



# RETHINKING THE PURPOSE AND MODALITIES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICAN CITIES

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Service delivery protests are now a common feature across the urban landscape of South Africa. In the wake of the Marikana calamity, protest and often violent ruptures are seemingly becoming the preferred way of expressing dissent, sending shock waves through the political establishment and causing a measure of introspection. These trends are symptomatic of a much deeper crisis of citizenship and lack of political imagination.



PHOTO: EDGAR PIETERSE

DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE in South Africa seems stalled. Radical civil society interest groups are keen to use the current social ferment to expose the perceived neoliberal and rapacious tendencies of the ruling party. They are hoping for much greater swells of disconnect that will signal the prospect of the emergence of “true” socialist opposition. Developmental activists, social movements and NGOs are keen to interpret the current conjuncture as an opportunity for genuine grassroots participation and control over development processes,

instead of the perceived cronyism that mark the performance of municipalities in most places. Dyed-in-the-wool, democratic ANC loyalists are hopeful that the times represent a wake-up call for the ANC to stop wasting precious political capital with the electorate and introduce greater accountability and efficacy in how the party “leads” development (national democratic revolution) at all levels of society. At the core of this project is a deep belief in the ANC’s inherent capacity for democratic renewal and moral leadership because

of its historically “proven” record for championing the interests of the poor.

These political communities – among others of course – are simply not able to establish a public agenda or vision for how to extricate our society from the deep mess it is in. This is due to the absence of a clear political vision of how to animate and sustain deep citizenship in a context of extreme structural problems such as chronic unemployment and inequality, etched in distorted spatial patterns of residence, mobility and economic activity.

South Africa is richly endowed with a variety of institutions, capabilities and people that can be used to produce vibrant and liveable neighbourhoods across the country. The purpose of this paper is to substantiate this contention. First, a sketch is given of the central problems that need to be confronted and addressed in order to bring a new and fresh approach to life. One problem is the under-performance of the local participatory democratic systems. A second problem is the crisis of work or, rather, large-scale structural unemployment. This issue is dealt with as part of the discussion on the elements of an alternative approach to integrated community development systems that can generate rich social ecologies of work, citizenship and cultural expression. Thus, the second part of the paper explores structural unemployment, the imperatives of place-making and social confidence, and the practical and institutional implications of operationalising it.

### IS PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY MISFIRING?

The South African local government system is designed to ensure participatory planning, responsive service delivery, active redistribution and a sensible balance between the short and long-term. Development plans and processes must be subjected to stringent environmental and heritage considerations, which also require active citizen input and oversight (Pieterse and van Donk 2008: 2013). A layer of civil society organisations (CSOs) –

membership-based and NGOs – exist to ensure that these legislative and policy imperatives are adhered to. Yet, it is a public secret that effective citizen engagement and empowerment is the exception to the rule, and that most municipalities fail to facilitate participatory governance adequately.

### WARD COMMITTEES

One of the main reasons for this failure is that the ward committees have generally been ineffective and often impede community empowerment. Academic reviews suggest many reasons for this, but for current purposes a few factors can be highlighted (Ballard 2008: 168–188; Bénit-Gbaffou 2010: 286–300). The territorial catchment of ward committees makes them unwieldy. Ward committees are too big for ordinary citizens to know their ward councillor well enough to feel any sense of connection. Exacerbating the situation is the strong allegiance of ward councillors to their parties rather than to their constituents. This tendency is understandable given the fierce power games within most political parties. As senior party members, ward councillors who do not play their role in the factional games of their sponsor are unlikely to advance within the party and will see any prospect of more senior political deployment evaporate.

Moreover, this tendency is reinforced by the limited influence of the ward councillor in the routine affairs of municipalities (Smith and de Visser 2009). Executive mayors and mayoral committee members dominate most urban governments. Given the size of most municipal councils, and the day-to-day pressures that obsess mayoral committee members, ward councillors have very little hope of gaining any insight into the “big” strategic decisions of the municipality. However, when communities and citizens are unhappy with municipal performance the ward councillors are the first in the line of fire, sometimes literally. So, politically ambitious ward councillors quickly figure out that the most important

challenge is to survive tenure relatively intact within the party in order to improve their chances to move across to the proportional representatives list or possibly even ascend to the mayoral committee.

Ward committees also have very little power because of the limited resources at their disposal. While many municipalities have been experimenting with ward budgets for locally determined priorities, the amounts have generally been too small to warrant institutional innovations such as participatory budgeting. Also, when resources are at play, it simply serves to reinforce the dysfunctional dynamics that make ward councillors party-facing as opposed to community-facing. In other words, irrespective of political persuasion, ward councillors have to work very hard to earn and keep their place in the party machinery (Oldfield 2008). This means working a number of angles with people and institutions that matter in terms of party dynamics. In practice, ward councillors are far more likely to choose ward committee members from community organisations who they feel can advance their cause in the party. This is inevitable in a predominantly list-based electoral system. Thus ward committees in their current form are unlikely to play a meaningful role in advancing substantive citizenship and community empowerment.

