Zainu Khan & Theo Haupt

Community participation — a necessary element of community development projects

Abstract

This article presents a number of important findings of a research project evaluating the importance of community participation in infrastructure delivery in the Western Cape. There is an emerging trend in South Africa that recognises that development is much more than the expansion of income and wealth and that economic growth is not enough. The focus is increasingly on human development. Participation in the development process must allow the members of the communities to use their own views and convictions to address specific conditions and problems prevailing in their community. In addition, participation must be acknowledged as a voluntary process that influences the direction and execution of community development projects in contrast to communities merely being consulted or receiving project benefits. The emerging participatory paradigm suggests two perspectives. The first consists of substantively involving local people in the selection, design, planning and implementation of programmes and projects that will affect them. The second is to make more continuous and comprehensive feedback an integral part of development activities. This paper reviews community participation and its importance in the delivery of development projects.

Keywords: community participation, community development, development projects

Ms Zainu Khan, M. Tech, Department of Construction Management, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Symphony Way Bellville, Cape Town, South Africa Telephone: + 27 21 959 6631, Email: <khanz@cput.ac.za>

Dr. Theo C Haupt; PhD; Research Coordinator, Faculty of Engineering, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa. Telephone: +27 21 959 6845, Email: <hauptt@pentech.ac.za>

Abstrak

Hierdie artikel gee 'n aantal belangrike bevindinge weer oor 'n navorsingsprojek in die Wes-Kaap wat die belangrikheid van gemeenskapsdeelname in die lewering van infrastruktuur evalueer. Daar is 'n opkomende neiging in Suid-Afrika wat erken dat ontwikkeling veel meer is as die uitbreiding van inkomste en rykdom en dat ekonomies groei nie genoeg is nie. Die fokus is al hoe meer op die ontwikkeling van mense. Deelname in die ontwikkelingsproses moet lede van die gemeenskap toelaat om hul eie oortuigings te gebruik om spesifieke probleme heersend in hul gemeenskap aan te spreek. Deelname moet erken word as 'n vrywillig proses wat die rigting en uitvoering van gemeenskapsontwikkelingsprojekte kan beinvloed in teenstelling met gemeenskappe wat skaars geraadpleeg word of projekvoordele ontvang. Die opkomende deelnemende paradigma stel twee perspektiewe voor. Die eerste is dat plaaslik mense betrek word in die keuse, ontwerp, beplanning en implementasie van programme en projekte wat hulle sal affekteer. Die tweede is om voordurende verstaanbare terugvoering 'n volledige deel van ontwikkelingsaktiwiteite te maak. Hierdie artikel gee 'n oorsig oor die belangrikheid van gemeenskapsdeelname in die lewering van ontwikkelingsprojekte.

Sleutelwoorde: gemeenskapsdeelname, gemeenskapsontwikkeling, ontwikkelingsprojekte

1.   Introduction

There is an emerging trend in South Africa that recognises that development is much more than the expansion of income and wealth and that economic growth, though essential, is not enough. The focus is increasingly on human development, which ranges from enjoying a decent standard of living to enjoying a greater sense of participation in the various activities within their communities. Seen in this light, projects in developing areas increasingly include objectives that go beyond the mere provision of physical facilities. How a project is undertaken and by whom, are just as important as what is delivered (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 1993).

Since 1994, the political landscape has been altered, with the introduction of the new central, provincial and local spheres of governments. New national and provincial departments have been established through the amalgamation and restructuring of former apartheid administrations With a few exceptions, most of these have now gone through some form of participatory strategic planning exercise and have formulated their own visions, missions, policy objectives and strategic plans, albeit of varying depth and quality. These planning outcomes have in many cases been made public through the publication of Green or White Papers, provincial Growth and Development Strategies or other policy documents. Greater difficulty has been experienced, however, in securing the necessary buy-in from staff and other stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of such visions and plans (Abrahams & Goldblatt, 1997).

2.   Development

According to the South African Poverty and Inequality Background Report (Abrahams & Goldblatt, 1997) infrastructural services such as communications, power, transportation, provision of water and sanitation are central to both the activities of households and the economic production of a nation. In order to ensure that growth is consistent with poverty alleviation, infrastructural development needs to be extended to all sectors of the population. Access to at least minimum infrastructure services is one of the essential criteria for defining welfare. Links between poverty and infrastructural services in South Africa are not always easy to define because lack of access to one utility does not necessarily mean a lack of access to the others. Moreover, the different infrastructure sectors have different effects on improving quality of life and reducing poverty. For example, access

to reliable energy, clean water and sanitation helps reduce mortality and morbidity and saves time for productive tasks; transport enhances access to goods, services and employment and communications allows access to services, and information on economic activities. Redress of current imbalances in infrastructural services requires considerable investment in the short- and medium-term, despite fiscal constraints. Resolving this fiscal dilemma — generating sufficient public and private investment without incurring excessive public debt — is essential in order to secure the growth and poverty reduction linkages of infrastructure investments.

