews held with government officials, civil society representatives as well as community members and representatives. Lastly, the chapter presents findings from the examination of available records for the purposes of cross-validation.

Chapter 5: This chapter interprets and analyses the contents of the preceding chapter and makes linkages with the literature review discussed in chapter 2. This is done by grouping together themes that will assist in answering the research questions as set out above. This chapter will also give an indication of the context and provide insight into what the municipalities are able to achieve and the areas that still need attention.

Chapter 6: This last chapter concludes and offers recommendations based on the analysis of the findings and the researcher's perceptions of the state of public participation policy implementation in the Ugu district municipality and the four local municipalities under it. The recommendations will range from general to specific. The researcher will also mention if there are any areas of further research that she thinks will contribute further to the subject at hand.

Finally, a list of references and appendices will be compiled in accordance with the requirements of academic writing.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter provides the background to the study and the reasons that necessitated this study. The chapter starts by introducing the topic and briefly outlining all the important elements of the study, including policy implementation, public participation and the role of local government in implementing policies. The background section of this study briefly outlines the background and current situations on the ground and how all these three elements interact with one another in a bid to ensure realisation of policy intentions.

As this study primarily examines the implementation of a public participation policy in local government, the researcher thought it important to firstly examine the policy itself and describe some of the important features so as to respond to the research question. The chapter then indicates the problem that the researcher aims to examine or give insight into by undertaking the research. The purpose and objectives of the study are also explained in this chapter.

The researcher then reveals the questions that the study aims to address by means of a case study based on the core purpose of the research. This is done by firstly presenting the overarching question the study aims to answer and this is supported by secondary questions which, when put together, will assist in answering the main or primary question. The chapter concludes with an outline of the chapters that comprise the research report.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This literature review explains the significance of the literature review in research. Prior to examining the literature on a given subject, it is important to firstly look at the contribution of a literature review and indicate how it helps in gaining an understanding of what has been written in the chosen field as well as how it contributes to the study at hand. Subsequent to indicating the importance or significance of a literature review in research, the study will engage in a critical discussion of knowledge currently available and impacting the field of policy implementation. This includes the two perspectives (top-down and bottom-up) of policy implementation, what role power plays in policy implementation, the importance of networks in policy implementation, the significance of the political environment of public policy implementation as well as the role played by institutions or institutional arrangements in public policy implementation. Further to that, the chapter will engage in a critical discussion of the contributors to successful implementation of a public participation policy in local government, followed by the conclusion of the chapter.

2.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW IN RESEARCH

Literature review is defined by Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins (2010) in Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012. P. 28) as "an interpretation of a selection of relevant published and/or unpublished information that is available on a specific topic from one of four modes (such as documents, talk, observations and drawings/photographs/videos) that optimally involves summarisation, analysis, evaluation and synthesis of the information". This indicates that a piece of literature can mean different things to different people based on the topic at hand, the person's

interpretation as well as a contextual understanding of the individual of the literature.

Further, Onwuegbuzie et. al. (2011) in Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012, p. 28) indicates that "...the literature review is the most important step of the research process in all studies because it is the most effective way of becoming familiar with previous findings and research methodology used by researchers in relation to the topic". This does not mean, however, that literature should be taken and presented as is in the review. Understanding of the literature is better achieved when it is evaluated, analysed and synthesised in relation to the topic. Boote and Beile (2005) further indicates that a literature review should give a theoretical basis for the research and help to determine the nature of the own research. Put simply, a literature review assists in grounding and giving direction to one's research.

For the purposes of this research, a literature review is conducted to firstly review all the important aspects that have a direct impact on the process of public policy implementation on a larger or broader scale. Taking all of that into consideration, the researcher further zooms into those aspects impacting policy implementation in local government. This is linked to the implementation of the policy on public participation as it is the frame of reference and main reason for doing this study.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

In a bid to better understand policy implementation, a number of theories, models and frameworks have been developed over the years. Each of these theories, models and frameworks seek to shed light on the concept of policy implementation, its relevance and how it features in the cycle of policy making and analysis. More importantly, researchers engaged in the study of policy implementation as a means of coming into an understanding or rather a reasoning behind many 'failures' that have been accounted for in translating policy intentions into actions. Even though some of these theories cannot be conclusive, it is worth looking into them in an attempt to link this research study to the most appropriate one.

Popular in available research on the study of policy implementation is the distinction between the top-down and bottom-up approaches to policy implementation. Both these approaches seek to give an account of how the process of translating policy objectives into actions can take place. It is evident, however, that neither of the approaches takes into consideration the shortcomings or strengths of the other. A brief discussion of both these approaches follows.

2.3.1 Top-Down perspective

Policy implementation in the early 1970s, as indicated by Cloete and Wissink (2000), was seen as merely an administrative choice which, once policy had been legislated and the institutions mandated with administrative authority, would happen by itself. This view suggests that as long as policy objectives are clearly articulated, the process of implementation should be a relatively easy and straightforward process. This view is supported by Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) in Hill (2013) when saying that the policy decisions set forth by policy formulators should serve as sufficient basis for achievement as implementation is merely the activities directed by the policy towards achievement.

Dye (1995) observes that the activities set forth in the policy documents must include the creation of new organizations such as departments, agencies, bureaux and similar, or the assignment of new responsibilities to existing organizations. All these activities involve decisions by bureaucrats, and these are decisions that determine policy. This view of policy implementation aligns with Cloete and Wissink's (2000) view above in that policy implementation actions are articulated when the policy is being formulated; however, he expands this view to include the involvement of public and private groups or individuals to assist in implementing the policy. This means that public policy implementation not only rests with the mandated institutions, for example government departments, but can also benefit from the involvement of other private and/or public entities, such as business and civil society groups.

The above mentioned theory of understanding public policy implementation for the most part regards it as a process that begins from the top where policies are being formulated and cascades down to the implementers. This is termed the top-down approach. This approach to policy implementation suggests that what is most important in the implementation process is the clear definition of the chain of command and ensuring that policy articulates and controls how every step in the implementation process occurs so as to leave no room for decision-making by those actively involved in implementation. Similarly, Hood (1976) in Sapru (2011) maintains that in order to achieve perfect implementation using the top-down approach, the below should be achieved:

- A unitary army-like organization with clear lines of authority;
- The enforcement of norms and objectives;
- People doing what they are told and asked; and
- Perfect communication in and between units of organization (Sapru, 2011, p. 287).

This model provides an understanding of how policy implementation can be achieved, but it has been heavily criticised. Firstly, it is criticised for assuming that people involved in the implementation process have no goals of their own that they want to achieve. It also fails to recognise that policy implementation does not occur in a vacuum, but there are outside or environmental effects that may call for immediate changes of plan. Dye (1995) notes that although it may be true that much of the work of bureaucrats involves administrative routine, such as issuing social security checks, collecting and filing income tax returns, delivering the mail and so forth, bureaucrats must have some form of discretion since they are working regularly with a wide range of individuals with diverse problems. Some individual cases may not exactly fit established rules and having to consult the authorities first would slow down service delivery. The top-down approach also assumes that there will be no pressure of time if the problem arises that will require the bureaucrats to make quick decisions. Lastly, this approach tends to consider the street-level bureaucrats as lacking in the required capacity and expertise needed to make important decisions.

2.3.2 Bottom-Up perspective

Another perspective that has been developed in a bid to understand how public policy implementation can be achieved is the bottom-up approach. The bottom-up approach proposes that, "instead of regarding human beings as chains in the line of command, or cogs in a machine, policy makers should realise that policy is best implemented by what Elmore (1985) terms a 'backward mapping' of problems and policy, which involves defining success in human or behavioural terms rather than as the completion of a 'hypothesis'," (Tummers & Bekkers, 2012, p.6). According to this perspective, central initiatives are poorly adapted to local conditions. Programme success depends in large part on the skills of individuals in the local implementation structure who can adapt the policy to local conditions (Paudel, 2009).

Mabena (2010, p. 58) further suggests that "the proximity of street-level bureaucrats to the social, economic and political environments makes them better placed to make policy that reflects these realities on the ground". Provision, therefore, should be made for street-level bureaucrats to modify policy based on their experiences in working with them. The bottom-up perspective does not negate the role of the executive in policy making. However, it emphasises that space must be made for civil servants to provide input that will assist in the proper implementation of policies.

The perspective is not, however, without criticism. Rist (1995) asserts that "the existence of discretion within policy-makers and street-level bureaucrats makes very clear the problems of differences in interpreting and applying general policy to specific circumstances". The street-level bureaucrats may also use the opportunity of having discretion to their own advantage. People tend to identify opportunities to maximize their power and influence, and this may result in conflict within the organization. We may see such conflict as an essentially political process involving different strategies for acquiring and maintaining power. On the other hand, this conflict may also work to the advantage of an organization in a sense that competing for power may involve people make an additional effort in their jobs so

as to be promoted and gain extra power and authority. It may also help in keeping those in power accountable for the decisions they make.

2.3.3 Power relations in policy implementation

Policy implementation involves a lot of decision-making. Power plays a central role in decision-making and hence influences policy implementation. Ham and Hill (1993) distinguishes between three dimensions of power that have a direct bearing on decision-making. Firstly they examine Dahl's decisional approach which states that "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" (Dahl, 1957, in Ham & Hill, 1993, p. 66). He goes on to say that it is the decision itself that must be studied or analyzed to understand who, in the decision-making arena, holds real power. Dahl argues against the understanding brought forward by Hunter (1953), that it is the small elite that holds the power to make decisions. It also counters the understanding brought forward by Mills (1956) that it is a combination of the military, business corporations and state agencies that hold power to make decisions. Of course, these claims were not representative of a larger sample as the study was only conducted in the United States of America, and Hunter and Mills could not defend the universality of their claims.

Another dimension to decision making is the notion of 'non decision-making' presented by Bachrach & Baratz (1962). Bachrach and Baratz (1962) assert that "…power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A" (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962, in Ham & Hill, 1993, p.67). This assertion shares similar connotations with the garbage can model of policy development where a decision not to create a policy is taken, due to political reasons and others, until such time that the policy decision can no longer be ignored. Bachrach and Baratz (1962 p. 68) argues that "…a non-decision-making situation can be said to exist when the dominant values, the accepted rules of the game, the existing power relations among groups and the instruments of force, singly or in

combination, effectively prevent certain grievances from developing into fully-fledged issues which call for decisions". The decision not to make a decision is a decision nonetheless. Therefore, it may still be relevant to examine how it is that the issue never makes it onto the agenda of issues for discussion and subsequent decision-making to understand who holds the power to make decisions.

The third approach to understanding power dynamics is brought forward by Lukes (1974). Lukes (1974) recognises the definitions of power by Dahl (1957) and Bachrach and Baratz (1962) that power can be overtly and covertly exercised. However, he asserts that there is a third dimension to power and that is the power that is exerted against people in order to change their perceptions and manipulate them into conceding that the status quo or the view that is expressed by those in power is the only way in which things can be done. Lukes (1974 p. 70) observes that, "when the third dimension of power operates, there is *latent* conflict". Lukes (1974 p. 70) puts it thus: "…latent conflict exists when there would be a conflict of wants or preferences between those exercising power and those subject to it were the latter to become aware of their interests. In this context, the definition of power employed by Lukes is that 'A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests". This type of power can mostly be exercised in situations where there is a low level of literacy, naivety and a lack of general understanding of one's rights and privileges.

Having described the different forms of power above as set out by different theorists, it is important for us to briefly look into what gives effect to power. Power may not mean anything if it cannot be used to influence decision-making. Lukes (1974) describes the basis of power as the relationship between 'A' and 'B' which is the source of that power. Some people are perceived as having power because of the organizations they come from. Some are perceived as having power due to the positions they hold. Lukes (1974) also cites that the different bases of power include reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power as well as expert power. Unless a person is perceived to have one or more of the above-mentioned

sources of power, they will not be in a position to influence or direct decision-making.

In order to understand policy implementation one has to have an understanding of power relations in that setting. As illustrated above, those who do not have power stand less or no chance of influencing decision-making. The source from which the power is emanating plays a big role and people can be forced to submit even to decisions they do not agree with based on the fear of negative consequences from those with power.

2.3.4 The political environment of policy implementation

Another important aspect in trying to understand policy implementation is the existence of a political environment in which policy implementation is taking place. Lasswell (1936) in Heywood (2013, p.10) asserts that, "...politics is about diversity and conflict, but the essential ingredient is the existence of scarcity: the simple fact that, while human needs and desires are infinite, the resources available to satisfy them are always limited". The political environment involves a multitude of aspects including the state, government institutions, legislation and public and private stakeholders. The international community, organizations and legislation also play an important role in regulating the politics of a given place. Policy implementation therefore is bound to be affected by the political environment in which it operates.

By way of example, the implementation of a public participation policy rests heavily on an enabling political environment. This includes a vibrant and enabling political culture. A political culture is defined as being how citizens relate to its government as well as what views they hold regarding how governments should operate. A government that disregards the views of its citizenry, especially in a democratic setting, runs the risk of creating an unpleasant political culture which will negatively influence policy formulation, implementation and reform.

Implementing the public participation policy, or any other policy, in South Africa is not easy as it requires political will and commitment from all sectors involved.

Politics affects origins, formulation and implementation of any public policy especially when significant changes are involved (Reich, 1995, p. 48). With regard to the public participation policy, for example, and taking South Africa's history into account, broad reforms are only possible when there is sufficient political will and when changes are designed and implemented by capable planners and managers (Cerna, 2013, p. 14). Reich (1995) in Cerna (2013, p. 15) distinguishes between three models of clusters of political conditions that will enable policy reform. These are:

- **Political will model**: Decisions by political leaders are necessary and sufficient for a major policy change. This model emphasises a technocratic approach with a rational actor model of decision-making, but it tends to ignore political constraints to policy reform. This model is more likely under political circumstances such as 'a strong mandate, strong state, narrow coalition and strong leadership.
- **Political factions model**: Politicians seek to serve the desires of different groups (interest groups, political parties). Rational analysis is the main means to promote and serve organizational interests. Reform occurs when it corresponds to a preferred distribution of benefits to specific constituent groups of government leaders.
- **Political survival model**: Government officials seek to protect individual interests (as power holders) in order to maintain or expand their existing control over resources. It assumes that politicians operate in a logic of opportunistic politics, in which decision-makers manipulate policies to achieve desired means. Reform occurs when it serves the personal political survival or the personal interests of political leaders (Reich, 1995, p. 58).

There are other factors that can contribute towards ensuring that the political environment is not the only factor that determines the direction of policy implementation. These factors involve the vibrancy, well organized and mobilised interest groups and other external factors. The political landscape is also important

as more power rests in the hands of politicians and having them in agreement with the policy will benefit policy implementation.

2.3.5 Network approach to policy implementation

Networks play one of the vital roles in policy implementation. It is a common understanding that government agencies are the ones that are directly responsible for implementing public policies. It is, however, also understood that government agencies seldom have all the capacity to implement policies without having to rely on other organizations, non-governmental or private, for assistance and back-up. It therefore becomes of paramount importance that a clear path in which policy networks can cooperatively work together is cultivated to ensure that a positive contribution is made towards better policy implementation.

Policy networks are defined by Benson (in Kickert, Klijn & Koppenjan, 1997, p. 6) as "stable patterns of social relations between interdependent actors, which take shape around policy problems and/or policy programmes". What becomes clear in this definition is that policy networks in nature are formed due to their interdependence. This means that there cannot be a network if there is no common interest or if there is sufficiency. Lack or inadequacy of resources, mutual interest and dependence are some of the reasons for the formation of networks while the opposite is a basis for them to dissolve.

O'Toole in Agranoff and McGuire, (1999, p. 20) further defines networks as "structures of interdependence involving multiple organizations or parts thereof, where one unit is not merely the formal subordinate of the others in some larger hierarchical arrangement". This definition suggests that network function can better be achieved where there is not one organization that will take precedence or assume an authoritative role in relation to the others. Having such organizations in the network will defeat the whole purpose as these organizations are likely to wield authority and sway policy decisions in their favour. It is therefore important to manage power relations within a network effectively if it is to achieve its objectives.

Some of the things that can undermine the effectiveness of a network and elevate the chances of having authoritative partners, as indicated by Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff (2002), are differences in resource levels, operational capacity and political influence. Including organizations or individuals that do not have much to offer in a network where there are organizations or individuals that possess resources and political influence may prove to be a futile exercise in that decisions that will be taken will most likely favour those with power.