### ROUTINE PARTICIPATION

The Constitution and various pieces of legislation are clear: in principle and pragmatically, municipalities are expected to enrol the beneficiaries of services in almost every act of service delivery. The assumption is that the quality of the service is likely to be higher and more durable when the target constituency is involved in defining the approach to service delivery and possibly in the delivery systems and monitoring. However, most municipalities are clearly lousy at ensuring effective participation.

The most obvious manifestation of participation is the widespread practice of convening various kinds of

gatherings to solicit the views of community members and organisations about the needs or shortcomings in their area. Such gatherings frequently take on a ritualistic character, where leading politicians and ward councillors patiently listen to people queuing in single file behind a microphone to tell their story. After a good few hours the complaints and anger morph together, and a general sense of dissatisfaction characterises the mood. The most senior politician present then stoically has the last word and uses the remaining airtime to reassure residents that they have heard their complaints, they are determined to address them and they will do better next time. Undoubtedly at those moments these politicians are sincere and steeled in their resolve but, of course, in the glare of daylight the next day, it is pretty much business as usual... The bureaucracy has an endless capacity for absorbing any amount of political decisiveness and grinding it into frustrated ambition. Moreover, politicians are quickly distracted by the pressures of their diary, endless meetings and other commitments. Political office is replete with symbolic gestures, which chew up time and energy.

Municipalities often do a little better at the service interface. Some services, such as primary health care, parks and recreational facilities, and waste management can involve interface institutions comprised of community representatives who play an active role in the delivery of the services. This practice is more widespread than commonly acknowledged and could be used as a resource while figuring out collectively how best to institutionalise and deepen integrated community development.

### UN-STRATEGIC CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

The limitations of South Africa's local democracy are usually placed at the door of political parties and municipalities, but this is only part of the story. As much of a problem is the lack of creativity and of a relational understanding of urban politics.

It is common knowledge that CSOs are in crisis, accused of being denuded, incapable of holding rapacious politicians to account and out of touch with the sensibilities of ordinary people. Although that kind of analysis is overstated, civil society is not performing its democratic mandate very well. Many issues are at play. One, many CSOs have a poor understanding of how the state *actually* works. As a result they cannot be effective in holding state bodies to account, or influencing their priorities, or working with them to achieve development objectives. It then becomes easy to adopt a simplistic stereotypical view of the state as interminably corrupt, and/or neoliberal, and/or devoid of capacity. In this caricature mode, CSOs can remain on their moral high horse and lament ad nauseam the failures and betrayal of the state and ruling party without taking co-responsibility for change, given that our constitutional democracy makes us all equally responsible for our country's development prospects.

In a pluralistic democracy, which has a variety of tools to influence policy, hold government accountable, and support the delivery process, CSOs need to up their game radically. It is incumbent on all CSOs to be informed and expert, where possible, on the issues that concern them. They have to be able to traverse the theoretical, policy, institutional, and fiscal dimensions of the problems. They have to work with a rigorous theory of change that informs the roles they and other actors in the institutional networks need to play to effect change. Such a perspective must be rooted in sound research and a theoretically informed understanding that can then give birth to a multi-dimensional strategic politics. Such a politics simultaneously addresses: the potential oversight role of parliamentary processes (at all spheres of government); the direction-setting function of macro policies, such as white papers and other supporting policy pillars; the institutional levers that live in the strategic plans, budgets, asset registers and human resource policies of sectoral departments and specialist

agencies that give effect to policies; the capacity of citizens and civil groups that have a stake in the issue; and the public domain where the issue gets framed in the public mind.

Obviously, individual organisations cannot have such widely distributed capacities. Thus, *network politics* are needed that work through various types of alliances and interdependencies. In a media-saturated era, CSOs must work in a distributed and symbolic manner. This kind of positioning and sensibility does not blend very well with dogmatism or moral certitudes but requires a principled politics that is comfortable with uncertainty, ambiguity, incomplete solutions, and an ethic of generosity and cooperation. This is not an argument for tame civic practices. On the contrary, when injustice and inequality runs as deeply as in South Africa, (non-violent) militancy is warranted, coupled to a politics of proposition and co-production. For better or worse, in our emergent democracy, civil society and the state are inextricably linked and inter-dependent.

### AN ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTION OF CITIZENSHIP EMPOWERMENT

As stated earlier, South Africa is richly endowed with resources, talent and institutional opportunities to effect citizen empowerment through integrated community development. However, a coherent vision is lacking about what community development involves and how to create an effective institutional ecology to substantiate the vision.

How does citizen and community empowerment get established and expanded? Some useful clues are provided in the prescient analysis from the Second Economy project (Philip 2010: 105–132) a few years ago, combined with the comprehensive treatment in the National Development Plan. Both of these analyses underscore that the biggest obstacle to citizen empowerment is structural unemployment and the marginalised spaces of the urban poor, especially youth,

which trap them in poverty. A first step in elaborating a theory of change to achieve citizen empowerment in the realm of everyday life must start with an account of why un- and under-employment remain at crisis levels.