The World Bank (1995) advocates three measures to reform the provision of infrastructure services, namely wider application of commercial principles to service providers, broader use of competition, and increased involvement of users where commercial and competitive behaviour is constrained.

The latter proposal suggests the involvement of users and other stakeholders in consultation during project planning direct participation in operation or maintenance and monitoring. This is the primary focus of this research.

3.   Need for development

In every sphere of society — economic, social, moral, cultural, environmental — South Africa is confronted by serious problems. Segregation in education, health, welfare, transport and employment left deep scars of inequality and economic inefficiency. The gap between rich and poor in South Africa is among the largest in the world. Infrastructure and social service delivery has the potential to assure minimum standards and redistribution. This is the sentiment voiced in the foreword of Collins & Torres (2000). Response to questions addressing key areas for concern include:

- To what extent have reconstruction and development programme goals been met in terms of delivery, resources, projects and targeting of delivery?

- Who is actually benefiting from delivery?

- What are the major barriers to delivery and how can it is addressed?

Images of poverty and deprivation of the South African townships as described by many social critics and writers was required reading for

all who wanted to join the struggle for liberation. Now that the fundamental battle for equal rights seems won, the more intricate questions surrounding public welfare needs, housing, health care and sanitation, for example, are likely to be no less vexatious. The South African government's success or failure in ensuring the adequate provision of welfare facilities and services for local population will prove a major indicator of national development (Khosa, 2000).

One of the objectives of the National Public Works programme as stated in the Guidelines for Enhancing Employment Opportunities (1999) is to empower communities through building their capacity to manage their own affairs. This would contribute to building and strengthening local government and other local institutions. The Guidelines further state that funders should be sensitive to the social issues arising from the implementation of development projects in communities

Awotana *et al.* (1995) argues that forms of social organisation and decision-making methodologies are inter-related and the extent of public involvement is affected by such issues as the scope and scale of the project, the time constraints attaching to it, the purpose — overt or covert — of the participatory programme and the capacity of the community to enter effectively into the planning process. Capacity is a function of many factors not least that of the history of the community since the capabilities of people are a reflection of past circumstances. In South Africa, the subjugation of the Black population under the National Party's separatist ideology over a period of some four decades precluded those citizens any realistic form of involvement in the decision taking of the country. It is therefore participation of the previously mute Black communities in the emergent post-apartheid procedures that are of particular interest and import.

This article presents certain important findings of a broader research project evaluating the importance of community participation in infrastructure delivery in the Western Cape.

4.   Delivery of Community Development projects (Procurement)

Procurement in a development context should be concerned with the setting of fundamental development objectives for an emergent community (Taylor & Norval, 1994) such as is prevalent in South Africa. The evaluation of procurement systems should accordingly be on a

basis, which is uniquely developmental in its orientation, while being particularly responsive to the specific needs and resource base of the location in which development occurs. Community empowerment and participation, job creation and economically and environmentally sustainable procurement processes would ensure the successful delivery of the completed facility.

Many construction projects suffer from inappropriate usage of procurement systems (Rwelamila, 1997). Traditional construction procurement systems (TCP) have been criticised for not meeting the needs of clients, being out of date, inefficient, and expensive and fostering poor communication between the client and the contractor. Arguably, the traditional system has lost its value to the client.

Rwelamila & Hall (1995) suggest that the balancing of the traditional project parameters namely, time, cost and quality by the project team, has to date been inappropriate with quality in particular not been adequately addressed. Consequently, project performance has been compromised.

Construction professionals have been prone to adopt over-simplistic and paternalistic views of their clients especially in a community development context (Haupt, 1996). The briefing process enables construction professionals to understand the requirement of their clients (Green, 1996). Where clients are not sufficiently skilled in communicating their requirements effectively such as is the case in community development projects, it is expected of construction professionals to consult extensively with the community in order to draft a brief, which is unambiguous, complete, flexible and realistic (Sawczuk, 1996).

Studies conducted in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) construction industries, have found strong evidence to suggest that poor selection of appropriate delivery mechanisms or procurement systems have led to problems contributing to their poor performance (Rwelamila, 1995; Rwelamila & Hall, 1997). In the findings of a study on infrastructure development in SADC, the revision of tendering and procurement procedures was found to be a key factor to improving infrastructure delivery and development (Haupt, 1996). More than 40% of the respondents regarded tendering and procurement procedures as inadequate.

For its part, South Africa can no longer rely solely on the paradigms of the developed world (Taylor & Norval, 1994). It must develop pro-

curement systems, which consider more than speed, quality, price competition and certainty, and risk transfer. These procurement systems must encourage, inter alia, appropriate, and people intensive technology and processes, learning and skill development. Public sector procurement, through the agency of the Department of Public Works, is one such area where these principles are being integrated into policies towards the procurement and management of public sector infrastructure and facilities in South Africa.