Policy networks can serve more than one purpose in policy implementation. Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002, p. 114) indicates that "networks can also potentially fulfil a broader function of promoting a more responsive, transparent and accountable government". These are very important pillars of a democracy. The participation of everyone who has a vested interest in a policy ensures that due consideration is taken and implementation is directed towards addressing the needs of those affected by the policy. This results in ownership of policy solutions by beneficiaries and also a high user rate of policy goods and services, reduced maintenance and operating costs, better conformity between policy intent and outcomes, and therefore subsequently greater sustainability of policies and programmes (Brinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002, p. 87).

2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.4.1 Institutional arrangements for policy implementation

While all the above factors are important to look at and understand when dealing with the question of policy implementation, this particular research is mostly going to look at public participation policy implementation through the lens of institutions or institutional arrangements that each of the local municipalities have put in place to aid and realise the policy intentions. The institution which is being looked at, in this case, is the institution of government, that being the municipality. The institutional arrangements will be all the mechanisms put in place by the municipality to implement the policy.

Implementing public policies cannot be achieved where there is no consideration given to institutions or institutional arrangements made. Usually, policies are clear on what they are aimed at achieving but sometimes pay less attention to how and who will be responsible for their implementation. Research suggests that without proper institutional capacity being put in place to implement policy, the chances of successfully translating the intentions to outcomes are significantly reduced.

Ostrom (1999) in Kraft and Furlong (2004, p.74) states that institutions refer both to the organizations and the rules that are used to structure patterns of interaction within and across organizations. Contextualizing the importance and role of institutions, Kumssa and Mbeche (2004, p. 840) further indicates that "well-functioning institutions can promote growth and reduce poverty in Africa by providing a conducive environment for implementation of sustainable development programmes". Further, they recommend that, therefore, "African countries should endeavour to establish effective, responsive and democratic institutions that will promote accountable and transparent governance and sustainable socio-economic development". This, according to Kumssa and Mbeche (2004), can be achieved by making the states more responsive to people's needs and bringing government closer to the people through broader participation and decentralizing programmes to empower local communities and enhance the role of civil society.

As indicated above, government institutions are mostly responsible for public policy implementation. Kumssa and Mbeche (2004) suggests that the institutions of government are the most important institutions to drive development. "Therefore, it is crucial to improve the planning and implementation capacity of the government by enhancing the capability of public institutions to design effective policies and rules that check arbitrary state actions and combat rampant corruption" (Kumssa 2004, p. 846). In so doing, Kumssa (2004) stresses the importance of involving civil society in decision-making, "…not as an institution replacing but rather complementing the state and guarantee the effective functioning of a society and its institutions". According to Kumssa (2004 p. 849), this will "initiate reforms

that will focus on building capacities for transparent, responsible and effective governance".

Furthermore, Fischer and Sciarini (2013) in Ingold and Leifeld (2016, p. 6) indicates that "institutionalised decision-making power affects how influential an actor is perceived in a network". This statement reveals that, on a broader scale, institutions, especially those with decision-making powers, have a perceived opportunity to influence policy implementation. Therefore, actors who are attached to institutions tend to be perceived as more powerful in a network as opposed to actors that do not come from recognised institutions. On an institutional level, this statement can be interpreted to reveal that those actors who hold the most power within the organization will have the greatest influence on policy implementation.

As this research is aimed at establishing how the Ugu District Municipality implements the public participation policy, more focus is put on the institutional arrangements put in place by the municipality to implement this policy and how adequate and effective they are. This is obviously benchmarked against the provisions of the literature on public participation and the policy itself. The research also places more emphasis on the capacity of human and non-human resources provided by the municipality for this purpose. Analyzing the institutional arrangements for implementing the policy will provide oversight on whether or not the policy is likely to be properly implemented. The researcher realises, however, that examining institutional arrangements will not provide a conclusive answer to the question of policy implementation.

2.5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Public participation in South Africa is a fundamental right. It is considered a cornerstone of its democracy. Sisk et.al in Nyalunga (2006) reiterates that participation is intrinsic to the core meaning of democracy. As indicated above, the demise of the apartheid system of government in South Africa brought about a stronger emphasis on legislation as well as in policy of the need for public

involvement in decision-making. Moreover, local government began to be viewed as a space where vigorous participation should happen. Research shows, however, that there are substantive challenges that undermine the realisation and implementation of this right. It is noted, however, that there is great value in opening up legitimate spaces of participation. This section will review the legislative and policy framework that forms the basis of this right. The value that correct implementation of public participation policies has in societies as well as challenges that have been found to deter the fulfilment of the obligation of public participation will then be discussed.

2.5.1 Legislative and policy framework

In South Africa the right to public participation is well protected and provided for. Legislatively, the emphasis on public participation is well articulated. Firstly, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 states in section 152(e) that a municipality must "encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of local government". This provision is further articulated in section 164(4) of the Constitution: "...no by-law may be published unless it has been published for public comment". This clearly identifies how much public participation is valued in the Constitution. Further, the manner in which the Constitution itself was established; through consultation with various stakeholders in the country and abroad, clearly sets the tone for the need for engagement and participation in all matters involving citizens.

The Local Government Municipal Structures Act, No. 117 of 1998 (as amended in 2002 to 2011) emphasises the need for municipalities to engage with communities in decision-making, especially on matters affecting them. The Structures Act focuses on the need for municipalities to create spaces for participation such as council meetings and ward committee structures. The Act further requires the Executive Committees and Executive Mayors to account on the level of community and community organizations' involvement in municipal matters.

Further legislation that supports public participation is the Municipal Systems Act, No. 32 of 2000. Chapter 4 of the Systems Act strongly encourages the involvement of the local community in decision-making in relation to the quality and impact of the services offered by the municipality. Section 42 of the Act stipulates that "...through appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures the municipality must involve the local community in the development, implementation and review of the municipality's performance management system, and in particular, allow the community to participate in the setting of appropriate key performance indicators and performance targets of the municipality".

The policy framework on public participation is extensive. The 1998 White Paper on Local Government requires that municipalities ensure community participation at four levels; namely:

- As voters: To ensure maximum democratic accountability of the elected political leadership for the policies they are empowered to promote.
- As citizens: Who express, via different stakeholder associations, their views before, during and after policy development processes in order to ensure that policies reflect community preferences as far as possible.
- As consumers and end-users: Who expect value-for-money, affordable service provision and courteous and responsive services.
- As organised partners involved in the mobilisation of resources for development via for profit businesses, non-governmental organizations and community-based institutions (White Paper on Local Government, 1998).

The need for public participation is also articulated in the Batho Pele Principles, published in 1998. These are eight core principles, of which four strongly advocate for public participation. Consultation, increasing access, providing information and openness and transparency are applicable in the situation of an enabling local government for public participation. Application of these principles in local government would allow for communities to be able to monitor and evaluate the conduct of the municipality. By way of example, if the municipal reports and

minutes from meetings are accessible to the broader community, the community or community organizations would be able to scrutinize and identify any irregularities therein.

The Community Based Planning (CBP) Policy is another initiative of government to ensure public participation. With CBP, government realises that communities have a clear understanding of their needs and also how best to have those needs fulfilled. The policy seeks to give autonomy to community organizations to provide services that can be used by the community without relying or depending on government. The structures, such as ward committee structures, are responsible for ensuring that plans and budgets given to the community are accounted for and properly utilized. Monitoring and evaluation of projects is undertaken within these structures.

There is a common understanding that participatory needs may vary from one community to the next. It is against this backdrop that the National Policy Framework on Public Participation (NPFPP) was developed. The aim of the framework is to guide municipalities on compliance with the legislative requirements for public participation. The policy framework prescribes three key strategies that municipalities must adhere to in order to fulfil the obligation of public participation. Over and above these, the policy framework realises that there are unique circumstances that municipalities may encounter, and therefore leaves space for municipalities to consider those circumstances and develop innovative ways that will assist in promoting the right further. These innovative approaches must however be in line with the other policies and in particular with the Constitution.

2.5.2 The value of public participation

Legitimate public participation has the potential to promote positive and beneficial outcomes from the process. Bastidas (2004) distinguishes between four fundamental benefits for public participation:

- **Strengthening democracy**: One of the definitions of democracy is that it is a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of the state, typically through elected representatives. The United Nations in defining democracy asserts that it is a system where "people have a say in decisions that affect their lives and can hold decision-makers to account, based on inclusive and fair rules, institutions and practices that govern social interactions. When citizens are involved in decision-making, the core values of a democratic society are fulfilled. This is due to the fact that any decision that is taken will have considered the views of everyone and the decision is likely to be in the best interests of the majority. Less or insufficient public participation will mean that decisions taken will not represent the larger community and therefore the democratic values may be compromised.

- **Increasing accountability**: In a democratic society like that of South Africa, government office bearers are put in office by means of a vote of confidence from citizens. The expectation is that those government office bearers are accountable to the citizens. Opening up spaces of participation increases the chances of accountability and responsiveness to public interest. In local government, for example, this means that government office bearers will be answerable to communities through available public participation spaces if service delivery targets are not met or if there are budgetary discrepancies.

- **Improving process quality**: Public participation also has the benefit of drawing together different kinds of expertise that can assist in solving a problem. Civil society organizations usually have first-hand information on issues and also expertise to identify possible solutions for them while citizens also have first-hand information on issues that affect them and suggestions for how they can be resolved. Government office bearers could well be assisted with this information and capacity in their interventions. Process outputs would be enriched through the involvement of the larger community through public participation.

- **Managing social conflicts**: Community protests, usually with complaints related to service delivery in local municipalities, are somewhat, although not always, the result of a lack of meaningful and legitimate public participation. When government office bearers are in constant communication with citizens, chances of social conflicts, usually manifesting in community protests, will be minimised if not eliminated. When communities are involved in the decision-making regarding services to be delivered, they are most likely to own and appreciate those services more than when they are imposed on them. Nyalunga (2016) posits that "if delivery issues are properly addressed, this will in turn entice people, most especially the poor to actively participate in the affairs of the government".

Further to the above, Irvin and Stansbury (2004, p. 56) succinctly categorise the benefits of public participation in Table 1 below. The table distinguishes between the benefits of public participation that both government and participants can achieve during decision-making as well as on the outcomes of programmes and projects.

Table 1: Advantages of Citizen Participation in Government Decision-Making

	Advantages of Citizen Participation in Government Decision-Making	**Advantages to Citizen Participants / Advantages to Government Decision Process**
Decision Process	• Education (learn from and inform government representatives) • Persuade and enlighten government • Gain skills for activist citizenship	• Education (learn from and inform citizens) • Persuade citizens; build trust and allay anxiety or hostility • Build strategic alliances • Gain legitimacy of decisions

Outcomes	• Break gridlock; achieve outcomes • Gain some control over policy process • Better policy and implementation decisions	• Break gridlock; achieve outcomes • Avoid litigation costs • Better policy and implementation decisions

2.5.3 Challenges with public participation

Just as public participation has beneficial consequences, there are, however, challenges that have the potential to impede the correct implementation of public participation plans. These challenges need to be identified and a plan to resolve them put in place. Overcoming these challenges would set the municipality up to lead communities that are involved and responsible for their own development. Some of these challenges include:

- **Representation**: It is acknowledged that it might be practically impossible for government to interact with every citizen. It is for this reason that care must be taken to ensure that representation takes into consideration all the aspects of the community. For example, it would not be advisable for a ward committee to only consist of male representatives. This is because men would not be well acquainted with the challenges faced by their female counterparts. This, in essence, means that representation must factor in disparities such as gender, age, social standing, political standing and disability, among others.

- **Time constraints**: Public participation may also be considered time consuming. This may be fuelled with the reciprocal processes that may need to happen before a decision is taken and more so if there are opposing views within a decision-making panel. Time can also be an issue where decision-making requires a quorum of representatives with competing responsibilities. The municipality needs to put measures in place, such as

setting up meetings early in the year, to mitigate the risks of non-participation in decision-making structures.

- **Budgetary constraints**: Availability of funding can seriously undermine the achievement of public participation targets. This is in relation to capacitating the public participation personnel as well as having funding to host meetings and disseminate the required information. Nyalunga (2006) asserts that inefficiency is also caused by "lack of incentives to persuade or entice representatives, such as ward committee members, to diligently represent their communities. A municipal office therefore has to ensure that a properly funded public participation office is established and budgeted for on an annual basis.

- **Capacitation**: A serious challenge in the proper implementation of public participation targets is with regard to capacitation. This relates to having insufficient personnel or untrained representatives in decision-making structures. It is a prescription of the national policy framework on public participation to train, for example, ward committee members in different areas that would enable them to engage and understand issues and also to present possible solutions to the identified problems.

Table 2 below lists the challenges applicable to both government and participants that can impede public participation during decision-making and also during outcomes (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, p.58).

Table 2: Disadvantages of Citizen Participation in Government Decision-Making

	Advantages of Citizen Participation in Government Decision-Making	Advantages to Citizen Participants / Advantages to Government Decision Process
Decision Process	• Time consuming (even dull) • Pointless if decision is ignored	• Time consuming • Costly • May backfire, creating more hostility toward government
Outcomes	• Worse policy decision if heavily influenced by opposing interest groups	• Loss of decision-making control • Possibility of bad decision that is politically impossible to ignore • Less budget for implementation of actual projects

2.6 CONCLUSION

What becomes apparent in the above literature review is that there is a need to place greater emphasis on policy implementation. During policy formulation, some research efforts must be directed towards crafting and charting exactly how the policy will be implemented. This has consequences for whether or not the policy objectives will be realised. Theory suggests that there are competing factors that contribute towards the success or failure of policy implementation. Factors such as power struggles, the political environment in which the policy is being implemented, the availability and adequacy of institutional arrangements as well as

relationships within the network community involved in implementing the policy should be taken into account at all times.

Also of significance in the literature review is the fact that public participation is intrinsic to the core meaning of democracy (Nyalunga, 2006). South Africa, post-apartheid, has fared relatively well in advocating for the right and obligation of involving citizens in decision-making. The legislative framework explains the importance of safeguardingthis right. There is still much to be done to ensure that this right is in fact afforded, in the correct manner, to citizens.

The above literature review also discusses the reasons why public participation can be of value to policy implementation. Beyond the fact that it is a legislative obligation, legitimate public participation can be beneficial to both citizens and implementing agents. The key to unlocking the benefits that stand to be realised when public participation is legitimately conducted involves the willingness and capacity from all parties to be involved and make the necessary contributions.

It is clear that there are challenges that still need to be dealt with in order to fully realise the implementation of public participation policies in South Africa and in local government in particular. These challenges emanate from both government and citizens. There are also disadvantages, as discussed above, that can present public participation in a negative light. It is the view of the researcher that there are more advantages than disadvantages when involving citizens in matters of governance. Although there may be challenges, much more stands to be achieved and gained when this legislative right is properly implemented and advocated for.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the report is concerned with explaining research methods that have been employed in this study to answer the research question. Research methodology is informed by the research question and that in turn informs the research design and also the ways in which the research should be conducted. This section firstly explains and analyses the research paradigm that is employed by this study. Secondly, the different types of research methodologies and how the one employed in this study is appropriate will be explained. Thirdly, the research design followed by this study will be revealed, including methods of sampling, data gathering as well as data analysis. Finally, this section will discuss validity and reliability, limitations and ethical considerations that will be observed and used to ensure that the study complies with the obligations of research in the social sciences.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Most research in the social sciences is concerned with discovering how people understand the world and how the research can improve the lives of those affected by it. Scientific research is aimed at "discovering laws and postulate theories that can explain natural or social phenomena, in other words, build scientific knowledge." (Bhattacherjiee, 2012, p. 3). Past experiences, in different ways, influence people to form particular ways of thinking, beliefs and assumptions about the future. It is understood, however, that since past experiences are subjective and are influenced by different things, not everyone will have the same view of reality or will share similar assumptions. There will, however, be a particular view which will be shared by a number of people and will thus be close to being accepted as being representative of shared reality. That view is termed a paradigm. Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012) distinguishes between five recognised paradigms in

social sciences, namely, positivism, post-positivism, constructivism, transformative and post-colonial paradigms. These paradigms are discussed briefly below.

Positivism: This paradigm emphasises that truth or reality can only be established through scientific methods. That is, what is claimed to be reality must be verifiable through observable measurements, possibly in laboratory settings. It therefore rejects the notion that there can be multiple realities and that results can be influenced by the researcher. Those following this paradigm follow the quantitative approach and can collect data through questionnaires, observations, tests and experiments.

Post-positivism: Unlike the positivist thinkers, post-positivism differs in that it acknowledges that no matter how faithfully the scientific methods can be adhered to; there is always a chance that results will not be unquestionably certain. The paradigm however still maintains that reality can only be understood through verifiable scientific means.

