

Framework for the Cross-Cutting Issues

18.1 INTRODUCTION

Local government is multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional. It is not only about sectors such as water, sanitation, electricity and housing, but also about the five key dimensions of economic, social, financial and institutional, spatial and infrastructural, and environmental development. These dimensions have a pervasive nature and need to be “mainstreamed” into the IDP process. This means that they need to be considered at every stage of the process. There are also certain issues underlying these dimensions that cut across all development processes in South Africa, such as HIV/AIDS, Local Agenda 21 (LA 21), poverty alleviation, gender equity, and youth and children. The Buffalo City Municipality adopted the above approach for the purposes of its integrated development plan, and this section attempts to provide an insight into how this was achieved.

18.2 LOCAL AGENDA 21

Local Agenda 21 originates from the Agenda 21 agreement at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. Agenda 21 is an action plan for sustainable development into the 21st century, with LA21 its translation into action at local level. Sustainability is a global concern and the key role of local government is put forward in the UNCED agreement on Agenda 21:

Because many of the problems and solutions being addressed by Agenda 21 have their roots in local activities, the participation and co-operation of the local authorities will be a determining factor in fulfilling its objectives.

This agreement has posed a challenge to local authorities all over the world to implement Local Agenda 21 activities, and Buffalo City did not see itself as an exception. Although LA21 is not a specific legal requirement of local government, it can add value by contributing to the IDP in terms of enriching the planning process. Furthermore, many of the principles of LA21 as articulated in 1992, have now been enshrined in legislation dealing with local authorities in South Africa

generally, and planning and development specifically. It is stressed that a Local Agenda 21 should be developed and adopted through a broad-based transparent bottom-up approach with different stakeholders i.e. women, unions, youth, business community etc.

18.2.1 LA 21 IN THE BUFFALO CITY PLANNING PROCESS

In the Buffalo City planning process, LA 21 was initially dealt with by the Environmental Task Team as an environmental component, but was subsequently identified as a cross-cutting issue. This was prompted by the realization that the principles of LA 21 are similar to those of the IDP, and they cut across all the identified planning areas.

The IDP analysis phase pointed out a number of problems and gaps in information, pertaining to LA 21 activities in Buffalo City. The current situation is that the municipality does not apply LA 21 principles on project planning in a structured way, and indeed lacks formal structures to undertake such a function.

The following issue was subsequently identified as the priority issue for Local Agenda 21 in Buffalo City:

There is lack of sustainable development due to inefficient use and management of resources in Buffalo City.

Following the identification of problems and risks, a number of important objectives for the effective implementation of LA 21 in Buffalo City were formulated. The specific objectives are :

- ❑ Creation of awareness of Local Agenda 21 at all levels in Buffalo City;
- ❑ Creation of effective partnerships with stakeholders;
- ❑ Development and implementation of Local Agenda 21 for Buffalo City.

A number of strategies and projects to achieve the above-stated objectives were identified and these included a need to establish an in-house structural arrangement to oversee the implementation of LA 21 activities. It was conceived in the planning stages that such a structure should be placed in the highest office, for example the Mayor's office or the office of the City Manager, to assume the high level of authority needed for this function.

The development and implementation of an inclusive and transparent LA 21 process was also identified as a viable option, and this will be achieved through the creation of a Stakeholders' Forum as well as the raising of awareness among citizens and employees. An important aspect of this process will be capacity-building. The development and implementation of the LA 21 document and the development and implementation of Environmental Management Systems within the Buffalo City municipality were also identified as important interventions in the

quest for sustainable Buffalo City. The municipality has an important role to play as co-ordinator, setting good examples etc. but it should be underlined that all sectors of society should feel an ownership as well as the responsibility for the full filling of the goals of Local Agenda 21.

18.3 HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is a priority issue for all spheres of government. South Africa currently has the fastest-growing HIV/AIDS epidemic in the world and the latest antenatal surveys suggest that about 24.5% of all pregnant women in the country are infected.