Development concerns people — people experiencing the reality within which they find themselves day-by-day and moment-by-moment, feeling its implication and seeing its practical functioning around them. Development relates to the people involved in it in all possible respects. Development must begin by identifying human needs and, therefore, concern itself with raising the level of living standards and providing opportunities for the development of human potential.

The need for people involved in development to be placed in the centre also suggests the implementation of specific and intruding shifts in emphasis. Policies and strategies directed mainly at the control of natural settings, technological considerations, economic structures and demographic conditions have to be replaced by policies that take full cognisance of concomitant values, customs, social structures and political participation.

5. Community Participation

Community participation implies the readiness of both the government and the community to accept responsibilities and activities. It also means that the value of the contribution of each group is seen and used. Mere tokenism or propaganda will not make participation meaningful. The honest inclusion of community representatives as 'partners' in decision- making makes for successful community participation (Yueng & McGee, 1986).

In broadening the scope of community development in this way, the UN was the first to view community development as synonymous with community participation. This metamorphosis was to be the root cause of the misunderstandings surrounding community participation over the next three decades. According to Pretty & Scoones (1995), there was a long history of 'participation' in development. A wide range of national and international development agencies

had attempted to involve people on some aspect of planning and implementation. The terms 'people's participation' and 'popular participation' were now part of the normal language of many development agencies. This role as a vehicle for social and economic change for people in developing countries was later justified by researchers on the basis that the term 'participation' is frequently used with connotations of a long socio-historical tradition, and understands to be civil involvement in political life.

There are good reasons for the close association of participation with a community development approach (Lane, 1995). First, meeting basic needs requires the participation of all its beneficiaries. Second, participation in implementation improves efficiency through the mobilisation of local resources. Third, the development of the capacity of a community to plan and implement change will require greater intensity and scope of participation as the project proceeds.

Awotana *et al*. (1995) further add that South African townships provide definite case examples of 'wicked problems.' The environments have been seriously degraded over decades by structural inequality, neglect and civil unrest. There are massive, multi-sectoral needs ranging from social infrastructure to education and employment generation. There are extreme limitations both on the resources available to meet these needs and on local capacity to pay for services. There is often a multiplicity of interest groupings, even at local level. There are very strong national and local pressures for the rapid delivery of service goods.

In such situations participation can be expected to be anything other than smooth. There are signs that a number of the typical problems identified in international literature are emerging in South Africa, as participation becomes more common. The most significant of these are the negative effects of structural limitations to the scope of participation, inefficiency and the difficulty of identifying community leaders. Participation programs require effort and investment on the part of participants.

There is a tendency for those who use the term participation to adopt moral high ground, implying that any form of participation is good (Pretty & Scoones, 1995). Recently developed typologies of participation suggest that great care must be taken over both using and interpreting the term. It should always be qualified by reference to the type of participation, as most types will threaten rather than support the goals of sustainable development.

A study of some 230 government and Non Governmental Organisations (NGO's) in Africa found that although participation in planning was relatively common, monitoring and evaluation is still largely conducted by outside organisations (Pretty & Scoones, 1995). Some organisations felt that participation simply implied local people doing what planners wanted

Lane (1995) argues that participation is a very broad concept. When the term is used in the context of development the first question to ask is exactly what type of participation is being referred to. Participation in the construction and implementation stages of a project is now very common, involving the beneficiaries in contributing resources. In these instances participation is equated with co-operation and incorporation into predetermined activities. However this is only one stage in the development process. Participation needs to be considered in decision — making, implementation and maintenance, benefits, and evaluating of successes and failures.

Lane (1995) further states that the second dimension of participation is who should participate? In a truly participatory approach it is expect that all those affected play a role at all stages of the development process. This approach suggests that certain groups had been bypassed by previous development and should now be included or even 'put first'. Once the scope of participation has been decided and who is to participate, consideration must be given to how participation is to be achieved in practice

According to Awotana *et al*. (1995) participation exercises in many contexts have failed because structural impediments drastically constrain the possible results of participation. This is worst when the limitations to the outcome of participation processes are not well understood by, or made clear to participants at the outset. In such circumstances, where the inevitable result of participation is the creation of expectations, which cannot be met, dissatisfaction is often transferred to the object. Participation, therefore, brings expectations with it almost by definition; but the extent to which these expectations can be met, or even addressed, is often limited by variables that stand outside the participation process.

Eyben & Ladbury (1995) further add that a lack of community participation in projects can therefore be the result of professionals assuming the role of knowledgeable specialists who do not take users' views into account because users do not 'know enough' to make

decisions. However sometimes users themselves hand over their participatory rights to professionals. Consequently they save themselves time, energy and, in some instances even conflict.