Constructivist/ interpretative: This paradigm subscribes to the notion of multiple realities in that it denotes that knowledge is socially constructed and is therefore subjective. It suggests that the world can be understood only by those who experience it. The constructivists maintain that no view is wrong and truth is context-dependent. Data when following this paradigm can be collected through interviews, observations, pictures, diaries and documents.

Transformative/emancipatory: The view carried by this paradigm is that reality is not constant and it is historically bound. It says that the only way to understand reality is dependent on understanding culture, politics, economics and power-based factors in a given society. It is concerned with encompassing all the factors in a society that can influence how reality is viewed. Data can be collected using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

Post-colonial: This paradigm takes into account the importance of relationships and how relations influence reality. It is almost similar to the transformative paradigm in the sense that it takes into account the importance of understanding the historical situations and how those affect the current realities. It emphasises the need for respect and equality between the researcher and participants in order to uncover reality. Data can be gathered through reading on indigenous knowledge, listening to stories, and understanding language frameworks.

Based on the above and also based on the research question and the researcher's conceptualisation of the topic, this research follows an interpretive and constructivist paradigm. This is because the main objective of the study is to understand how the implementation of the national policy framework on public participation is carried out in the municipality. The research acknowledges that 'truths' that will be shared by the participants will be constructed based on their experiences with the municipalities in question. As such, there may be different 'realities' on the subject matter. The researcher is interested in understanding those 'truths' and 'realities' as the researcher believes they play a major role in implementing policies, more especially the policy on public participation.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODS

Choosing the most appropriate research method is yet another critical step in ensuring that the study yields the desired results. The research question or the purpose of the study will most likely 'suggest' the methodology to be used. To be briefly discussed below are three predominant research methods undertaken in social sciences research, namely quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods. This will assist in determining whether the chosen research method is the most appropriate one to use for the purposes of this research.

3.3.1 Quantitative method

Based on the discussion on paradigms above, quantitative methods are usually suitable for studies following positivist or post-positivist paradigms. The collection

of data is through experiments or quasi-experiments, observations or structured interviews. Data is usually in the form of numbers of quantifiable objects that can be analysed through using statistical applications. This type of data gathering does not allow for exploration of concepts and further understanding of social phenomena.

Quantitative approach is mostly used to test theory or hypothesis. It is concerned with identifying the cause and effect relationship between variables. In this way, using quantitative methods can lead to improving theory and to a lesser extent in proving it. The benefit of using quantitative methods involves the fact that results can easily be verified and generalised to the larger community. This generalisation is made possible by the fact that quantitative researchers have the scientific means to remove bias in the data. This is due to the fact that there is no room for the researcher to influence data through his or her own beliefs and social background. There are also means to measure reliability and validity prior to analysis. Quantitative research is also conducted in controlled areas such as laboratories and this allows for test and retest to improve reliability and validity.

The study at hand does not allow for the use of quantitative methods as it is concerned with exploring as well as analysing how the municipality implements policy. Using the quantitative method would only lead to an indication of whether or not the policy is being implemented while the current researcher is concerned with finding out what causes the implementation to fail or succeed as well as what variables contribute to the success or lack thereof of the policy implementation. The study is concerned with proving whether current mechanisms are working or not and if not, what is causing them to fail. Furthermore, the study is not primarily concerned with drawing conclusions but rather contributing to the knowledge base.

3.3.2 Qualitative method

“Qualitative research is concerned with understanding the process and the social and cultural contexts which shape various behavioural patterns. It strives to create a coherent story as it is seen through the eyes of those who are part of that story, to

understand and represent their experiences and actions as they encounter, engage with, and live through situations" (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012, p. 126). Using qualitative methods therefore requires the researcher to be immersed in the cultural and behavioural patterns of the community being studied. It usually leads to understanding phenomena on a case-by-case basis. Qualitative methods therefore render the study subjective and that means that the results will be case-specific; generalisation when using qualitative methods is not possible.

Prior perceptions of qualitative research methods were that results of the study will be less credible due to issues related to researcher bias and also the fact that it is easy for the researcher to influence results especially when he or she has vested interests in the study. It is also viewed as a disadvantage in using qualitative methods that it is not easy to generalise results to other people or other settings due to the subjective nature of the study. This therefore means that each case must be investigated on its own merits. This is difficult to do because using qualitative methods requires time and resources.

Data, when using qualitative methods, can be collected by means of unstructured interviews, conducting focus groups and observations. This allows the researcher to probe or ask further questions based on an answer provided in order to gain more understanding. A researcher is also allowed to go back to the informant and seek more information, including during data analysis.

The other advantages of using qualitative methods include allowing the researcher to delve into an unexplored field and also to study and describe complex phenomena that cannot be easily described by using quantitative methods. It assists the researcher to understand how and why a phenomenon occurs. In that way, a researcher may be in a position to make recommendations that will help solve the problem or situation and contribute to available literature on the subject matter. Qualitative methods provide rich, real-time and case-specific data on phenomena as they occur in local contexts. This ensures that results are relevant and to the point.

As the current study is concerned with exploring and understanding the socio-cultural contributors to proper policy implementation in a local government context, using qualitative methodologies is appropriate. The study is not concerned with determining whether or not policy is being implemented but rather how it is being implemented and specifically what arrangements and their adequacy are made available in a bid to achieve to proper implementation of this legislative right.

3.3.3 Mixed method

To limit the disadvantages and to maximise on the advantages found in using qualitative and quantitative methods, some researchers resort to using mixed methods. For structured and tested integrative processes, researchers seeking associations between primarily quantitative biophysical and primarily qualitative socio-cultural data use mixed-method research designs (Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salib & Rupert, 2007). Driscoll et al. (2007, p. 19) observes that design in mixed method is "...differentiated by the level of prioritization of one form of data over another, by the combination of data forms in the research process and by the timing of data collection".

As much as it may be advantageous to use mixed-method as a form of curtailing disadvantages found in qualitative and quantitative methods, it is not without challenges or disadvantages. During analysis, quantified qualitative responses will render it difficult to capture the initial rich data received. This will defeat the purpose of having done qualitative research from the onset. Quantified qualitative data is vulnerable to the problem of collinearity, meaning that responses will be linked according to the categorization of the coding strategy (Driscoll et al., 2007). Doing mixed method research will also generally be expensive and time-consuming and this may lead to researchers resorting to reducing the sample size or limiting time spent interviewing due to budgetary and time constraints.

The study at hand will not benefit from using mixed-methods as the data which will be collected will primarily be qualitative and not quantifiable in nature. It will therefore not be possible to have phenomena tested using quantitative systems.

Furthermore, it will not assist in achieving the real results that this research has set out to achieve and answering the questions that this research has set out to answer.

3.4 SCOPE

The primary purpose of this study is to establish how the national policy framework on public participation is implemented in the Ugu District as a whole. The district municipality provides oversight to six local municipalities, namely Umzumbe, Hibiscus Coast, Vulamehlo, Umuziwabantu, Ezinqoleni as well as Umdoni local municipalities. The study will therefore collect information on all six local municipalities as well as on the district municipality itself.

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

As the study draws from a constructivist/ interpretative paradigm which seeks to gain more understanding and explore matters, an empirical qualitative study was conducted using primary data and analyzing secondary data. Following the qualitative approach allows the study to gain more insight into how the municipality understands and implements the policy. The following design was employed.

3.5.1 Sampling

For the purposes of this research, a purposive non-probability sampling technique was used. According to Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012, p.126), non-probability sampling is commonly used in qualitative research where a sample size cannot be selected randomly. Therefore, only individuals with the required knowledge were appropriate to interview in order to obtain the information that assisted in answering the research question in this study. The key participants interviewed are officials and managers responsible for public participation in the district and local municipalities in the Ugu district. Also interviewed are representatives from civil society organizations in the district as well as the community members and community representatives in the district. The total number of participants interviewed in this study is nineteen (19) people.

3.5.2 Data collection methods

Data was collected by means of face-to-face semi-structured interviews as well as document examination. For the interviews, the researcher firstly explained the purpose of the research and assured the participants of the confidentiality practice that will be employed in the study. With the permission of the individual interviewees, the interviews were recorded. A questionnaire containing seven (7) open-ended questions for government employees, five (5) open-ended questions for civil society representatives and seven (7) open-ended questions for community members and community representatives was designed to guide the research. The open-ended nature of the questions allowed for the researcher to ask follow-up questions for clarity and further information that would provide more insight. Further questions were asked by the researcher as and when needed. Subsequent to the interviews, data was transcribed and stored in a controlled area in preparation for analysis.

Secondary data was collected by means of document examination. The documents examined include annual reports, municipalities' strategies/policies for public participation as well as minutes from ward committee meetings. The researcher accessed annual reports through municipalities' websites. Public participation policies/strategies as well as minutes from ward committees were not readily available on the websites and the researcher requested them from the government participants; however, not all the documents were provided. The researcher therefore used the available documents for examination and subsequent analysis. These documents assisted in revealing insights into how the municipality implements the national policy framework for public participation in relation to what the interviews revealed.

3.5.3 Data presentation

Data presentation from interviews in this research is done by thematically categorising information as guided by the research questions. The researcher also

presents data that is deemed important and will assist in ultimately answering the research question and solving the research problem as stated in chapter one. Direct quotations are used in presenting data as a way of proving statements and also giving the reader a better sense of the interview. Some participants presented data in the isiZulu language, but for the purposes of this research interviews were translated into English.

To ensure confidentiality in accordance with the agreement with participants, the researcher uses letters of the alphabet to indicate respondents. Letters A-D represent government participants, E-I represent participants from civil society organizations, and J-S represent members and representatives of the community.

Data gathered from documents examination is also categorised based on the type of document. For example, the report starts by presenting data that comes from annual reports followed by data extracted from the policies/strategies for public participation, and then lastly data from minutes from ward and forum meetings is provided. Since this information is extracted from public documents, the researcher references quotations in accordance with the recognised referencing guide. The only information that is presented from these reports is relevant to the subject matter and will assist in answering the research questions and also assist in validating the information provided during interviews.

3.5.4 Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis is an important step in research whereby the collected data is made sense of. It assists with answering the research question or finding a solution to a research problem. The way in which the researcher goes about analyzing the data determines the validity of the study. It is important for the researcher in this step to remove him/herself and his/her pre-existing beliefs or hypotheses and 'truthfully' analyze the available data.

As indicated above, data for this research comes in two forms. These are data coming from documentary sources (such as annual reports and policy documents)

and data coming from qualitative interviews. Data emanating from the interviews will be analyzed using the deductive approach. Deductive approach means that "…a particular situation is explained by deduction from a general statement" (Gibbs, 2007, p.5). There is a general understanding of policy implementation that already exists in literature and there is a general view for what constitutes successful or unsuccessful policy implementation. The particulars that will be revealed by the data will be measured against the provisions of these general assumptions.

The data gathered from the interviews was transcribed, labelled, copied and then stored safely in an access controlled place where only the researcher has access. This is particularly important for purposes of verification and also to maintain the confidentiality that participants were promised. After reading and re-reading the transcripts, information was organized into themes based on the responses and coded. Subsequent to that, coded data was organized into categories and where necessary re-coding was done. These categories assisted in making sense of the data and understanding the story from the participants' perspectives.

Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012, p. 141) defines documentary analysis as "...an integrated and conceptually informed method, procedure and technique for locating, identifying, retrieving and analyzing documents for their relevance, significance and meaning". Three factors are of importance in analyzing data coming from documents in this research. These are authenticity, credibility and meaning. It is well understood that annual reports, for example, are prone to manipulation and distortion as information is coming from people with a vested interest in how the report appears. It therefore becomes important to find ways in which the authenticity of the information is obtained. This is done through triangulation. Information gathered from the documents is measured against information presented during the interviews. All this information is thematically analyzed in chapter five (5).

3.6 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability and validity are two distinct but interrelated phenomena that are of significant value to a research study. Ensuring that reliability and validity is achieved in a research study is one way of determining that results can be trustworthy and that researcher bias is minimised. There is a common understanding that testing reliability and validity has mostly been used in quantitative studies. Stenbacka (2001, p. 252) argues that validity and reliability are quantitative concepts as a result of their preoccupation with measurements. In the social sciences, testing reliability and validity is a complex task as social sciences research usually involves the use of humans as participants and textual data.

It is, however, still important for a researcher in social sciences to minimise the risks related to producing unreliable and invalid results. In this study reliability is ensured by interviewing the people that are directly responsible for public participation in the municipality. It is also assured by conducting interviews under similar conditions and where questions are asked in a similar way from one respondent to the other. Questions aimed at revealing the same 'truth' are also asked to further ensure reliability of responses.

Validity is ensured by making sure that questions asked are of relevance to the study and are directed towards answering the research question. Questions that are of no relevance towards answering the research question are avoided. Validity is also ensured by using direct quotes from respondents' responses to illustrate points during results presentation and discussion. The examination of available documents also assists with ensuring validity of the answers that have been provided.

3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As the study follows a case study design, it is an anticipated limitation that the results will only be applicable to the community in question and not generalizable to the larger community of municipalities. The study makes use of the data collected

from the Ugu district and it is understandable that the information received only applies to the circumstances of the Ugu district.

It is also a limitation of this study that since data is collected by means of qualitative methods, it is largely subjective and may even not be a true reflection of the real situation on the ground. For example, a member of the municipality directly responsible for public participation may have felt the need to protect his or her job by giving inaccurate or incomplete information on the situation of the implementation of the national policy framework on public participation in the municipality. As indicated above, the researcher was prepared to mitigate these risks by ensuring that other sources of information are obtained in order to corroborate the information received from the responsible officials for public participation in the Ugu district. Another limitation was the unavailability of one participant from government. This limited the research as regards covering all the municipalities in the Ugu district by one. Due to time constraints, the researcher could not interview a representative sample of civil society organizations and community members and representatives.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Social sciences research strongly advances the need for researchers to conduct their research in an ethical and morally acceptable manner. This is due to the fact that human subjects are mostly used in social research. This research ensured that consent was obtained from participants to conduct the interviews. This was either done verbally or in writing. Upon commencement of the research, the researcher explained the background, purpose and objectives of the study to each participant. Where applicable, the researcher used the isiZulu language to explain so as to ensure understanding.

Furthermore, the participants were informed that the interview was voluntary and there would be no negative consequences for non-participation. Their right to stop the interview at any given point and to not answer questions that they were not comfortable with was reiterated. Consent for recording the interview was also

sought; some participants agreed while others refusted. In cases where participants did not agree, the researcher took detailed notes.

The participants were assured that confidentiality in the presentation of data and throughout the report will be maintained. No names, positions or description of participants is done except for basic biographical details and these are reported per sector. The participants were allocated letters of the alphabet for identification. The transcripts from the interviews are only used for the purposes of this research and are stored safely where only the researcher has access. After completion, the researcher will destroy the transcripts.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter explains the process that the research followed. The research methodology section in a research report serves as a compass to take the reader through the process that the research engaged in. It also helps the researcher to understand important variables that need to be taken care of in order to validate the research and have it accepted as a legitimate piece of work.

The methodology that the research follows is usually informed by what the research question, objectives and purpose is. In this chapter, the researcher firstly discussed the paradigmatic stance of the research, which is the frame of understanding and the manner in which the researcher conceptualises the study and the processes it needs to follow, based on what already exists in theory. Following that, a brief discussion on the different methods of research was indicated and the selected method explained. The research design section served as a compass to guide the reader through every step of the research as well as highlighting the reasons for the chosen design. Also of importance was a discussion on how the study aims to present and analyse data emanating from the interviews and document analysis, taking into consideration the need to ensure the validity and reliability of the data.

This chapter also discusses the concepts of validity and reliability and how those contribute to ensuring acceptability of the study. It is noted that there are necessary

steps in qualitative research that serve to avoid researcher bias and ensure that the study focuses on real data as provided by the participants. The chapter has also indicated the limitations of the study and how these influence the final results. The chapter finally discusses the ethical considerations and the importance of ensuring that adherence to these considerations is maintained, especially in social research as it uses human participants as subjects.

CHAPTER 4
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the report presents data emanating from the interviews held with members of government, community and civil society. It also presents data from documents retrieved from municipal websites and relevant documents requested from government officials. In relation to interviews, the researcher conducted a total of nineteen in-depth and qualitative interviews. Presentation of data from these interviews will be done through categorisation by group of participants (that is, government, civil society and communities) and then creating themes that will make the data easier to understand under each group. This will assist during data analysis as the themes will contain information that is useful in answering the research questions. Data presentation will draw on the use of direct quotations as this assists in ensuring reliability in the study.

As indicated in Chapter three confidentiality in terms of revealing names and positions of participants will be maintained. This is a direct request from participants. Data will be labelled alphabetically where A-D represents participants from government, E-I represents participants from civil society organizations and J-S represents members of the community and community representatives.