Communities and households that are the most affected by HIV/AIDS, and are the least able to cope, are those that live in areas that have the least access to socio-economic and infrastructural services.

The impact of HIV/AIDS and the requirements of households affected by the epidemic, will in turn affect municipal services and economic activities. This implies that HIV/AIDS is not simply a health issue, and requires that all government institutions have to be up-front in terms of involving themselves in the fight against AIDS.

HIV/AIDS impacts on all aspects of development, and municipalities should introduce HIV/AIDS issues in the IDP process and outputs. This section seeks to indicate Buffalo City's approach in dealing with HIV/AIDS issues as part of its planning process.

18.3.1 HIV/AIDS IN THE BUFFALO CITY PLANNING PROCESS

HIV/AIDS in Buffalo City is currently perceived as a health problem and therefore programmes are usually relegated to the health department in general and specifically to the Aids Training and Information Centre (ATIC). The situational analysis of Buffalo City on HIV/AIDS has led to the identification of a number of HIV/AIDS-related problems that are impacting on Buffalo City municipality. These can be divided into internal and external, and are listed as follows:

- Staffing issues
- Programme issues
- Industrial relations issues

- Impact on households and individuals
- Impact on communities
- Impact on service provision.

In the light of the above scenario, the Buffalo City municipality was convinced that it has a vital role to play in the fight against the disease and its causes and effects. This necessitated a review of the current approach to HIV/AIDS issues and highlighted the need to integrate the issue of HIV/AIDS into the planning process. An in-depth analysis of the specific impact of HIV/AIDS related to service delivery, human resource planning, economic and infrastructure development was conducted. However, due to lack of accurate data to factor in the impact of HIV/AIDS on loss of skills, the budgetary impact due to potential loss of revenue has not been possible to calculate at this stage.

The following priority issues were identified as needing urgent attention:

- Inadequate access to a comprehensive package of HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support.
- Fragmented service provision and lack of information on the prevalence and impact of HIV/AIDS on the community.
- There is a general lack of involvement in HIV/AIDS programmes.
- Increase in HIV/AIDS amongst the Buffalo City Council workforce.

The Buffalo City municipality has adopted as one of its strategies, the development of a comprehensive HIV/AIDS programme for prevention, treatment, care and support that involves the other key stakeholders in the municipality. The implementation of this programme would be facilitated and co-ordinated by the municipality and it is important for the mobilization and channelling of resources for HIV/AIDS activities in the municipality.

Another strategy that has been adopted is the establishment of a municipal structure to deliver HIV/AIDS programmes, and such a structure has to be well-placed to assume a high level of authority in order to influence the decision-making and implementation.

A need to conduct research on the impact of HIV/AIDS in the municipality and to develop a data-base of HIV/AIDS statistics were identified as important strategies.

In keeping with the decision to identify the HIV/AIDS issues as cross-cutting, the strategies developed within the other identified planning areas have also been reviewed and evaluated in an attempt to mainstream the HIV/AIDS issue within the planning process of the Buffalo City municipality.

18.4 POVERTY

A third of all South African households are living in poverty. In many respects, the Local Government White Paper set the poverty alleviation agenda for local government. A poverty focus means that each municipality must strive to ensure that the needs of the vulnerable and the destitute households within its area of jurisdiction are adequately and sustainably addressed.

The primary policy approach in respect of poverty is framed within the equity-focus of the constitution. Poverty alleviation entails the changing of conditions that keep both women and men poor, recognizing the different ways in which communities and households might experience poverty.

The recently articulated new mandate of local government, which is said to be developmental in terms of the policy and legislation, requires municipalities to focus their efforts towards the alleviation of the conditions of poverty. This section seeks to highlight the processes of the Buffalo City municipality aimed at achieving this mandate.

18.4.1 POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN THE BUFFALO CITY PLANNING PROCESS

Poverty alleviation has been identified as a core area of focus of the Buffalo City municipality IDP process. This meant that poverty alleviation was mainstreamed into the IDP processes of Buffalo City, and that an attempt was made to ensure that poverty alleviation was considered throughout the process.