Awotana *et al*. (1995) argue that distinctions in these and other factors can often result in different agendas and needs, which can remain submerged unless participation strategies are specifically designed to bring them to the fore. Conversely, a participation exercise not designed in this way can have the unintended effect of consolidating the power and status of particular interest groups within a community, having opposite effects to those intended. Assessing support levels of different, sometimes self-styled leaders can be very difficult.

According to Petty & Scoones (1995), it is also common for practitioners to assume that everyone in a community is participating, and that development will serve the needs of everyone. The appearance of external solidarity though may mask internal differentiation. Understanding these internal differences is crucial. Different livelihood strategies imply different isolated local knowledge systems, and those who assume that communities are homogenous easily miss these. Methodologies are required that are sufficiently responsive to such complexity, that can accommodate an understanding of agriculturist — pastoralists' views of different constituencies and which can in turn reflect these in the responses made by development agents.

6. Difficulties in implementing community participation

Carew-Reid *et al*. (1996) highlight the following constraints to participation:

- Participation requires major reversals in the role of external professionals, from 'management' to facilitation. This requires changes in behaviour and attitudes, and can only be gradual. It requires significant retraining but usually; inadequate resources are devoted to training.

- Participation also threatens conventional careers; professionals feel a loss of power in dealing with local communities as equals and including them in decision-making. This discourages professionals from taking risks and developing collaborative relationships with communities.

- Participation and institutional developments are difficult to measure and require using quantitative and qualitative performance indicators together. Existing monitoring and evaluation systems cannot measure this well; thus, physical and financial indicators, which are easier to measure, dominate the performance evaluation and impact analysis process.

Additional difficulties relate to use of the term 'participation' (Petty & Scoones, 1995). Participation may be used to accommodate a failed political process, where politicians may accept participation and its associated rhetoric, but not democracy, pluralism and accountability in planning. Effective participation implies involvement not only in information collection, but also in analysis, decision-making and implementation — implying devolution of the power to decide. The political context of attempts at institutionalising participatory planning is thus critical. Empowering people to take control at local level inevitably leads to conflict if external institutions are unwilling to give up some of their existing power. It should therefore be asked: how genuinely democratic and accountable are governments or non-governmental organisations promoting 'participatory approaches?'

7.   Benefits of community participation in development projects

Awotana *et al*. (1995) contests that 'participation' conceived in the purely instrumental terms of cost or managerial benefits is unacceptable in the context of projects in South African townships, where empowerment and capacity building must be the real goals, not merely the achievement of project management efficiency — although efficiency and cost control may be desirable by-products. The reasons for this are as much practical as political — capacity building is a fundamental prerequisite for project success and sustainability.

Carew-Reid *et al*. (1996) highlights the immediate risks of a participatory approach, as opposed to a top-down approach. The strategic vision/direction may be less clear, at least for the first year or so. Given the multiple perspectives incorporated, it may be more difficult to focus on priorities. Momentum may be lost, as the time taken for participatory strategies is longer. This is possible at both 'higher' levels including donors, and 'lower' levels; but can be minimised by regular feedback of information (and, most important, by implementing poli-

cies on which consensus has already been reached at the earliest stage possible).

Awotana *et al*. (1995) added that while participation can make implementation more efficient by eliminating delay-causing differences in communities, it could also itself cause delays. This is particularly likely to occur when different interest groups attempt to assert themselves, or when community members lack the time or skills to keep pace with the dynamics of a project. For this reason, some writers argue that the immense and pressing nature of Third Word development and planning problems make participation inappropriate because of the time and financing required for its implementation. Others argue that the extra benefits participation brings more than justify the extended process and extra expense.

Awotana *et al*. (1995) goes further by stating that another type of inefficiency can arise when communities do not know the full range of alternatives, which can open to them and participation then means that creative and innovative solutions to problems are never considered. This is less a criticism of participation per se, however, than of a particular style of participation in which professionals abrogate all responsibility and, in effect, approach participation as merely the need to ask people what they want.

These problems are becoming evident in South Africa, and there is evidence in government and elsewhere of increasing impatience with drawn out processes of talking in the absence of delivery. Finding efficient methods of participation are therefore a pressing need if the present developing culture of participation is to be sustained.

Schübeler (1996) contests that the potential benefits of participation have been discussed in relation to the specific interest of each stakeholder. However, it is important to recognise that participation, as any process of socio-economic development, involves costs and risks as well as benefits. It is a process of give-and-take in which each side must surrender certain current positions and assume additional costs in the interest of a greater overall benefit.

According to Khosa (2000) and Everatt, Gwagwa, & Shezi, (2000), experience has shown that the more a community makes inputs into and participates in projects, the more sustainable the development. Participation could range from community decision making to hands on construction involvement. This extends the life span of both the projects and the benefits received by the community. He adds that

apart from the fact that projects should be integrated into national socio-economic development programmes that are fully supported by borrowers and local authorities, they should involve also beneficiaries in project development and execution so that they take ownership and this ensure sustainability. Khosa contest that the lack of effective community participation affects the sustainability of projects negatively.