Furthermore, the second section of this chapter presents data from documents obtained on municipal websites and those that were requested from government participants. This assists in cross-validation during analysis. These documents include annual reports, policies or strategies for public participation used by municipalities as well as reports or minutes from ward committee and forum meetings. Because these are public documents, the researcher will reference quoted sections using the acceptable referencing guidelines.

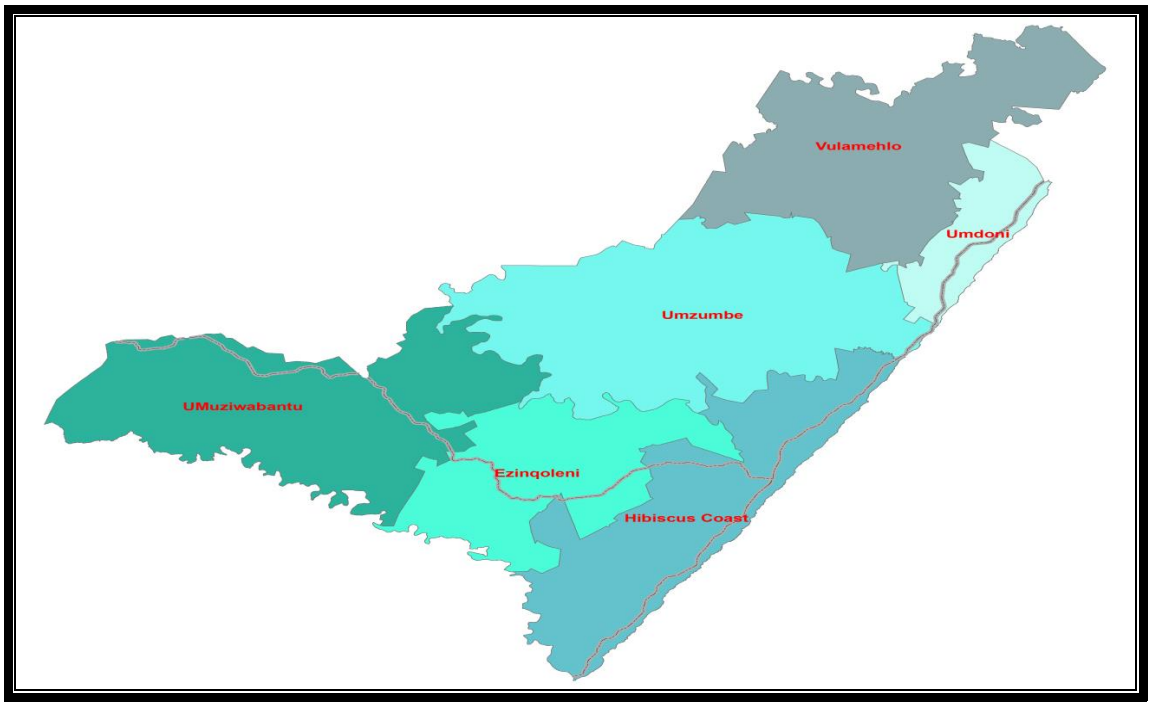
This chapter provides a brief background on the area of interest and also of the respondents. This, in the researcher's view, helps in clarifying the situation on the ground and poviding insight and better understanding of the data for the reader. Only information pertinent to this study is provided in this section. The researcher uses diagrams and plots to make the information more accessible.

4.2 OVERVIEW OF THE AREA OF INTEREST

4.2.1 Ugu District Municipality

The Ugu District Municipality is one of ten (10) district municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal and is located in the lower south coast region. The district municipality is made up of six local municipalities, namely, Hibiscus Coast, Umzumbe, Umuziwabantu, Ezinqoleni, Umdoni and Vulamehlo Local Municipalities and comprises 81 municipal wards. The population size, according to the 2011 Census by Statistics South Africa is 722 484, of which 53% are female and 47% are male, with 55% of the population comprising adults (that is, 18 years and older).

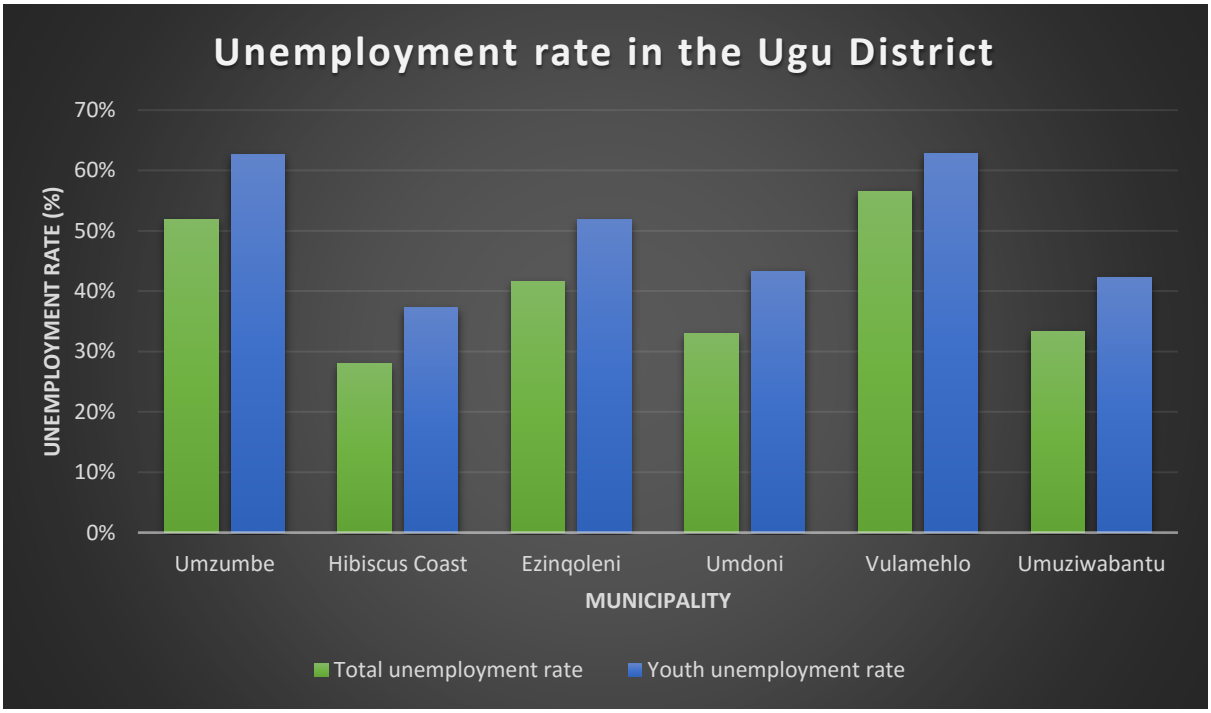
Figure 1: Map of the Ugu District



Source: Ugu District Municipality website – www.ugu.gov.za

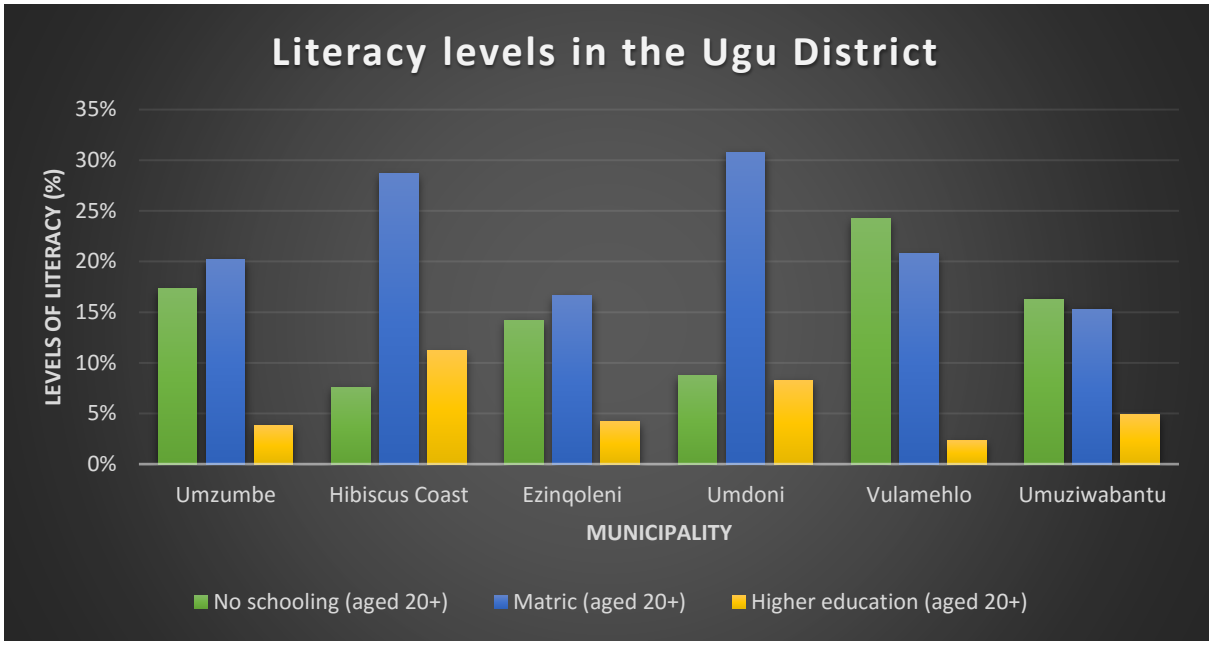
A concerning statistic reveals that unemployment levels for youth and citizens who should be economically active is high; on average, 40% of the total population is unemployed while 50% of the youth in the district which should be economically active are also unemployed. The graph below shows the unemployment rates in the district both for the general population and specifically for the youth.

Figure 2: Unemployment rate in the Ugu District



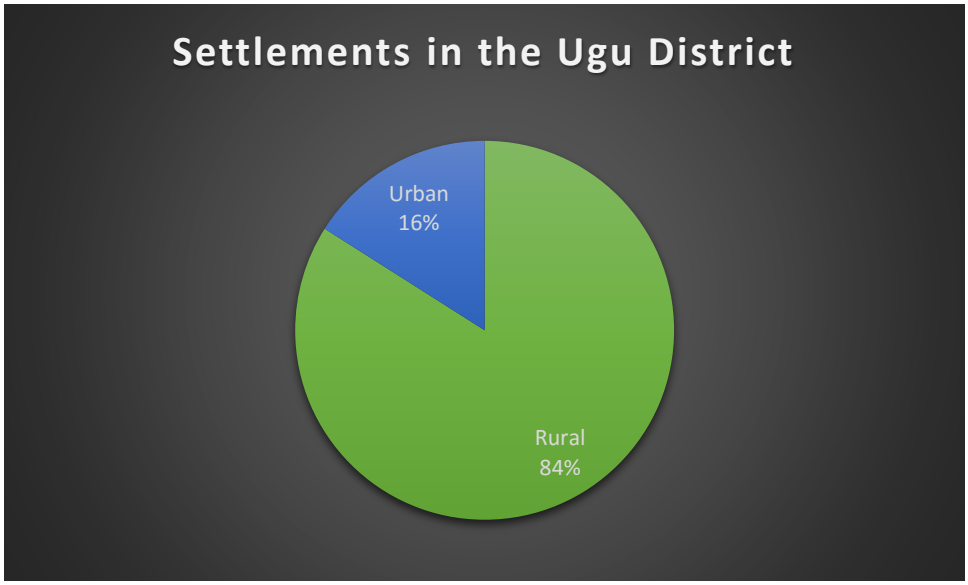
Also of concern is the rate of illiteracy in the district municipality. About 15% of the population have never received formal education; about 22% passed matric; and only about 6% have undergone higher education and training (Statistics South Africa, 2011). This raises questions around the capability of the citizens to meaningfully engage with the municipality on issues of governance and policy implementation. Figure 3 below depicts the literacy levels in the district.

Figure 3: Literacy levels in the Ugu District



The Ugu district is 84 percent rural and 16 percent urban. Since the district is predominantly rural, there are 42 traditional authorities. According to the Systems Act and the NPFPP, a municipality must devise ways in which the traditional authorities are afforded the opportunity to participate in matters of governance concerning their areas of authority. It is therefore of particular importance to find out how the Ugu district municipality manages these relationships and ensures the right to public participation for all. Figure 4 below illustrates the nature of settlements in the Ugu district.

Figure 4: Settlements in the Ugu District



4.3 PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

4.3.1 Government officials

Subsequent to the recent local government elections held in August 2016, the researcher learned that of the six local municipalities under Ugu District Municipality, two have been merged into the other municipalities, now making it four local municipalities under the Ugu District Municipality. Vulamehlo and Umuziwabantu were merged with Umdoni and Ezinqoleni respectively. This resulted in the researcher only being able to request interviews with five government officials; that is, officials from Ugu district, Umdoni, Hibiscus Coast (now known as Ray Nkonyeni), Umzumbe and Ezinqoleni Local Municipalities. Four qualitative interviews were held with these government officials who are directly responsible and involved in public participation in these municipalities. One government respondent approached for an interview could not avail himself despite several attempts to schedule the interview.

The interviews revealed that two of these respondents had been involved in the public participation activities within their municipalities for some time and two of the respondents interviewed have recently joined the field. The researcher observed

a number of differences between the “new” and “old” participants and their views around public participation and the role of public participation officials in government. According to the researcher, these observations have a bearing on how, and the extent to which, thorough implementation of the policy can be achieved. This will be discussed below. The respondents are all black male persons.

A total of seven open-ended questions was developed by the researcher and follow-up questions based on the respondents’ answers were asked (see Appendix A). A high level of co-operation and willingness to answer questions by the respondents was observed. However, some hesitation was encountered regarding a request to be provided with some of the documents, such as minutes from ward committees, forum meetings and izimbizos for purposes of cross-validation. Subsequently, only a few documents were received.

4.3.2 Civil society organisations

The interviews with government officials paved the way for the researcher to have some of the information on the stakeholders that the municipality ‘claims’ to work with. A total of five interviews were held with available non-governmental organizations, community organizations and forums that engage with the municipality at some level. These interviews provided insight into what is really happening on the ground and the municipality’s openness to receiving and utilising input from other groups with regard to governance and specifically service delivery in the municipality. Of the five organization representatives interviewed, two are from Umdoni and Ray Nkonyeni municipalities respectively and are located in the urban settlements while the other three are from the rural settlements of the Umzumbe and Ezinqoleni local municipalities and Ugu district municipality.

A distinction was drawn by the researcher on the level of knowledge and understanding of what responsibilities the municipality has to fulfil with regard to public participation in the different municipalities. As indicated above, the Ugu District is comprised of rural and urban settlements. One of the forums interviewed is the tax-payer’s forum which is based in the urban settlements under Ray

Nkonyeni municipality. The level of understanding with regard to what the municipality must do in accordance with its responsibility towards the community was significantly better than other community organizations in the rural settlements. This distinction will be discussed in the next chapter.

A questionnaire was drawn up by the researcher comprising five questions on civil society's involvement in the matters of the municipality concerning them (see Appendix B). These questions were followed up with more probing questions as and when the need arose. The organizations that agreed to the interview showed great interest and willingness to divulge information in responding to the research questions. This indicated a willingness for the community and community organizations to meaningfully contribute and share experiences with the municipality in attempting to improve their living conditions.

4.3.3 Community members and community representatives

The researcher decided to conduct informal interviews with members of the community, especially those in rural areas. There were, however, a set of questions drawn up to guide the interviews. It was an added advantage that the researcher is well acquainted with these communities and fluent in the Zulu language that most of them speak. This aided the research process and providing greater insight into how public participation is viewed by the communities.

Among the community members interviewed, some are members, or at least were elected to be members of ward committees. This group provided the researcher with a better view of the real situation at hand and the impact this has on the communities, mostly in relation to development and policy implementation. It also provided insights on how the municipality handles and implements the public participation obligation in the respective areas. Interviewing community members also served as a reference check for the information provided by the municipality officials.

It soon became apparent to the researcher that there is a serious gap that needs to be filled if the implementation of the public participation policy is to be successful, or in order to promote improvements. There are many impediments that can potentially render the efforts to properly involve communities in the matters of the municipality null and void. Issues of literacy, poverty, lack of accessible information, the extent of the rural areas and the inability to access certain places easily are some of the many barriers that need to be addressed in ensuring that this important constitutional right is progressively realised. These findings and more will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS

This section of the report presents findings from interviews held with government officials, members of civil society organizations, community members and community representatives. It will present the findings thematically, by grouping responses to the questions that were posed to the respondents. The researcher will, however, share information that is deemed important that became apparent during the interviews. Data will be presented using qualitative means; that is, information will be illustrated using direct quotes where necessary.