The IDP analysis phase has pointed to widespread poverty within the Buffalo City municipality area of jurisdiction, with the most commonly-earned monthly household income between nothing and R1,499. Poverty alleviation and meeting the basic needs of the poor by providing access to basic services has been identified as a top priority for the Buffalo City municipality.

The poverty alleviation agenda has been integrated into the planning activities of the various planning areas within the Buffalo City process, the key areas being economic, financial, infrastructural, social and environmental development. The desired result has been to effectively measure the different strategies, projects and programmes against their respective impacts on households affected by conditions of poverty.

The Buffalo City municipality has adopted as its main objective, the creation of opportunities for all to sustain themselves through productive activities, and to protect the poor and other disadvantaged groups. This objective would be an integral part of all developmental programmes and projects in Buffalo City and

such projects should ensure the participation of the marginalized groups of the society.

18.5 GENDER

The term gender refers to the different roles and responsibilities that societies and cultures impose on men and women, because of their biological differences. Gender issues include inter-generational issues, and are not simply issues about or concerning women only. They are development issues that affect all the residents of a municipal area. They manifest themselves in terms of different and unequal access to and control of resources and power between men and women.

Gender equity in a developmental context is about ensuring that both men and women have equal understanding of, access to, and control over social, political and economic resources.

To promote gender equality, local government has a critical role to play in reformulating municipal procedures and practices to ensure greater representation and accessibility. There are however, no single policy proposals pertaining to gender issues, aside from the Constitutional provisions of the Bill of Rights. Instead most of the national legislation and policy makes explicit the notions of gender equity and equality as key principles of development.

18.5.1 GENDER EQUITY IN THE BUFFALO CITY PLANNING PROCESSES

The IDP analysis phase has yielded the following facts around gender issues in the Buffalo City municipal area:

- ❑ There is a poor representation of women in the community structures.
- ❑ Only 24% of the Buffalo City councillors are women although women constitute 52% of the community.
- ❑ The demographic trends clearly demonstrate that women are generally poorer with less access to resources than other groups.
- ❑ The staff demographics of Buffalo City are skewed in favour of males.

The above facts illustrate the existence of gender inequalities in the social, economic, physical and institutional environment of Buffalo City, and this has been declared a priority issue for the municipality.

As a consequence of the above, the municipality has formulated two important objectives that are aimed at redressing this unfortunate situation:

- ❑ The municipality will strive to reduce gender inequalities as they affect access to jobs, land, services and housing
- ❑ The municipality will strive to improve the quality of life of especially women.

The above will be progressively achieved through the implementation of a number of strategies and projects. Key amongst these is the development and implementation of a gender policy. Such a policy will have to reflect on the municipality's stated objective of prioritizing gender issues within the development framework of the Buffalo City Municipality. The municipality has also resolved to look at establishing an institutional structure that will co-ordinate and facilitate gender issues within the municipality. The municipality will also establish and maintain links with other institutions and stakeholders.

An attempt has also been made to mainstream gender issues into the other themes, in keeping with its cross-cutting nature. The development and implementation of a programme to improve the quality of life of women and youth has been identified as one of the projects under the LA 21 (sustainable development) theme. The performance of different strategies, projects and programmes from other planning themes will also be measured against their impact on gender issues and relations.

18.6 YOUTH AND CHILDREN

As has been identified in the analysis, Buffalo City is experiencing a number of social problems that are characteristic of a society in which there is a high degree of poverty and joblessness, and the marginalisation of under-educated adolescents and young adults, particularly males. This is manifested in various forms of petty delinquency or more serious and violent crime, with alcohol-abuse and gangsterism being common.

The municipality's planning process has identified as a social priority the maintenance and upgrading of existing community facilities, and the provision of further appropriate facilities in all areas, as resources allow, in order to address the need for recreation of the younger generation.

In taking on the responsibility of facilitating economic growth and development in Buffalo City, the municipality also aims to act as a catalyst in increasing the number of sustainable jobs in the municipality, to ensure that all who wish to work have the opportunity to do so.