8. Research Methodology

To achieve the objectives of this particular research project the primary source of data were responses to a questionnaire survey of participants who were mostly consultants operating in the public sector as well as government agencies, contractors, facilitators of development projects and funding agencies. However community members were also interviewed to add to the scope of the survey. These were drawn from residents in areas where housing development had taken place. The interview process was selected to allow for questions to be explained to the respondents to clarify anything they might not have understood.

Various measures were used such as a 5-point Likert-scale of importance, agreement and representivity, rankings and hierarchies of preference. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the data.

9. Findings

9.1 Interviews

The respondents reported that community participation to them was about communities uniting and getting involved in projects to fulfil their goals. These projects were perceived to be contributing to making a difference in the community and improving the quality of their lives.

They further reported that they needed to participate in housing construction to contribute to self-improvement and meeting their own needs. However, some of them felt that the Department of Housing was not delivering housing as had been promised to them and therefore they saw no need for communities to participate in the delivery process.

They recognised the need for their community to come together and engage in dialogue with other communities where there had been a clear consensus of what the community needed and demanded. They felt they should be engaged in training programmes to empower themselves to make informed decisions about their own development. A minority felt that the community should contribute financially and physically to building houses in order to work hand in hand with the government to address poverty issues.

Respondents indicated that the community often became involved only in the early stages of the projects, and seldom became involved in the construction stage. This finding confirms that of the questionnaire survey, which showed that, communities were only involved at the briefing and handing over stages of a project. Some of the respondents indicated that the community did not become involved at all.

The respondents felt that the community should be able to address their views, priorities and opinions and be part of the process in order to meet the needs of their communities. During the planning stage, various skill resources relevant to the project, such as bricklayers, plumbers and managers, should be identified from among the community. Placing people at the centre of planning and decision-making is a strategy to convince people that the project was designed for the community. A minority of the respondents felt that the community should only accept the government's offer whatever that was and not be involved in the decision-making.

Interviewees felt that community participation could assist in job creation. However, several felt that communities did not have the skills needed to participate in the construction process.

Of respondents, 70% indicated that community participation had an impact on the quality of the houses. They felt that the lack of contribution from the community with regard to critical activities such as site layout, design and materials and even the physical involvement could affect the quality negatively. They felt if they were involved the quality would improve. If this did not happen the communities were forced to accept the poor quality of houses being provided.

The majority felt that the use of community organisations was an essential way of ensuring more effective participation. Only 25% of respondents felt that the relationship between communities and government should be improved and be much closer than what it is at present.

Respondents emphasised that the community leaders are driving all projects and that projects would not start without them. Of the respondents, 40% indicated that the community leaders were not representative at all because they serve their own interest and the interest of their families. They felt that most times projects were not started or completed if the community leaders did not play an active role in the process.

9.2   Questionnaire survey

9.2.1   Community Dynamics

Despite the low level of representativity of community leaders found in this study they had been clearly identified in the literature as a necessary component to the success of community projects. The lack of representativity might be due to problems directly linked to the manner in which these leaders were elected suggested by the means of the responses of the stakeholders, namely 2.3 in the case of contractors and 3.0 in the case of government. According to one stakeholder "leaders are selected not elected."

Table 1:   Community Dynamics

Issues	Funders (Mean)[1]	Consultants (Mean)	Government (Mean)	Facilitators (Mean)	Contractors (Mean)
How representative are community leaders of their communities	3.4(1)	3.3(2)	3.3(2)	2.9(4)	2.9(4)
How transparent are the elections of these community leaders	2.4(4)	2.7(3)	3.0(1)	2.9(2)	2.3(5)
Diversity of communities	3.7(1)	3.7(1)	2.7(4)	3.5(3)	2.6(5)
How problematic is this diversity	3.1(4)	4.1(1)	3.3(3)	2.7(5)	3.7(2)

Note: rankings according to stakeholders for each issue are indicated in parentheses

---

[1]   On a representivity scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = not at all and 5 = extremely representative

The literature suggests however that it is common for practitioners to assume that everyone in a community is participating, and that development will serve the needs of everyone. The appearance of external solidarity though may mask internal differentiation. Understanding these internal differences is crucial. Different livelihood strategies imply different isolated local knowledge systems, and those who assume that communities are homogenous easily miss these. In some cases non-participation is explained through the views that participation of all or some of the beneficiaries might not be in the political interest of other actors in the project (Petty & Scoones, 1995). Comments by facilitators in the questionnaire survey identified political diversity as a major barrier to effective community representation.