4.4.1 INTERVIEWS WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

4.4.1.1 Existence of a regulative framework for public participation in the municipalities

Data from the question of whether or not there is an existing regulatory framework for public participation in the municipalities revealed that all municipalities had existing strategies and/or policies that regulated how the municipalities aimed to fulfil the obligation of involving communities in their processes. As the interviews were conducted soon after the local government elections, the interviews revealed that some municipalities had undergone, and some were still undergoing, the process of reviewing the public participation policies and having them approved for the current term of municipal administration. The interviews also revealed that

these strategies/ policies were developed taking into consideration the provisions of the national and provincial strategies for public participation while being adapted to the local conditions.

4.4.1.2 Spaces of public participation

Responses on the question of spaces of public participation that the municipalities have created to ensure that the public participation obligation is fulfilled varied little among the four municipalities. Ward committees, ward forums and public hearings (izimbizos) were revealed as the predominant spaces of participation that are made available by the municipalities. Ward committees were revealed as the most important structures that all the municipalities relied on for public participation; all the municipalities had e implemented ward committee elections, with only a few wards that were yet to have their committees elected. Participants from municipality 'A' explained that there is a ward committee steering committee within the municipality that assists with ensuring that ward committees are elected and that matters concerning ward committees are resolved throughout the term. This committee also assists with reviewing minutes from ward committee meetings and ensuring that matters raised are tabled and resolved during council meetings.

There were challenges reported by the participants in relation tothe effectiveness of ward committees. The general consensus was that ward committees remain the most important structure that municipalities have to drive public participation. All the participants indicated that should it come to a point where ward committees are effective, capacitated and all challenges resolved, there will be a better chance for achieving and ensuring public participation in the municipalities.

Another arrangement made by the municipalities to meet the public participation obligation is through engaging with forums available in the respective municipalities. The municipalities identified forums, such as the youth, older persons, disabled persons, HIV/AIDS, professionals and tax-payers, amongst others, that exist within the municipality and periodically engage with them on

matters raised by their constituencies. The forum leaders are also encouraged to form part of the ward committees.

The interviews also revealed that there are standard community engagement platforms conducted by the leadership of the municipalities that serve as yet another space for participation. The IDP processes, Mayoral izimbizos and awareness campaigns are conducted annually by the municipalities to gauge the views of the communities on different matters involving service delivery and governance.

There were challenges reported by the participants in relation to the effectiveness of these platforms, as explained by a participant from municipality 'A':

> "*poverty and illiteracy are two of the major challenges that contribute towards the ineffectiveness or underutilization of these platforms of participation. People come to these meetings and are unable to meaningfully contribute due to illiteracy and some just attend meetings only when there is a promise that food will be served, and that is the only thing that they care about*".

On the question of internal structures set up to enable proper public participation, the participants indicated that the municipalities manage public participation through a public participation unit based in the office of the Speaker. There was, however, no reported support received from the municipal manager. Chief amongst the challenges reported was that of capacity within this structure. The responses revealed that only one of these municipalities had enough capacity within the office to carry out public participation duties. Of concern is that the researcher discovered that in one of the municipalities there was only one person who works in the public participation unit and that is the person who also serves as the manager.

Participants explained that the public participation units relied heavily on other units within the municipalities for support. For example, a public participation unit from municipality 'C' worked closely with, and received support from, the communications unit and the customer care unit within the municipality. There was

a functioning system of passing information and ensuring that each matter received attention and was seen through to completion. The units also worked together when the municipality went out to engage the communities on different matters in accordance with the provisions of the policy and annual performance plans. The municipalities relied heavily on ward committees to consistently engage with communities.

What appeared as lacking from three of the four municipalities is the strategy of opening up lines of communication between the municipality and the communities. Only one municipality reported having a customer care line and visibility on social media. The websites were reportedly not properly maintained and updated and as a result communities could not get real-time information on what the municipality is undertaking. Only one municipality reported publishing a newspaper and using local newspapers and local radio stations to communicate with communities.

4.4 1.3 Network configurations/ stakeholder relations

According to the literature reviewed in chapter 2, successful policy implementation relies on proper co-ordination and integration of all interested parties. These interested parties form a network that will draw on each other's strengths and expertise and thereby make a concerted effort to positively realise the objectives of the policy. It is understood, also in this case, that government cannot implement the policy alone; however, it has the responsibility of identifying and co-ordinating efforts from all interested parties and forming a working network that will serve the purpose of bringing the policy objectives to life.

It becomes apparent from the interviews, however, that there is a lack of any co-ordinated network relationships that are configured by the municipality and that assist it in its endeavours to realise the policy objectives. Even the responses received from the participant from the district municipality do not reveal any co-ordinating role being played by it in ensuring that the local municipalities properly implement the policy. The participant from the district municipality did not reveal that there is a functional way in which it monitors the involvement of civil society

organizations by the local municipalities in order to ensure proper implementation of the policy.

It is revealed, however, by some of the participants from local government that their municipalities regularly engage with individual organizations and forums in the municipality. This, according to them, happens on a regular basis and their views are sought on different matters that directly relate to them.

4.4.1.4 Monitoring and evaluation

On the question of how the municipalities monitor and evaluate the implementation of the public participation policy, the participants revealed that firstly, at an organizational level, the public participation office reports directly to the Office of the Speaker. The public participation unit is expected to compile regular reports emanating from ward committee meetings as received from ward committee secretaries and other community engagements and identify matters that require the attention of the executive council. Municipalities monitor the implementation of the public participation policy through annual performance reviews of staff directly responsible for public participation.

The municipal officials revealed that they monitor the work of ward committees through conducting impromptu visits to determine whether meetings do take place and also whether the minutes from meetings accurately reflect the discussions held. The municipal officials in the public participation office draw up the schedule of meetings for ward committees and then use this tool to conduct impromptu visits. The problem, however, is that the public participations units are understaffed and as a result it is not easy for officials to conduct many of these impromptu visits to ward committee meetings.

At a community level, there did not appear to be a consistent and constructive monitoring and evaluation plan. A participant from municipality 'A' only mentioned that the municipality is confident that the community feels involved and are aware and approve of the municipality's work because there had not been

protests to show dissatisfaction. None of the participants from municipalities revealed that they have conducted citizen satisfaction surveys as required by the policy.

4.4.1.5 Challenges in the implementation of the policy

The participants were also asked about the challenges that they face and that hinders the proper implementation of the public participation policy in their respective municipalities. The general consensus was that there are many issues that need to be dealt with in ward committees which, if resolved, would contribute towards realising the proper implementation of the policy. These challenges include ward committee meetings being used as battle-grounds for politics and score-settling, illiteracy of some of the committee members, not having enough resources such as laptops and cell phones for ward committee secretaries, not holding meetings as prescribed and not having substantive minutes from meeting discussions. One participant mentioned that minutes from meetings hardly ever come through and even when they do, they are not of good quality and are hard to understand.

Another challenge as mentioned by a participant from municipality 'A' is that usually the municipality holds meetings during the day and on working days. This results in the exclusion of some members of communities who are working as they are unable to attend the meetings.

> "*You therefore only find that people who are able to attend the meetings cannot fully comprehend with the issues and therefore cannot contribute meaningfully. You also find that there is only a handful of people who are participating in the meeting". (*Participant from municipality 'A')

The issue of accessibility of meeting venues was also raised. In rural areas, for example, the extent of land area and lack of transport to take people to the meetings prevented them from attending. Poverty was also reported as a hindrance for people to attend meetings. A participant from municipality 'B' mentioned that people only want to attend meetings where there will be food served. During the meeting they

may not be concentrating on the proceedings and are only interested in when food will be served.

There is also a general lack of understanding from communities of their rights and responsibilities in contributing to the matters of municipal governance. In rural areas, for example, there is a general feeling that anything that the municipality does for them is out of the 'goodness of their hearts' and that they are not entitled to the services.

> "*This therefore leads to the municipality only hearing the voices of the few and as a result the municipality ends up delivering services that will serve the interests of that few"* (Participant from municipality 'B').

Lastly, another challenge faced by municipalities in ensuring that public participation happens between communities and the municipality as indicated by the interviewed participants is that of non-co-operation and resistance from traditional leadership to work together with the municipality. Some traditional leaders were reportedly non-co-operative and this formed a barrier between the people and the municipality. An indication was made that there is lack of understanding and acceptance from traditional leaders of the role of municipalities on 'their' land. In some instances, traditional leaders even prevent municipal officials from having meetings with the communities.

4.4.1.6 General remarks

The interviews with government officials revealed that there is a considerable lack of understanding of what policy implementation entails. Over and above that, there appeared to be a lack of understanding of what public participation is and why it has to be done. The researcher identifieda difference in understanding public participation between the participants that are 'older' and have been working as public participation officials in the municipality for longer as compared to the 'younger' officials that are recently out of learning institutions. There was a sense of having a better understanding of policy implementation and specifically the value of public participation among the 'younger' officials interviewed.

4.4.2 Interviews with civil society

4.4.2.1 Relationship between the civil society organizations and the municipalities

On the question of whether or not the interviewed organizations have a working relationship with the respective municipalities under which they fall, different sentiments were shared by the interviewees. On one hand, a representative from a professional forum from one of the municipalities, namely organization 'F', indicated having a very good working relationship with the municipality. He noted that the municipality regularly invites them to meetings when matters that concern the forum are being discussed and that they also invite the municipality when they have events and the municipality is then able to make presentations to the communities as and when needed, highlighting what the municipality is able to do for the forum and how the forum can meaningfully engage with the municipality.

A participant from organization 'E' reported having an established working relationship with the municipality and having regular engagements with the communications and public participation offices in the municipality:

> "…*we have received enough support from the municipality over the years. Whenever we have issues and need assistance, the municipality always meets with us and works with us in finding solutions to our problems. They also listen to us on what we have to say on matters concerning children that we take care of. We really are happy with the relationship".*

The participant further indicated that the organization is fully aware that the municipality has an obligation to be transparent and involve organizations such as theirs in matters of governance, and that it is also the responsibility of the organization to contribute towards better governance of municipalities. It is worth noting that both organization 'E' and organization 'F' are based in the urban settlements in the district municipality.

On the other hand, a participant from organization 'I' contradicted sentiments of having any relationship with the municipality. The participant indicated that he once heard of a forum that was being established that would regularly engage with the municipality on matters concerning faith-based organizations but never heard anything further. He further stated that the only engagement they have with the municipality is when they request that the church makes announcements for meetings that the municipality holds. "…*and those, I must say, usually happen around election times*". Upon asking whether the participant knew or understood that there is a public participation policy that requires the municipality and any organizations and communities at large to engage and have a transparent relationship with one another, the participant responded that he was not aware of that. He further mentioned that he is only aware that the municipality must bring to the community services that they deem the communities need.

The sentiments from a participant from organization 'I' were echoed by the participant from organization 'G', who also mentioned that during the previous term and immediately after the elections, there was discussion about forming a forum that will always engage with the municipality on matters concerning disabled persons. The participant explained that he was elected to represent his organization in that delegation. Since then, the participant noted, there had not been meetings despite following up and enquiring about the forum and the engagements. The participant also indicated that when the municipality was building houses in the community, a member of his organization brought it to his attention that the house they planned to build for him was not accessible because of his condition. The participant then took it upon himself to speak to the company that was given the tender to build the houses and also tried to contact the municipality but no assistance was received:

> "*It is a very frustrating thing to have a municipality that does not listen to what the people have to say. I get the feeling that they (the municipality officials) feel that they are doing us favours by providing these services to us. The only time you stand a chance to be listened to is during election times".*

The participant from organization ‘H’ observed that there is no solid relationship between the municipality and the forum representing youth organizations and that any engagement from the municipality always feels like a measure of last resort or a ‘tick box’ exercise.

> “*It is hardly a constructive exercise where we are asked how we would like the municipality to help us but rather what the municipality plans to do for us. In instances where we challenge what they want to give us, you never hear from them again”.*

The participant expressed a willingness and also eagerness for her organization to have a working relationship with the municipality when she said that

> “…*I think that together we can do more; together we have a potential to uplift the youth of this community, create jobs and contribute meaningfully to the economy of this area; it really would be a win-win situation”.*

4.4.2.2 Communication between the municipality and the organizations

Seventy-five percent of participants representing organizations in the Ugu district municipality indicated that there are no clearly established lines of communication between the organizations and the municipality. Some participants admitted that they would sometimes hear about municipal programmes throughnewspapers and local radio stations but it is hardly ever about the municipality trying to solicit the views of the communities.

> *“Mostly, it is about what the municipality has done, what it aims to do and so forth. You cannot believe that the first time we heard about the ‘nude beach’ that had been opened in this area was from the national newspapers like the rest of the world. I mean, does it not matter what we have to say on the subject? This stands to affect us the most, but who cares?” (*Participant from organization ‘I’).

A participant from organization ‘F’ who is also a ward committee member commented that ideally ward committees are a good platform for sharing

information from the communities to the municipality and vice versa; however, the issues that remain unresolved regarding how the committees function remain a barrier in achieving this. He further explained that his organization has developed its own relationship and lines of communication with the municipality directly instead of relying on the ward committee because there was *"…too much competition and unnecessary politicisation of issues on that platform".* Other than that, the participant indicated that his organization is able to communicate with the municipality as and when necessary.

The interviews also shed light on possible challenges that prevent the organizations and the municipalities from having clear lines of communication. One of these challenges, especially in rural community settings, is the fact that technological advancements that allow for easy communication are not yet at a stage where everyone has access. A participant from organization 'I' indicated that sometimes information about municipality events is received after the event has taken place, observing that, *"…it would really assist if the municipality can have our cell phone numbers and disseminate information that way because in as much as we are not well-off, at least some of us have cell phones*".

Another challenge as indicated by the participants is that sometimes the municipality posts written communication in key spots like stores and post offices. One therefore has to have reached those places to receive or see the information. "*…Well I must admit that they do write it in the language that we understand, however, some people cannot read at all and require some of us who can to assist in that regard".*

4.4.2.3 Perceptions of willingness by municipalities to receive and utilise input from organizations

The researcher realised that there was a growing perception that municipalities communicate with organizations only as a way for them to have 'tick-boxes' or have something to report about in their annual reports. The researcher therefore decided to find out what the organizations' representatives think about whether or

not the municipality utilises the information they provide in good faith and take their views seriously. The organizations that were interviewed had different perceptions. The seventy-five percent of representatives from organizations that claimed to have no working relationship and any clear lines of communication with their respective municipalities again indicated that even on the rare occasion that they engage with the municipality, they do not feel their views are taken seriously. One representative said,

> *"…like I told you, it usually feels like they already have their plans cast in stone and are not willing to change them for anything. It becomes very discouraging and feels like one has wasted their time and effort."* (Participant from organization 'I').

The researcher however deduced a sense of willingness from the organizations' side to have a mutually beneficial relationship with the municipalities. A representative from organization 'G' said,

> "*I do not see how working together can be harmful. The only thing I see is that they will tell us what they have and we will together decide what we can do based on that. We are the ones who know what we need the most at the end of the day and we fully understand there can never be enough resources at the same time".*

The other two representatives from two organizations indicated that in as much as the municipality will not always take everything that they say seriously, most of the time their input is taken into account. *"This we see from the feedback the municipality gives us and the delivery of services. Remember they also have their own issues to consider; like availability of funds and stuff."* One of the representatives expressed concern about whether or not the incoming leadership will still provide the same platform they had been enjoying. She said that,

> "*…change in leadership usually comes with uncertainties. Even though the people we have established communications with are still there, the relationship may not be the same depending on what the new political leadership feels about public involvement on the matters of the municipality.*

There is hope, however, because we have been asked to comment on the reviewed public participation strategy. We remain hopeful". (Participant from organization 'E').

4.4.3 Interviews with community members and representatives

4.4.3.1 Understanding the concept of public participation

To set the tone of the interview, the researcher thought it important to establish whether or not participants understood the concept of public participation. In cases where the participants' response was that they are not sure what that is, the researcher explained in easily understandable terms what the concept entails. The interviews then proceeded on those grounds. It was revealed that participants had a very limited understanding of public participation and what it entails. Their views were mostly limited to the fact that participants had the right to vote and choose councillors that are going to be responsible for representing them in the municipality. Over and above that, most participants did not understand that there are further channels for them to communicate and be involved in the matters of the municipality. The researcher deduced that participants perceived that there was a barrier between them and the municipality and the only link was councillors; councillors that they have to wait five years to remove from office should they not fulfil their promises.