Community leaders according to all stakeholders as per Table 1 were not rated as being strongly representative of their communities. Means ranged between 3.4 in the case of funders and 2.9 in the case of facilitators and contractors. This finding is of concern given that they should represent the interest of beneficiary communities who elected them as community leaders.

Evidently communities have different groupings with different needs. Bringing these diverse groups together can be problematic to the participation process. A specific need common to all residents within a settlement has the potential to impact the smooth implementation of the project. The means of responses of stakeholders range between 2.6 in the case of contractors to 3.7 in the case of funders and consultants as indicated in Table 1.

This diversity appears to be problematic to the stakeholders considering the means of their responses evidenced in Table 1. The means ranged from 2.7 in the case of facilitators to 4.1 in the case of consultants. The increase in the mean indicate that the consultants had the strongest opinion that this diversity was very problematic. From parties interviewed different groupings had the resources to motivate for a project to proceed even if it only serves the interests of a few.

Vigorous efforts are required to identify all the interest groups in a community who may for example have a stake in a project, to establish the representatives of community leaders and to set up procedures, which make it possible for all groups to become involved when decisions are taken.

9.2.2 Procurement

This section of the questionnaire was designed to deal with the merits of the procurement process as a delivery mechanism in South Africa to improve community participation.

Studies conducted in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) construction industries, have found strong evidence to suggest that choice of delivery mechanism/or procurement systems have led to problems which have contributed to their poor performance. In the findings of a study on infrastructure development in SADC, the revision of tendering and procurement procedures was found to be a key factor to improving infrastructure delivery and development (Haupt, 1996; Rwelamila, 1997).

Table 2 indicates that government and funders agreed strongest with a mean of 4.0 that professional advice on procurement system selection was essential to the communities. They supported this view with comments that government relied on consultants to advice communities. Consultants had the lowest mean (3.6) for the necessity of professional advice to communities. This is indicative of the general attitude which consultants had towards communities and thus be a cause of the problems communities had with understanding the process of project delivery.

Table 2:   Procurement issues

Issues	Funders (Mean)[2]	Contractors (Mean)	Government (Mean)	Facilitators (Mean)	Consultants (Mean)
Understanding the term procurement	3.4(3)	4.0(1)	3.3(4)	3.1(5)	4.0(1)
Communities understanding of procurement	2.2(3)	2.7(2)	1.3(5)	2.2(3)	2.8(1)
How essential is professional advice on selection of procurement systems	4.0(1)	3.6(5)	4.0(1)	3.7(3)	3.7(3)
How often is advice given	3.6(2)	2.3(5)	2.7(4)	2.9(3)	3.7(1)
Extent that advantages and disadvantages of different procurement systems are discussed with communities	2.7(4)	3.7(1)	2.7(4)	3.1(2)	3.0(3)
Extent of community involvement in selection of procurement system	2.7(4)	3.9(1)	2.0(5)	3.3(2)	3.0(3)

Note: rankings according to stakeholders for each issue are indicated in parentheses

---

[2] On a 5-point scale of agreement where 1 = never and 5 = always

Funders (3.6) and contractors (3.7) were most positive about the frequency of advice they received from consultants. Consultants agreed most strongly (3.7) that they discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the different procurement systems available with communities as well as communities being involved during the selection of procurement systems (3.9).

9.2.3   Community Participation

Table 3 evidences the involvement of communities at various stages of a project. Participation in the construction and implementation stages of a project is now very common, involving the beneficiaries in contributing resources. In these instances participation is equated with co-operation and incorporation into predetermined activities. However this is only one stage in the development process. Community participation needs to be considered in decision — making, implementation and maintenance, and evaluating of successes and failures (Lane, 1995).

Table 3:   Community involvement at different stages of projects

Stage	Contractors (Mean)	Government (Mean)	Funders (Mean)	Facilitators (Mean)	Consultants (Mean)
Project brief	4.3(5)	4.7(2)	4.7(2)	5.0(1)	4.7(2)
Tender documentation	2.3(4)	2.9(3)	1.7(5)	4.1(1)	3.0(2)
Contract documentation	2.3(4)	2.7(3)	1.3(5)	3.9(1)	3.2(2)
Contract	3.7(4)	4.0(3)	2.0(5)	4.3(1)	4.2(2)
Handing over	4.3(3)	4.0(4)	4.0(5)	4.6(2)	4.7(1)

Note: rankings according to stakeholders for each issue are indicated in parentheses

There is a realisation that new emphasis and added responsibilities are being placed on professional consultants to involve local communities in the development process. The literature further suggests that during the briefing stage, most projects are rushed in order to get design approval as soon as possible. Consultants do not bear in mind that the briefing stage was the most important and yet least expensive stage (Taylor & Norval, 1994; Sawczuk, 1996).