Further to that, most participants revealed the level of distrust that they have even regarding their elected councillors to champion the needs of the communities. One participant who is a ward committee member said "…*we basically vote to feed that person's family, the rest of us are always left to fend for ourselves*. *You just wait and hope that one day you will also be chosen as a councillor*". This particular participant further commented on how even the ward committee he is part of is not capable of being a vehicle for public participation in the area. The main reason, according to him, is because the ward councillor that is responsible for tabling their matters at council meetings simply could not care less and does not consider tabling

views that come from members of the opposition over and above the fact that meetings rarely take place.

When the researcher explained to some participants that public participation included the responsibility for the municipality to open lines of communication with the communities, to involve the community on budget and IDP processes as well as to establish structures such as ward committees and forums, the general feeling was that the participants were not aware of such. Participant 'K' indicated that they never get told what the municipality is doing:

> "*You only hear word on the street that the municipality is building a mall near the taxi rank. In fact, some people say it is just Boxer store that is being built. So, no one really knows what is happening. We will wait and see. It would really help us to know, however, because then we can also see how we can benefit whether in terms of applying for jobs or taking our small businesses into the mall".*

4.4.3.2 Community meetings

Participant 'M' revealed that he had been in a few meetings that were said to be called by the municipal mayor. Those meetings, however, were either to open an infrastructure such as a school or to inform a community about a project that the municipality is undertaking. He further indicated that the municipality once called the community into a meeting to tell them about the houses that were going to be built in the area.

> "*I asked why the municipality is building us houses when we are in dire need of accessible water. Our children come back from school and have to travel long distances to fetch water. It is not safe because then it is dark. What surprises me is that only a very few members in our community had unstable houses. Most of us have solid houses. But we were told that that is the only thing the municipality had money for".*

Community meetings were also described as sometimes not providing a good platform for public participation in some areas. Firstly, the meetings are sometimes

held in distant centres that some community member are unable to access. They are also held during the day when not everyone is available due to work, school and other commitments, rendering the meetings unrepresentative. Community meetings were also described as spaces where a lot of disruption and misbehaviour occurs. Some members of the community reportedly attend community meetings intoxicated and disrupt the proceedings. Others use the platform to settle political scores and undermine leadership.

Over and above that, some participants reported that community meetings are not a space where municipalities solicit views of community members. Seven participants representing communities indicated that municipalities come to meetings with an agenda already set up and decisions already taken. "*The meetings are therefore just to inform us rather than finding out what we have to say. You are therefore left feeling like there is no point in attending*". Participants 'J' and 'N' observed that they are not convinced that their municipalities have their best interests at heart. This is due to the fact that even when they make suggestions during community meetings they do not get the satisfaction that they are being heard and their suggestions are not acted on.

4.4.3.3 Ward Committee Meetings

The first issue raised with regard to ward committees is the contestation of positions that sometimes lead to a committee not being established or being dysfunctional. Ward committees were reported by the three interviewed participants involved in them as spaces that have potential to facilitate engagement between communities and the municipalities. However, a number of challenges prevents this from happening. Participant 'M', who had been a ward committee member since the previous term of municipal administration indicated that,

> "…*we had been told that we should have two meetings a month, but, to this day we have only managed to have meetings that are not more than five for the whole five years. I am in fact not worried because these meetings ended up not being what I had thought they would be. People are only just worried about themselves there and there is too much disruption caused by members*

of other parties. The only thing I will miss if I am not re-elected is the stipend because I am not working".

This statement was corroborated by another participant who was also a ward committee member, participant 'K'.

Another issue raised by participants that prevents ward committees from being good spaces of participation is that of having a ward councillor presiding over meetings and being the one responsible for conveying discussions to council. Some participants revealed that some councillors are self-serving and would only table and request services that they themselves stand to benefit most from. One example that was given was of a councillor that lobbied for the municipality to provide refrigeration where members of the community that have small farms can store their produce. It was later recognised that the councillor in question is the only one in the area with a small farm capable of producing produce that requires refrigeration. The facility was therefore only used by him.

The municipality itself was criticised for not following up on matters that come from ward committees. One participant who indicated that she had been part of a ward committee that regularly held meetings complained that sometimes the ward secretary sent minutes of meetings with issues that needed the municipality's intervention but the municipality does not respond or takes a long time to do so. Participant 'R' put it thus:

"…*we have our meetings as stipulated by the policy. It is only a few times that we are unable to. The most discouraging thing is that we never hardly ever get feedback from the municipality. The meetings therefore end up about following up on issues that were never resolved. This is very discouraging because we also need to go back and report to our sectors. Now it's like we don't do our jobs".*

4.4.3.4 Communication strategies

Two-thirds of the interviewed participants indicated that there are strategies used by the municipality to communicate with them. These include local newspapers, local radio stations, notices in key locations like clinics and taxi ranks and loudhailer announcements. The participant from the urban setting indicated that the municipality would sometimes post notices together with water or electricity bills. This she commended very much and said that it is a good way of keeping them informed. This participant also indicated that they are able to call the municipality's customer care line, as they have cell phone numbers they can contact on weekends and holidays whenever they have challenges such as burst water pipes or electricity cuts. The turnaround time is always reasonable and the participant indicated satisfaction with the municipality's management of communication techniques.

On the other hand, the participants from the rural settlements indicated that they rely on notice boards in key locations and loudhailers when the municipality wants to communicate a meeting. Other than these channels, the community is unable to communicate with the municipality. One participant explained that the municipality had provided them with a calendar which contained cell phone numbers of councillors and on the occasion that she contacted the cell phone, it went unanswered. These participants explained that they are not aware that they have any role to play as individuals in the matters of the municipality or that the municipality has any obligation to keep them informed of what it does. The concept of public participation seemed unknown to them.

4.5 EXAMINATION OF RECORDS FOR CROSS-VALIDATION

This section examines records for the purposes of cross-validation with information gathered from the face-to-face qualitative interviews. It is important to note,, as pointed out above, that it had been a challenge for the researcher to obtain documents requested from government officials. The researcher made requests for the municipalities' strategies/policies that they have developed to guide public

participation, minutes from ward and forum meetings as well as minutes from council meetings. This is due to the fact that these documents, especially the public participation strategies or policies, were not readily available on the municipalities' websites. One of these municipalities had a substantial number of policies and regulations readily available on its website but the public participation strategy was not included. This raises a question of how exactly the public is expected to know about this policy if it is not accessible. Over and above that, the researcher had to use extensive persuasion to finally gain access to the policy.

The reports that were easily accessible were the annual reports. All the municipalities had their annual reports posted on the website. However, there is one municipality that has an annual report that dates back to 2013/14 and does not have the 2014/15 annual report on the website. The other municipalities only have the 2014/15 annual reports online. The researcher, therefore, was limited to examining the 2014/15 reports and was unable to make reference to previous years.

4.5.1 Annual reports

Upon examination of the annual reports the researcher found that the municipalities are aware of the obligation to involve, consult and inform communities about the matters of the municipalities. It is evident, however, that some take this obligation more seriously than others. There seems to be a standard template that the district and the local municipalities use to produce an annual report. A section of chapter 2 of the reports is dedicated to public participation while Appendix E and Appendix F of the reports are dedicated to providing information on ward committees as well as their functionality reports.

Also evident is that some municipalities, with regard to ward committees, decided on having ward committee meetings quarterly and some monthly throughout the five-year term despite the fact that the NPFPP prescribes for ward committee meeting to be held monthly. These are coupled with public meetings, also either monthly or quarterly.

The report from Umzumbe local municipality shows that of the nineteen (19) municipal wards under it, all have established ward committee structures. According to the report, ward committees meet monthly, the meetings are reported to be effective, and suggestions are tabled at council meetings. In all, the nineteen wards had ten (10) monthly meetings in the 2014/15 financial year. The report also notes that quarterly report-back public meetings were held by all the wards (Annual report 2014/15, p.33); however, appendix E (pages 111-116) of the same report reveals that there were no report-back public meetings held. The municipality also has IDP and Budget roadshows and Mayoral Izimbizos. There is, however, no evidence of these claims in the report. The report also notes that draft IDP and budget documents are posted strategically on community facilities where communities can read and make comments.

The report from Umdoni local municipality explains that the municipality decided on having quarterly ward committee meetings, totalling four (4) meetings per ward. The local municipality consists of ten (10) wards. The report points out that "*It is to be noted that we continue to experience challenges with ensuring that each ward committee is functional*" (Umdoni Local Municipality 2014/15 Annual Report, p. 22). The report went on to explain that intervention from CoGTA has been requested in dealing with this issue. Ward one (1) and ward two (2) are shown to have not held any ward committee meeting, despite the committee being established, whilst ward four (4) and ward ten (10) reportedly had three (3) quarterly meetings. The report also reveals that all the wards had report-back public meetings, including the wards that that had no committee meetings all year round. With regard to general community participation, the report reveals that "*Understanding the concept of the IDP by all the communities whilst contributing meaningfully to the development of the IDP is still seen as a challenge, we await the time where all will be understanding the process, concept and role to be played*" (Umdoni Local Municipality 2014/15 Annual Report, p. 24).

The municipality continues to experience challenges with conducting community surveys and there is no information given on any platforms to which the communities can be in contact with the municipality.

The Hibiscus Coast local municipality (now Ray Nkonyeni local municipality) seems to have a real hang on what public participation is about. With regards to ward committees, their 2014/15 annual report reveals that "*The ward committee system has been effective and communities have echoed these sentiments at the izimbizo (public meetings) that have been held during the consultation periods*". (Hibiscus Coast Local Municipality 2014/15 Annual Report, p. 28). The municipality also seems to strategically schedule public meetings with the times when the development and finalisation of the Integrated Development Plan and Budget is done. This shows that there is a strategic intention to include communities' comments on these documents before they are submitted to Council. The report breaks down every meeting held as well as the date of the event, number of participating municipal councillors, number of community members attending, matters addressed as well as date and manner of feedback given to the community. Also evident is the fact that all wards held their quarterly committee meetings and reports were submitted to the municipalities' public participation offices. Public report-back meetings were also held. The report is silent on other mechanisms of opening communication lines between the communities and the municipality beyond public meetings and ward committee structures.

The 'parent' municipality, in this case the Ugu District municipality, is tasked with the obligation to monitor and ensure that the local municipalities are in compliance with all the legislation and policies and also provide support where necessary. With regard to ward committees, the National Policy Framework for Public Participation provides that district municipalities cannot have ward committees of their own, but have to form and budget for ward forums that can be established in consultation with local municipalities. These ward forums are gatherings of all ward committees in all local municipalities with the intention of creating uniformity across all local municipalities on how to deal with ward committee matters and also for the district

to provide needed support. According to the policy framework, ward forum meetings are to be held at least twice a year. The Ugu district municipality, however, does not report having an established ward forum.

The 2013/14 annual report of the Ugu district municipality acknowledges that there are still challenges that hinder the effectiveness of ward committees. These, according to report, include "…administration/ logistics support and the vastness of rural wards" (Ugu District Municipality 2013/14 Annual Report, p21). The district municipality also took a decision to include traditional leaders as non-voting members in municipal council meetings in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000. This is another way the municipality is trying to involve communities in the matters of the municipality.

The municipality also involves the communities through IDP and Budget processes as required by the Act. In addition, the municipality holds awareness campaigns throughout the year where information is shared about how the communities can contact the municipality and access municipal services. The report reveals that the municipality had an established IDP Forum, IGR Forum, Speakers Forum, Municipal Managers Forum, and CFOs Forum to ensure further participation in key decision-making processes. The report is silent on the establishment of Ward Forums.

Also evident in this report is the fact that on the schedule of public meetings listed on page 26 of the report, public meetings are held by the municipalities on working days. The challenges in this regard have been discussed briefly above. Notably, all municipal wards have established ward committees and almost all seemed to comply with holding meetings, be it quarterly or monthly, and also produce reports, with the exception of one municipality that did not send through reports after meetings.

4.5.2 Public participation strategies/policies

Upon request, the researcher received four public participation strategies, one from the Ugu district municipality and three from the local municipalities under the district. One local municipality refused to comply. On examination, the researcher observed that all public participation strategies from all the municipalities are the same. The only difference is in the name of the municipality, the foreword by different municipal managers, the vision and mission of the municipality and the number of ward committee meetings to be held per annum.

The strategies provide background to community participation and reiterate legislative and policy framework for public participation. Chapter two (2) of the strategies looks at the theoretical framework for public participation where different types of participation are explained.

The strategies also reveal that the municipalities have adopted two participatory models, namely the Citizen Action Support Programme (CASP) and Community Based Planning (CBP). CASP is a programme that aims to promote and advocate for better citizen involvement through creating an enabling environment for public participation from the municipality's side and developing citizens' willingness to be involved in the matters of the municipality. The programme aims to realise this by firstly effecting behavioural change whereby "…both the elected representatives and municipal officials work with communities through information, consultation, involvement, collaboration and empowerment modes" (Hibiscus Coast Municipality Draft Community Participation Strategy, 2012 p17). The programme also aims to ensure that government is and remains open to communities at all times. This, according to the strategies, will be done through ensuring that established community participation structures such as ward committees are effective and there are ongoing civic education mechanisms where citizens are informed of their rights and responsibilities regarding participation in the matters of government. Lastly, the programme aims to establish and expand community participation structures widely to reach every member of society. This will be done through establishing credible stakeholder participation structures such as pre-

council meetings for ward committees and non-governmental organizations and encouraging political caucus meetings with respective political constituencies.

With regard to CBP, the municipalities through their public participation strategies commit to ensuring that a link between community participation and the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is created. To this end, the municipalities commit to adopting a bottom-up approach to planning with regard to development. For example, the communities indicate through their participatory structures which services they would like to receive and the conversation between the communities and the municipalities begins from there. This, according to the strategies, will reduce the risk of creating unrealistic "shopping lists" that the municipality may not be able to fulfil. It will also create a feeling of ownership of the infrastructure by communities. Through the CBP programme, as indicated in the strategies, the municipalities also commit to allocating adequate resources to community-based planning structures and also to designate a unit within the municipality that will be directly responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the community-based planning processes.

The strategies further indicate institutional imperatives that will allow for effective community participation that will be made available by the municipalities. Firstly, the strategies reveal that the municipalities will utilise a community participation unit which will be administratively placed under the municipal manager's offices and politically placed under the Speaker's offices. The strategies further explain the functions and responsibilities of the Mayor, the Municipal Manager and the Speaker. It is noted in the strategies that there is sometimes an overlap of functions between the three core structures according to the Systems Act and emphasis is placed on the need for opening lines of communication between these structures to avoid confusion, conflict and duplication of functions.

Finally, it is worth mentioning, amongst other things, that the community participation strategies from these municipalities also provide guidelines on how to

incorporate the institution of traditional leadership and councils in the affairs of the municipality. To this end, the municipalities recognise that,

> "*Municipalities, Traditional Councils and Local Houses of Traditional Leaders are expected to co-operate with local municipalities based on the principles of mutual respect and recognition of the status and role of the respective parties, and be guided by the principles of cooperative governance"* (Hibiscus Coast Municipality Community Participation Strategy, 2012 p. 43).

The municipalities commit to ensuring this through making available seats for traditional leadership in community participation structures such as ward committees and also to meeting with all Amakhosi in their respective areas on a quarterly basis to discuss all issues of common interest.

4.5.3 Ward and Forum Committee meetings minutes

As indicated above, the government officials that participated in the interviews promised but did not follow through on sending the researcher the ward or forum committee minutes. Only one official from municipality 'A' complied with providing two sets of minutes from ward committee meetings. The researcher requested on several occasions for the reports to be sent but none came through. As a result, the researcher will present observations from the two sets of ward committee meeting minutes that are available.

The minutes received indicate that almost all ward committee members attended the meetings. This is evident from the attached attendance register. The minutes also show that correct procedure, for example that the ward councillor must chair the meeting and that ward secretaries must take minutes, is being followed by the committees.

Another observation made by the researcher is that the meetings mostly discuss service delivery issues. Also evident is the willingness of committee members to intervene and address problems that arise from the community. One report reveals

that members of the committee agreed to assist Eskom in identifying a number of households that still did not have electricity so that Eskom could connect those households. The role of tribal authorities is addressed in one of the reports when the authority assisted in resolving a dispute among community members who were blocking service delivery because of demarcation issues. These minutes also reveal the proactiveness of ward committee members in suggesting ways in which things can be done in their communities based on their experiences. The also reveal knowledge of the different services they must receive and from which municipality. For example, issues related to water were directed to the district municipality while issues related to in-roads were directed to a local municipality. Also in evidence is the ability of ward committees to follow up on issues and request the ward councillor to bring matters to the attention of the municipality and then provide feedback.