Table 4:   Importance of criteria on success of projects

Criteria	Contractors (Mean)	Government (Mean)	Funders (Mean)	Facilitators (Mean)	Consultants (Mean)
Community participation	4.7(4)[1]	5.0(1)[1]	5.0(1)[1]	4.9(3)[1]	4.7(5)[2]
Completion on time	4.7(1)[1]	3.3(5)[6]	3.4(4)[4]	3.7(3)[6]	4.3(2)[4]
Completion to budget	4.7(1)[1]	4.7(1)[2]	2.0(5)[6]	4.2(4)[5]	4.3(3)[4]
Completion to quality	4.7(1)[1]	4.7(1)[2]	3.0(5)[5]	4.5(3)[3]	3.8(4)[6]
Capacity building	4.0(5)[6]	4.7(1)[2]	4.4(4)[2]	4.5(3)[3]	4.7(1)[2]
Usefulness to end user	4.7(3)[1]	4.7(3)[2]	4.4(5)[2]	4.9(1)[1]	4.8(2)[1]

Note: rankings of criteria according to stakeholders for each issue are indicated in paren-
theses. Ranking across criteria for each stakeholder is indicated with [ ]

Table 4 shows the views of respondents on criteria for a successful project. The results highlight that community participation was ranked highest by all stakeholders except for consultants who ranked it as second to the usefulness to the end-user of the completed facility.

Table 4 also suggests that contractors agreed most that completion on time, to budget and to quality standards were important. These are typical for contractors considering client pressure to have their projects completed on time, within the budget and to desired quality standards. Similarly the government rankings are typical considering their role in policy application. Without community participation, completion within time becomes secondary. Community participation and end user usefulness are the most important criteria for facilitators considering their role in the delivery process. The consultants surprisingly ranked the criteria of time cost and quality the lowest. This is not typical of consultants, as they would be pressurising the contractors to meet these criteria first. However since the questionnaire related to community development projects this response would be beneficial to effective community participation.

The literature supports that that development projects has to substantively involve local people in the selection, design, planning and implementation of programmes and projects that will affect them. In this way local perception, attitudes, values and knowledge are assuredly taken into account as fully and as early as possible. Continuous and comprehensive feedback to beneficiary communities was an integral part of all development activities (Mikkelson, 1995).

From the literature reviewed, questionnaire responses and interview responses the necessity of community participation within the development framework is apparent. This importance is further highlighted in Table 5.

Table 5:   Importance of Community Participation

Issue	Funders (Mean)	Consultants (Mean)	Government (Mean)	Facilitators (Mean)	Contractors (Mean)
How necessary is CP in development projects	4.6(5)	4.7(1)	4.7(1)	4.7(1)	4.7(1)
How much has CP increased cost of projects	3.2(1)	2.7(2)	1.3(5)	2.0(4)	2.6(3)
Do the benefits outweigh the cost of CP	3.2(3)	3.8(1)	2.7(4)	2.5(5)	3.3(2)

Note: rankings according to stakeholders for each issue are indicated in parentheses

All stakeholders regard community participation as important in development projects. The ranking for the cost increases of community participation was average and does not indicate that it was a concern to stakeholders. Most respondents felt that the benefits of community participation far outweighed the costs.

10.   Discussion of the findings

It was clear that even though there was a good understanding about community participation by all professionals as well as governmental organisations, problems existed relative to its application. However it seems that as long as the process is driven by parameters for success that are dictated to by professional stakeholders and as long as representatives of communities and even communities themselves are not fully included in the entire procurement process of development projects, there can be little satisfaction from the end users of the project.

According to Gilbert *et al.* (1996), an essential element of governance — when used to describe the ways that local authorities relate to their communities — was inclusiveness, which meant the active participation of affected sectors of the community in decision-making processes. Inclusiveness was especially important for the achievement of environmental sustainability. Generally speaking, governments that were authoritarian, exclusive, and short sighted were unlikely to be effective in helping to move their communities towards environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

An additional reason given by Eyben & Ladbury (1995) why beneficiaries might have little influence over project decisions was that professionals assumed the role of identifying the needs of beneficiaries and finding the solutions. The greater the assumed knowledge gap between professionals and beneficiaries, the more likely it was that this would happen. Individuals were contented to rely on professional judgements in any country, as long as the service was relatively equitably distributed in ways, which made sense to them.

Professional consultants and contractors who operate within the development framework responded that they appreciated the importance of participation but that their opinion on the parameters for success of projects included community participation but that it was not necessary the only important one. Also they expected the communities to follow the structures they put in place.

Community based organisations and facilitators on the other hand made clear that their loyalties lay with communities in terms of projects improving the conditions which poor communities found themselves in. They indicated that the priority should be the satisfaction of the end user and their involvement in the process of achieving improved living conditions

The interviews confirmed that community members wanted to be involved but their understanding of participation was limited to involvement during the construction stage only. They indicated a desire to be part of the construction process where they could assist in the building of their own homes. This was the extent of their perception of participation. The fact that in the questionnaires professional consultants testified that communities could retard the progress of projects if they were involved supported the view that communities were not assisted in this process by the professional consultants. The community needed support from all stakeholders in the development process to aid them in understanding why their involvement was crucial to the success of projects. The results showed clear evidence that non-participation of communities within the projects could result in project failure.

11.   Conclusion

It would seem that the success of a participatory community technique depended on making clear the stakeholder involvement and responsibilities at the outset of projects. Cooperative stakeholders joining together in consultative processes created an environment of continuous review of problem identification, objectives, activities and anticipated cost and benefits.

We cannot assume that people would always participate, even when they have the choice. In some situation communities were limited to the extent that they wanted to be involved or have the capacity to be involved. Many people struggled on a daily basis to meet their most basic needs. This being water, food and electricity. Expecting people under these circumstances to sit on committees and attend meetings to discuss improvements to their situations would be insensitive. People in affluent areas who received these services certainly did not spend their time sitting on committees and attending meetings. These basic services were seen to be their right. How do we therefore explain this scenario to the poorer communities where even obtaining water was a privilege? It is important that stakeholders understood these differences when they deal with community developments and appreciate the frustrations of poorer communities at waiting for services, which should be their right.

Participation by the people in the institutions and systems, which govern their lives, was a basic human right and also essential for realignment of political power in favour of disadvantaged groups and for social and economic development.

Participation was an essential part of human growth, which could lead to the development of self-confidence, pride, initiative, creativity, responsibility and cooperation. Without such a development within the people themselves all efforts to alleviate their poverty would be immensely more difficult, if not impossible. This process, whereby people learn to take charge of their own lives and solve their own problems, was the essence of development.

References

Abrahams, G. & Goldblatt, M. 1997. *Report on Poverty and Inequality: access to urban infrastructure by the poor progress in the public provision of infrastructural assets*. [online]. Available from: <www.gov.za/reports/1998/poverty/infrastructure.pdf>

Awotana, A., Japha, D, Huchzermeyer, M. & Uduku, O. 1995. *Community based strategies for local development: Lessons for South Africa*, CARDO, and UCT.

Carew-Reid J., Prescott-Allen R., Bass S.M.J. & Dalal-Clayton D.B. 1994. *Strategies for National Sustainable Development: A Handbook for their Planning and Implementation*. London: International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), London and World Conservation Union (IUCN), Gland, in association with Earthscan Publications.

Collins, D. & Torres, L. 2000. Infrastructure delivery: A Nedlac Project. *Indicator South Africa*, 17(2), pp. 1-84, June.

Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA). 1998. *Infrastructure: A Foundation for Development*. Midrand: DBSA.

Everatt, D., Gwagwa, N. & Shezi, S. 2000. Empowerment through public works into the next millennium. In: Khosa M. (ed.) *Empowerment through service delivery*. Pretoria: HSRC.

Eyben, R. & Ladbury, S. 1995. Popular participation in aid assisted projects: why more in theory than practice. In: Nelson, N. & Wright, S. (eds.). *Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Green, S.D. 1996. A metaphorical analysis of client organisation and the briefing process. *Journal of Construction Management and Economics*, 14(2), pp. 155-164.

Khosa, M. 2000. Social Impact Assessment of Development Projects. In: Khosa, M. (ed.), *Infrastructure Mandate for change 1994-1999*. South Africa, Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Lane, J. 1995. Non-governmental organisations and participatory development: the concept in theory versus the concept in practice. In: Nelson, N. & Wright, S. (eds.). *Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Pretty, J. N. & Scoones, I. 1995. Institutionalising adaptive planning and local level concerns: Looking to the future. In: Nelson, N. & Wright, S. (eds.). *Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Rwelamila, P.D. 1997. Appropriate or default procurement systems? A dilemma for balancing building project parameters. In: proceedings of the PPC Cement, South African Institute of Building National Student Congress *Construction Beyond 2000*, Peninsula Technikon, Bellville, April, pp.19-27.

Rwelamila, P.D. & Hall, K.A. 1995. Total systems intervention: an integrated approach to time, cost and quality management. *Construction management and Economics*, 13(3), pp. 235-241.

Sawczuk, B. 1996. *Risk Avoidance for the Building Team*. London: E & F.N. Spon.

Schübeler, P. 1996. Participation and partnership in Urban Infrastructure Management. In: *Participation and partnership in Urban Infrastructure Management*, 1(1), pp. 1-100, June. Washington: World Bank.

Taylor, R.G. & Norval, G.H.M. 1994. Developing Appropriate Procurement Systems for Developing Countries, Proceedings of CIB W92 Symposium, *CIB Publication No 175*.

Yeung, Y. M. & McGee, T. G., (eds.).1986. *Community Participation in Delivering Urban Services in Asia*. Canada: The International Development Research Centre.