Ward committees have also been revealed by these reports to be vehicles for dissemination of information from the municipality to communities. The councillor, in one of the meetings, requested committee members to inform communities about a march against racism that was going to take place in the area. There is also a slot in the minutes where the councillor reports back on issues discussed in previous meetings and also on other issues from council meetings. The sectorial and ward functionality reports are also tabled in the meetings. Finally, the attendance registers reveal that sometimes municipal officers also attend ward committee meetings and this, to some extent, corroborates information revealed during some of the interviews.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter has presented findings from the qualitative journey that this research has undergone. Firstly, this chapter laid a foundation by presenting a brief background of the area of interest as well as the background of the participants. The findings from interviews held with government officials, representatives from civil society organizations as well as community members and community representatives were presented.

What becomes apparent in the data presented above, amongst other things, is that there are a number of structural and relational aspects that promote or prevent proper implementation of the policy on public participation that still exist between the municipalities, civil society organizations and communities. The municipalities have been shown to have little or no capacity to implement the policy. There are also no monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure that the municipality realises what it sets out to do in the public participation strategies. This, therefore, leads them to operating under the perception that they are doing well in terms of implementing the policy. There also does not seem to be any active participation and will from all necessary municipal executives to vigorously implement the policy.

On the part of civil society organizations and communities, the data presented shows that there is a willingness to participate and engage the municipalities in matters of governance. There are, however, many challenges, such as illiteracy, poverty, lack of access to information and many others that prevent communities from fully and meaningfully participating and engaging with municipalities.

The data presented from the documents firstly reveal that municipalities from the Ugu district have well-articulated and detailed strategies for public participation. The challenge appears to lie in the implementation of these strategies. Information retrieved from annual reports does not fully correlate with the information received from the interviews held with government officials.

CHAPTER 5
INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Interpreting and analyzing qualitative data is a step in social research that requires skill and attention to detail. Gibbs (2007, p.5) observes that qualitative data analysis is concerned with describing "…what is happening to answer the question of 'what is going on here'?" There are a number of ways in which qualitative data analysis can be done. Researchers may opt for inductive or deductive approaches. An inductive approach is when the study makes an analysis of general explanations based on specific circumstances and a deductive approach is when the study uses specific circumstances to explain general theories or phenomena. The chosen option will be influenced by the individual studies, the problem that the study is trying to address or provide insight into and also what the study is aiming to achieve.

This chapter of the research interprets and analyses findings emanating from the previous chapter of this report. It does this by way of a deductive approach. The general hypothesis of this research is that there are structural and systematic challenges that hinder proper policy implementation in South African local government. Therefore, the current research aims to explain why this is so using the specific case of institutional arrangements in the selected district.

In the sections below the chapter will firstly reiterate the problem that necessitated this study. Thereafter, the chapter will link the conceptual framework with the findings of this research to make interpretations and analysis. Themes and sub-themes will be used to illustrate points that emerge from the findings and that the researcher thinks are important to illustrate for the purposes of the research objectives.

5.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The general problem that this research aims to examine is the issue of policy implementation in South African local government. Many studies have highlighted the fact that, post-apartheid, South Africa has been able to produce ground-breaking and well-articulated policies that aim to move the country forward in terms of consolidating and deepening its new democracy and also in terms of ensuring equality and a quality living experience for all. Sadly, many more studies have also shown that there is still a long way to travel if these policy intentions are to be realised. Policy implementation has been indicated as that gap that needs to be filled if this is to happen.

As indicated in the literature review, there are an array of activities that take place during policy implementation and that contribute towards the achievement or non-achievement of the proper implementation of policies. These are all important in their own right; however, as indicated, this research focuses on the institutional arrangements that are put in place by the local municipalities under study to implement the policy on public participation. The research examines the spaces of participation that are put in place by the municipality, the municipal structural configurations that enables the implementation of the policy, capacitation of the arrangements that are or should contribute towards successful policy implementation as well as how the municipality monitors and evaluates the implementation of the policy on public participation.

5.3 INSTITUTIONALIZING THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

5.3.1 Available spaces for public participation, their effectiveness and adequacy

The previous chapter of this report revealed that some of the municipalities studied have met the minimum requirements for creating spaces of public participation for their respective communities. These spaces include ward committee and ward forum structures, public hearing (izimbizo) structures where IDP and Budget issues

are discussed, and also some municipalities that have attempted to open lines of communication with their communities through having customer care and anonymous tip-off lines, through websites and social media pages, as well as the use of local radio, print media and loudhailer announcements to publicise municipal affairs.

Section 17(2) of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 provides that municipalities must open up spaces for community participation: "A municipality must establish appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures to enable the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality…". The Systems Act does not, however, provide detail of how this is to be done. The National Policy Framework on Public Participation therefore addresses this gap by prescribing three strategies that municipalities may use to fulfil this obligation. The policy framework prescribes for municipalities to ensure participation through communication, ward and forum committee structures as well as through IDP and Budget forums and processes. The policy further indicates that these are minimum requirements for participation and that municipalities may devise other ways of involving communities in the affairs of the municipality as they see fit and also based on their individual and unique circumstances.

It is evident from the data collected that the municipalities in question are in partial compliance with the provisions of the policy in as far as the creation of spaces for participation is concerned. There are, however, major challenges that still need to be resolved in order for these minimum requirements to be effectively implemented. Ward committees, to begin with, have been dubbed by the participants as a space for community engagement that holds a lot of potential in terms of fulfilling the requirement; however, the space is reportedly inundated with challenges that, in more ways than one, renders it less effective. This view that is held by the participants is supported by Nyalunga (2006) who observes that ward committees are viewed as ineffective in advancing citizen participation. He explains that "Their inefficiency is caused by among other things, lack of capacity and incentives to persuade them [ward committee members] to work wholeheartedly

towards the betterment of their constituencies" (Nyalunga, 2006, p.3). Janine Hicks, former director of the Centre for Public Participation, on Nyalunga (2006), further declares that "…there are tensions between ward committee members and ward councillors, and limited resources available to enable committees to function better and improve efficiency".

Another challenge that almost nullifies the whole purpose of having ward committees, according to the findings, is that of an allegation that ward committee members hardly call for ward meetings to obtain a mandate from community members or to report back to the communities about the council decisions. A government participant observed that sometimes ward committee members would suggest projects that will not be of value to all members of the community. Another major concern, according to Noxolo Kabane of Afesis-Corplan, is to do with, "…the way representation on ward committees is constituted, in particular the allegation that often arises that ward councillors direct selection of ward committee members in line with their political affiliations (Kabane, 2013). This challenge was also raised by government participants in this study.

The question of representation is further raised as a concern in light of the fact that, since the Ugu district is predominantly a rural area and also the fact that geographically some areas are extensive, contributing to wards that are overly populated, the maximum of ten (10) representatives may not be enough to cover the interests of all the population. It also becomes a challenge to select one member to represent traditional leaders since it may be possible to have three traditional leaders in one ward. Over and above that, the data reveals that there is a high degree of contestation for positions in ward committees due to the fact that there is a perception that being in the committees places a member in an advantageous position to become a councillor in the context of the high unemployment rate in the Ugu district, as previously explained.

The public hearings, or izimbizo as they are popularly known, are other spaces of participation as prescribed by the NPFPP. These usually cover the IDP and Budget

processes. Their effectiveness is also of importance if the public participation obligation is to be fulfilled. The Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act, 56 of 2003 (MFMA) clearly explains that municipalities must ensure active involvement of communities when the budgeting process is under way and also ensure that these are aligned with IDP processes. The interviewed participants from government all revealed that their respective municipalities engage on budget and IDP roadshows twice a year. They further noted that these engagements have largely proved to be ineffective due to the fact that people in the communities are sometimes unable to properly understand the contents of the budget due to limited literacy skills. Furthermore, many meetings are held during the week when most people who can understand the budget and IDP are unavailable to attend and also due to the fact that people sometimes attend meetings only when there is a promise of refreshments being made available, but where those present do not fully engage with the main content of the meetings.

Civil society organizations remain the most effective spaces of participation that have the potential to challenge the status quo using their available resources and expertise. They are therefore an important resource to keep government, including local government, in check. The Local Government Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998, as well as other legislation including the Constitution, prescribes the involvement of civil society organizations in the operations of municipalities. Nyalunga (2003) asserts, however, that "The local political environment is, however, not always conducive for CSOs to articulate their mandates. It is sometimes a hassle for CSOs to participate in local governance due to political nature of consultations" (Nyalunga, 2003, p.5). According to the data collected through interviews for this study, government participants indicated that their respective municipalities do involve local civil society organizations on a regular basis; however, some civil society organizations' representatives did not concur with this allegation while others did. The annual reports for the respective municipalities did not reveal this fact. There still seems to be a lack of understanding of the beneficial outcomes that these kinds of relationships may provide for both municipalities and the communities.

Furthermore, literature on the subject of spaces for public participation reveals that sometimes 'invited' spaces of participation are not enough to create an environment of vigorous contestation of issues in a way that will lead to proper governance and policy implementation. Miraftab (2004) distinguishes between 'invited' and 'invented' spaces of participation by saying that "'invited' spaces are defined as those ones occupied by those grassroots and their allied non-governmental organizations that are legitimized by donors and government interventions. 'Invented' spaces are those, also occupied by the grassroots and claimed by their collective action, but directly confronting the authorities and the status quo" (Miraftab, 2004, p.1).

To summarise on the question of the adequacy and effectiveness of spaces of participation made available by the municipalities in the Ugu district, this research finds that the spaces are not adequate, only somewhat effective and also very limited. The study further identifies that the public participation obligation is not fully understood both within the municipalities and also in the communities. Some municipalities have been found to avail spaces of participation as required by the NPFPP; however, they make no other means beyond that, regardless of the fact that they are aware that the provided spaces are not sufficient and effective on their own. The question of unavailability of budget to ensure that the public participation spaces are adequately managed, the researcher notes as a key impediment. However, this cannot be taken as enough reason to completely disregard the fact that public participation is a constitutional right and adhering to it stands to do the municipalities and communities more good than harm.

5.3.2 Internal configurations and information flow to aid policy implementation

To answer the question of policy implementation in local government using this specific example and the focus of this research which is the institutional arrangements, the researcher had to incorporate the question of co-ordination and integration of the public participation function within the municipalities

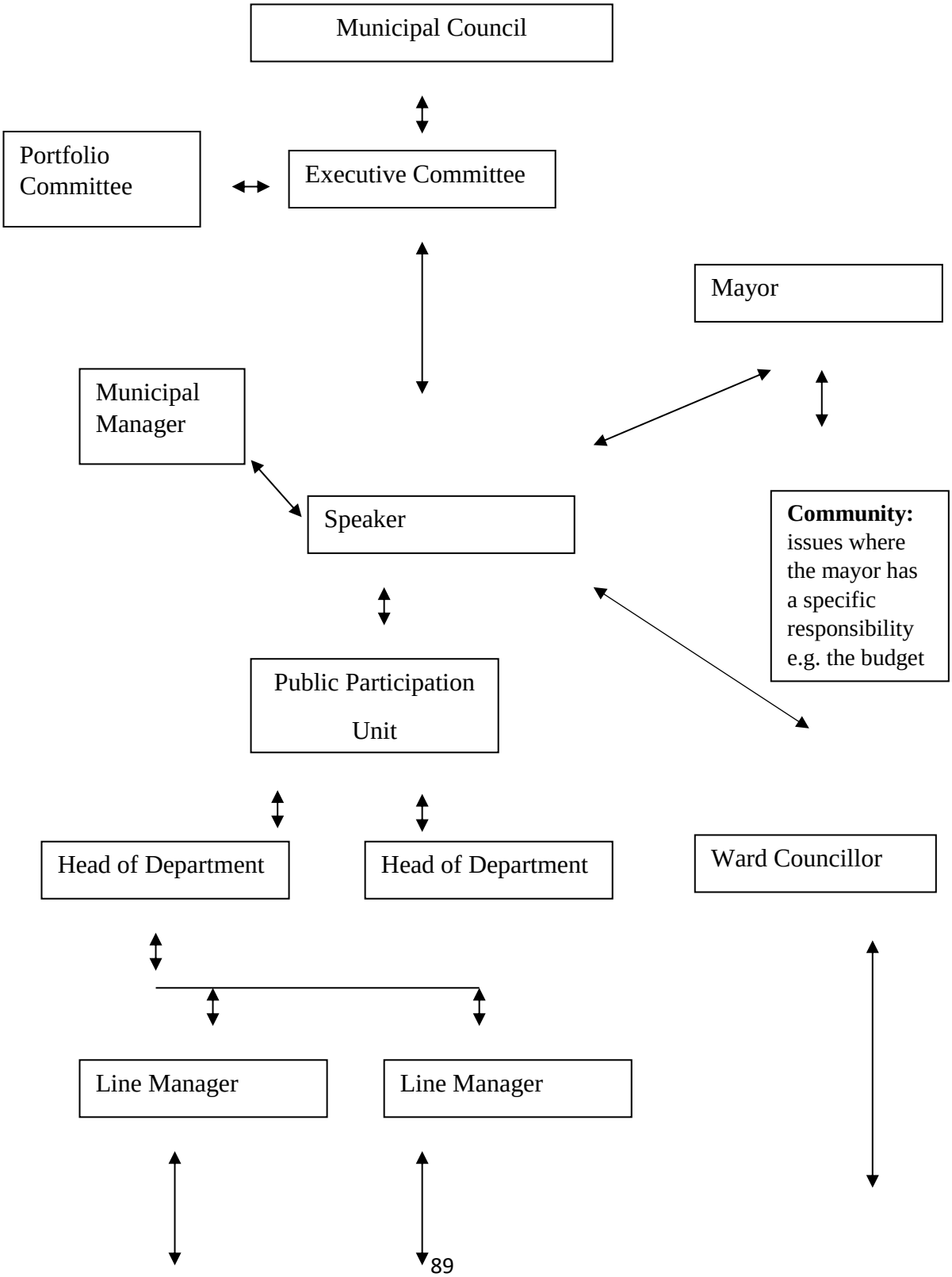
themselves. Literature has revealed that part of the problem that leads to improper implementation of policies is the lack of proper planning in institutionalising and allocating duties and responsibilities to individuals as deemed fit.

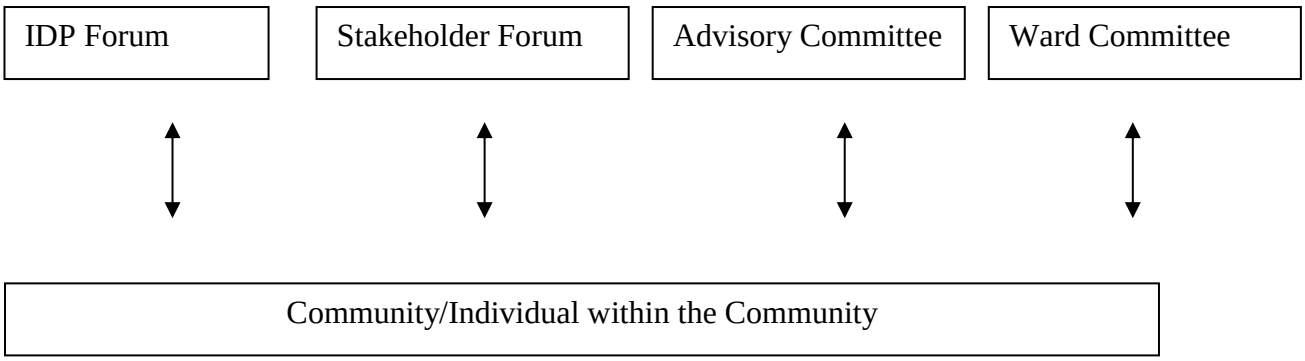
Chapter nine (9) of the NPFPP focuses on the institutionalization of the responsibility for public participation within municipalities. According to the policy framework, the implementation of this policy in a municipality requires a concerted effort of the leadership units of the municipality; that is, it requires both administrative and political backing and commitment. The Systems Act also places the responsibility for public participation with the municipal administration, municipal council as well as the community. It is evident, however, that there is bound to be some overlap in, and duplication of, responsibility which, if not properly managed, can lead to challenges related to not achieving the target and not having anyone to account for them. The policy framework therefore places great emphasis on the need for role-players to be in constant communication so as to share vital information as may be needed by communities during engagements. The policy framework categorically states that "…the officials must provide required information to the councillors who are then required to consult and involve the community in the decision-making process" (National Policy Framework on Public Participation, 2007, p. 70).

In order to ensure proper institutionalisation of the public participation responsibility within the municipality, the policy framework proposes that municipalities must create and adopt a structure of information flow that would assist in ensuring that public participation duties do not go unattended and may ultimately remain resolved. This structure should visualise the relationships and indicate the responsibilities of all the role-players so that every role-player remains clear about their responsibilities. An example of the structure is given below. This structure reveals how the different responsible units must be inter-linked in an effort to properly implement the policy. The structure also reveals how information from the different public participation spaces must flow upward until it reaches the

municipal council. It further explains how different units must interact whenever information is required and received for processing within the municipalities.

Figure 5: Recommended Process Flow for Public Participation





Source: National Policy Framework on Public Participation, 2007, p. 71

The interviews and document analysis for this study revealed that not much consideration is given by the municipalities in ensuring that the internal municipal structures are conducive to the implementation of the public participation policy. Data revealed that public participation in the municipalities only rested with the public participation office in the Office of the Speaker. No indication of active involvement by other municipal executives, such as the municipal manager and mayor, to implement the policy was visible. The public participation strategies developed by municipalities also did not clarify how public participation should be supported internally nor did it indicate roles for every decision-making structure within the municipality.

5.3.3 Capacity-related issues in policy implementation

The interviews with Ugu district municipal officers revealed that there is some lack of capacity for officials to undertake participatory processes in the district. These capacity constraints range from not having enough human capacity within the municipality to carry out the public participation activities to officials themselves not really grasping the concept of public participation together with its intensity. The researcher observed, based on the responses, that some municipal officials did not fully understand their obligation of public participation beyond what has to happen in ward committees. It was discovered that too much attention was given to ward committees and any other strategies for community involvement were overlooked or ignored. The researcher further observed that there was a significant difference between the officials who have recently started working after having

been studying when compared to the officials that have been with the municipality for some time. The officials that have recently started working showed a significant understanding of what public participation entails and were not reluctant to identify ineffective mechanisms currently used by the municipalities in implementing the policy. The 'old' officials, on the other hand, seemed highly uncritical of the state in which public involvement was happening in the municipality. This speaks directly to the need for continued training of officials to fully understand the concept of public participation and to keep up with new developments and latest information on the subject.

In agreement and in support of this point, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) published guidelines aimed at enhancing public participation in local government. One of the tools they say is critical in enhancing public participation in local government is skills development for officials responsible for public participation. SALGA notes that, "Engaging communities requires a wide array of skills, among others facilitation, management, co-ordination and an understanding of the context and environment where services need to be rendered. It requires skills to manage a healthy communication lifecycle where communities are consulted, their inputs are taken into account and feedback is given" (SALGA, 2013). To this end, it is evident that basic and continued training of public participation officials is necessary in the institutionalization of this obligation.

Capacitating the communities and community representatives to understand their role and responsibility is also an important factor in ensuring the institutionalization of the public participation obligation. There was a lack of comprehension around the concept of public participation observed among community members and representatives. The interviews revealed that community members did not know that they have a right to be involved in municipal matters and also have the responsibility to assist the municipality in its operations so as to ensure a mutually beneficial state of affairs. The community members who serve in ward committees also did not display adequate understanding of the concept of public participation in its entirety even though some revealed that they had undergone training. This

emphasises the need for municipalities to go back to basics and conduct workshops for communities on the concept of public participation as well as how it should be conducted and why. This way, communities would have a better understanding and it may contribute towards them taking an interest in being involved and making their civic contribution.

With regard to human capacity within municipal offices, the NPFPP does not prescribe how capacitated the public participation office should be. However, looking at all the responsibilities that the office should fulfil, one cannot dispute the fact that considerable human capacity is needed. The data collected reveals that most offices are severely understaffed and cannot be expected to function properly and be able to conduct engagements with communities in an adequate manner. As indicated above, one municipality participant indicated that there was only one member of staff in the public participation unit. Considering all the duties, co-ordination and integration to be undertaken by the unit, it is unrealistic to expect one person to do this without losing sight of other important responsibilities. Capacitating the public participation unit with enough staff is another critical element that municipalities must consider in order to fully implement the policy.

One cannot discuss issues of capacity and overlook issues of budgetary constraints that are usually the reason for under-capacitation and subsequent lack of proper policy implementation. Research has shown that local municipalities, especially those in rural areas, usually do not have adequate funds as they are often unable to generate their own income and always rely on government grants to carry out their responsibilities. Furthermore, because there is a high demand for service delivery in rural areas due to unemployment and poverty, municipalities are mostly concerned with providing those services and thereafter do not have funds to capacitate staff and communities on issues of public participation. The public participation practice on its own requires considerable resources to implement. The interviews conducted with the municipal officials also revealed budgetary constraints as a contributing factor to the lack of implementation of the public participation policy.

The last sections of the NPFPP address budget matters and how municipalities can ensure participation in this regard. It suggests that municipalities must make budget provision for staff salaries, office equipment, vehicles, computer and video equipment. Furthermore, municipalities must also make budgetary provision for the fulfilment of all the strategic elements for public participation. To fulfil the communication strategy, for example, the municipality must provide for advertising costs through radio broadcasts and print media, as well as the establishment of customer care facilities. To capacitate ward committees, budgetary arrangements must be made for training of members, stipends, hiring of venues, transport expenses and similar. Izimbizos also require considerable resources to arrange and conduct.

The researcher observed a difference in public participation policy implementation between the rural and urban municipalities. The municipalities in urban areas seem more successful than the municipalities in rural areas. This has been attributed to a number of factors, including accessibility of meeting venues, literacy and hence understanding of the policy objectives, contents and thus the related proactive participation, as well as poverty and limited resources which make meeting attendance difficult. Another factor, as observed by the researcher, that contributes to this distinction which had not yet been indicated above is the fact that urban municipalities are able to generate income as opposed to rural municipalities which find this more challenging. Money from taxes, electricity and waste management is paid to the municipality and in this way the municipality is able to fund public participation practices. The two municipalities that appear to do better around public participation are located in predominantly urban areas.

5.3.4 Monitoring and evaluation in policy implementation

Policy implementation requires continuous monitoring and evaluation for the purposes of determining the extent to which it will meet its desired objectives. Monitoring and evaluation is also a tool used to identify problematic areas and provide the opportunity to correct them and give the programme or project a greater chance of success. McLaughlin (1987) supports this view by saying that "Learning from experience requires moving away from a positivistic model to a model of social learning and policy analysis that stresses reflection and assistance to ongoing decision-making" (McLaughlin, 1987, p. 175).

It is for this reason that municipalities must also invest time and resources in determining whether programmes put in place are achieving the intended impact and thus attaining the desired results. It is also for this reason that the NPFPP strongly recommends that municipalities should conduct citizen satisfaction surveys in order to learn what perceptions communities hold about the municipality. The NPFPP also suggests that these surveys must be conducted in a professional and independent manner so as to avoid any suggestion of bias.

Of the municipalities interviewed in this study none of them indicated having conducted citizen satisfaction surveys. The participants from municipalities expressed their view that communities are satisfied with their services based on the fact that there are minimal protest actions in their areas. As indicated above, the community members and representatives did not concur with this view. It is the researcher's view that should the municipalities invest resources in conducting professional surveys, a different view to what they currently hold would be presented and will most likely challenge the views that they currently hold regarding citizen satisfaction. This would also contribute towards directing municipalities on the right path of implementing their public participation policy.

As part of the monitoring process, all the interviewed municipal officials revealed that the municipalities use performance contracts of officials to effect public participation obligations as key performance indicators. This assists managers in

keeping track of the officials' performance with regard to the implementation of the policy. It also helps to ensure that there are mechanisms in place to hold the officials accountable should they fail to undertake such duties as required by both the public participation strategies and their contracts.

5.4 CONCLUSION

Information presented in chapter four as well as the analysis provided above reveals that policy implementation in local government still requires a lot of attention. As this research has particularly focused on the institutional arrangements for public participation policy implementation, the researcher notes that in as much as there is a perceived attempt at creating spaces of participation, the municipalities under study still need to focus on the adequacy and effectiveness of such spaces. The most trusted space, which is ward committees, has been shown to still have a lot of challenges that prevent it from being the structure that properly enables the involvement of communities in municipal matters.

The municipalities themselves also fall short in providing adequate systems to implement the policy. There is still lack of capacity and inadequate structural configurations that could allow for proper policy implementation.

Research has shown that policy implementation requires the concerted efforts of everyone involved in order to succeed. Understanding public participation and appreciating the fact that it is a constitutional right and that all stakeholders are likely to benefit when it is correctly practiced may be the first step in ensuring that the policy is better implemented. Policy implementation also requires ongoing and genuine monitoring and evaluation to derive lessons on what should be strengthened or changed in order to make improvements. The municipalities in this study have been shown to have neglected this obligation and as a result will continue to conduct its business based on the unfounded belief that communities are satisfied.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This sixth and final chapter of this report is aimedat providing conclusions based on some of the most important elements of this research and which provide the foundation for the recommendations that follow. Firstly, this chapter describes the purpose of the research, the literature review conducted, the methodological steps that this research followed and the considerations made, the presentation of findings from the interviews and document analysis as well as the interpretation and analysis of those findings. The researcher will then make recommendations based on the findings and suggest ways in which the municipalities can strengthen the implementation of the policy. This will be done by offering broad recommendations for policy implementation in local government and also specific recommendations for this particular district.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore and analyse the institutional arrangements put in place by the municipalities under Ugu district in implementing the national policy framework on public participation. The policy framework itself was used as a guideline to find out how the municipalities fare in making provisions in accordance with the implementation guidelines on the policy framework. Of particular importance was identifying what spaces for participation are made available by the municipalities and also how adequate and effective those spaces are for community engagement and involvement. Also important was discovering what structural arrangements are made by the municipality itself that allow for proper implementation of the policy. The capacity that would allow for the structural arrangements as well as the spaces of participation was explored. How the municipalities monitor and evaluate their performance on implementing the

policy was another aim of this study that would also contribute towards understanding how the municipalities implement the policy and whether or not they are in a position to make necessary improvements.

To better understand the concept of policy implementation, the researcher thought it important to discuss some of the varied and important theories and aspects that contribute towards successful or unsuccessful implementation of policies. The literature revealed that policy implementation research was prompted, around the 1970s, by the realisation that there was a gap that did not allow for policy intentions to be translated into the intended actions. There are still no concrete theories on policy implementation; however, researchers suggest that there are top-down and bottom-up perspectives to understanding policy implementation. Over and above that, a realisation was reached that there are many factors that contribute towards the outcomes of policy implementation. Briefly discussed in this research are how power relations influence the implementation of policies, how the political environment of any given setting influences the implementation of policies and how networks and network arrangements can contribute to policy implementation. Of particular importance and of particular interest to the researcher was the notion of how institutions and institutional arrangements contribute to proper implementation of policies. This was used as a conceptual framework for this study.

For the purposes of providing the reader with enough of the background that necessitated this research, the researcher thought it important to give a review of the concept of public participation. The researcher is in agreement with the view that public participation, when practiced correctly, has the potential to deepen and consolidate democracy. Two decades into democracy, the researcher believes there is still a lack of understanding of the concept of public participation, especially in local government, despite it being pronounced as a necessity in most government legislation and policies in South Africa. There is a very strong legal and policy framework for public participation in South Africa; however, implementation is still severely lacking and as a result this has the potential to stall development with the potential for negative outcomes. To this end, the researcher explains some of the

reasons why public participation is important and also what challenges are revealed by the literature that local government encounters when implementing the policy on public participation.

To get the necessary tools for achieving the purpose of this study the researcher used the Ugu district as a case study. The Ugu district presented itself as an ideal case for this study because it is in the local sphere of government where the researcher is of the view that public participation must be vibrant and this is also a sphere where government policies are being implemented. The researcher had posited that there is a lack of understanding of policy implementation and from the researcher's experience the purpose and possible benefits for public participation in the district required examination. Qualitative research methodologies were employed by the study as it is the only way to arrive at the intended answers that could contribute to realising the purpose of this study.

Chapters four and five of this report present and analyse findings from the interviews conducted with government officials responsible for implementing the public participation policy, the participants from civil society organizations in the area and also the community members and representatives. This was done so that an rounded view of the situation on the ground would be achieved. The interviews with government officials, in the researcher's view, revealed that in as much as the government is aware, to some extent, of this obligation to involve communities in the matters of government, there are still structural and systematic challenges that undermine this process. So far, the government is only concerned with putting measures in place, as per the policy provisions; however, these measures have proved inadequate and ineffective, at best. Community members and representatives revealed very low levels of knowledge of what municipalities do and what role they have to play in the greater scheme of things. They indicated that they have serious reservations about how government works. Deeply worrying, though, is the fact that government does not seem to recognise the intensity to which the systems are not functional. As a result, government will not then invest time and resources in improving the situation.

Another worrying but not unexpected finding is that of the lack of capacity for municipalities to implement the public participation policies, especially the financial capacity. As understood, conducting public participation activities requires considerable resources and this is particularly difficult for poor municipalities, especially those in rural areas. Municipalities therefore opt for conducting the minimum level of public participation for compliance purposes even if there are no benefits gained from it. The fact that these communities are also unaware of their rights and would thus not hold the municipalities to account for the decisions made make it all the more possible for municipalities to preserve the status quo.

The researcher notes, however, that is some optimism regarding the improved implementation of the public participation policy within the municipalities studied. What provides cause for hope is the fact that communities and community organizations have displayed a great willingness and eagerness to work with municipalities in improving the situation. The municipalities have also displayed a willingness to devise effective ways of community involvement. The researcher therefore makes the following recommendations with the aim of strengthening the implementation of the public participation policy in local government as a whole and in the Ugu district specifically:

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.3.1 General recommendations

- The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs should review the National Policy Framework on Public Participation to include sections that pronounce consequences for municipalities that do not comply with the policy provisions.
- Since most research reveals that ten (10) members per ward committee sometimes render the committee unrepresentative for all the different sectors and interests in the municipality, the Systems Act and the NPFPP

must be revised to indicate that ward committees ensure inclusivity and representativity in accordance with their unique circumstances; therefore, the number of ward committee members must be determined by those unique needs and endorsed by the municipality.

6.3.2 Recommendations specific to Ugu district

- There should be basic and continued education or workshops for both municipal officials responsible for public participation and the communities at large about the practice of public participation. This will allow for the community members to understand their government better as well as their role and responsibility in its functionality. This will also make the municipal officials receptive to community inputs and enable them to better understand that the relationship can be mutually beneficial.
- There needs to be a pronouncement on how many officials must constitute a public participation unit to avoid incapacity.
- The public participation obligation must also be included in the performance contracts of the municipalities' executive employees; that is, Municipal Manager, Municipal Mayor and Heads of Departments.
- The municipalities must strengthen communication strategies so as to ensure constant communication with, and accessibility to, their communities.
- The municipalities must conduct citizen satisfaction surveys with communities to fully understand their feelings and how to proceed going forward.
- The district municipality must strengthen its monitoring and evaluation systems in order to ensure that local municipalities are in compliance with the implementation of the policy on public participation.

6.3.3 Possible future research questions

As indicated above, the question of public policy implementation is a multifaceted one that requires research on a number of factors in order to be fully understood.

The current research has focused on the institutional arrangements put in place by the Ugu district to implement the policy on public participation. Further studies on this particular area could usefully focus on areas such as the network relationships and configurations that exist in the district and that influence the implementation of policies.

Further studies could also examine how politics and political affiliations influence the implementation of the policies as it has been revealed in this research that the ineffectiveness of ward committees is to some extent attributed to political interference.

Lastly, research on how power relations influences the implementation of policies in local government would also contribute to addresing the question of policy implementation in local government.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

MANAGERS/ OFFICIALS

1. Does the municipality have an existing public participation policy? If not, what regulative framework for public participation exists in the municipality?
2. What institutional arrangements are made by the municipality to implement the policy?
3. Please name all the mechanisms used by the local/ district municipality to ensure public participation.
4. How does the municipality monitor the implementation of the policy framework on its local municipalities?
5. Does the district municipality have a functional Ward Forum? If yes, how many times does the Forum meet annually?
6. What challenges are faced by the municipality in implementing and monitoring the implementation of the policy?
7. What successes can you share that makes implementing the policy possible?

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTATIVES

1. Does your organization have a working relationship with the municipality?
2. Does the organization have regular meetings with the municipality?
3. How open are the lines of communication between your organization and the municipality?
4. How often is the organization requested to make input on the matters of the municipality that concerns your organization?
5. How receptive do you feel the municipality is to the inputs that your organization makes?

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES

1. What do you understand about public participation?
2. Do you ever receive information on what the municipality is doing and how often?
3. What do you know about ward committees and their function?
4. Have you ever attended a community meeting called by the municipality. If yes, how many times and what is your perception on those meetings?
5. Do you understand that you have a right and responsibility to assist the municipality in any way?
6. Do you think the municipality will listen to you if you engaged with them?
7. What do you think the municipality should do better in order for you to be sufficiently involved in its matters?