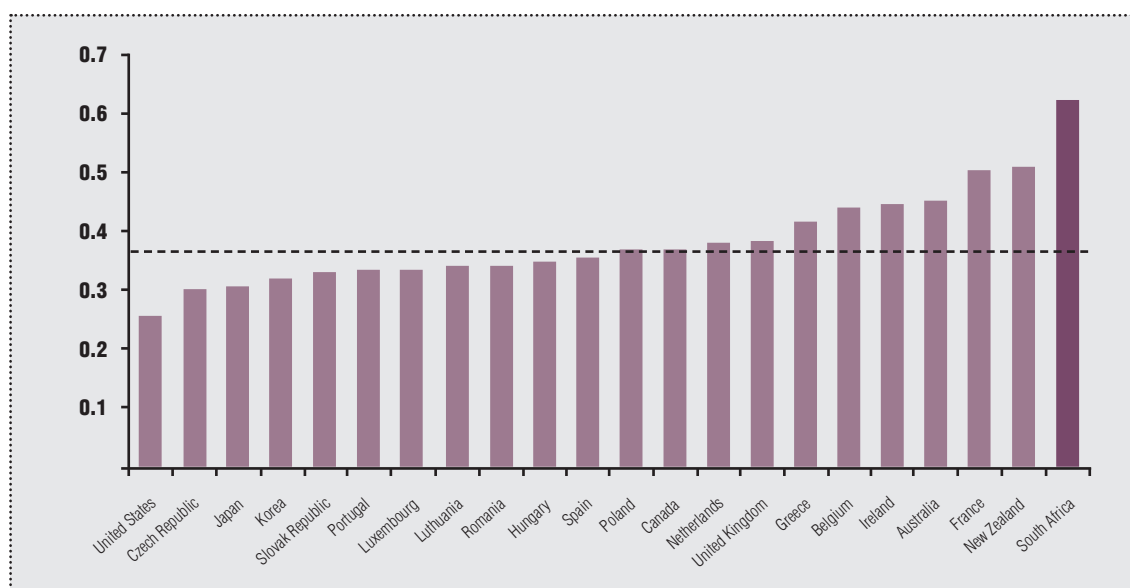
### STRUCTURAL UNEMPLOYMENT

The drivers of high unemployment are manifold, but the following stylised account provides the essence of the problem. First, between 1970 and 2000 the economy grew too slowly to keep pace with labour force growth. Second, from the 1970s deindustrialisation took root (coupled with increasing capital-intensive production), beginning the long-term process of a skill-intensive industrial structure in a predominantly services economy. For example, between 1970 and 1995, two labour-intensive sectors of the economy (mining and agriculture) shed 46% of their work force, or a net job loss of 1.4 million workers. Third, the apartheid-era education system was designed to distort the education attainments of black South Africans and the long-term

effects of this system remain evident in contemporary education patterns and outcomes, which are profoundly mismatched with the needs of the predominantly post-industrial labour market.

Fourth, in more recent years the relatively high starting salary<sup>1</sup> of formal employees is undoubtedly discouraging firms to expand its labour force. Figure 1 compares the starting salary level in South Africa to that of OECD countries (which have, importantly, much higher rates of GDP per capita). The relatively high starting salaries are related to the collective bargaining system, which tends to be driven by the cost structure and financial depth of large, highly unionised companies but makes taking on new workers very expensive for micro, small and medium sized enterprises.<sup>2</sup> In most functional territories (space economies), SMMEs provide the rump of employment opportunities, and so in South Africa, one could argue ‘the labour market is almost designed to limit new entrants’ (NPC 2011a: 16).

**Figure 1: Ratio of minimum wage to average wage**



Source: NPC (2011a: 3)



Fifth, their spatial distribution makes it very expensive for the black South African population to look for work. This applies in urban areas, where the black working class are settled in townships and informal settlements typically found at considerable distance from work opportunities. The situation is more acute in rural areas where the economic opportunities are few and far between to start with, let alone the arduous and expensive task of job seeking. Finally, the extreme shortcomings of the educational system undermine the employment readiness of many school leavers. One startling statistic underscores the profound failures of the education system: 'While there has been some improvements as measured by the pass rate of those who sat the 2010 matriculation exam which was 67.8 percent, this hides the fact that only 15 percent achieved an average mark of 40 percent or more' (NPC 2011b: 12). Guess what the class and colour composition of that 15 percent might be.... Given these factors, labour absorption will clearly remain very limited indeed.

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In addition to the factors that affect labour absorption, the economy's performance is at best mediocre and vulnerable to stagnation and decline due to structural problems. Most urgent among these are: the low savings and investment rate in the economy; the poor performing and expensive logistics system in the country, which undermines competitiveness and productivity; the ageing and sometimes unreliable basic infrastructures that ensure power, water and waste treatment flows;<sup>3</sup> the high levels of economic concentration and tendencies towards uncompetitive behaviour; and insufficient investment in research and development coupled to shallow innovation systems.

The spatial underpinnings at the structural core of the unemployment crisis in South Africa are noted in the NPC, which found a '[w]eak alignment between human settlements, economic opportunities, social services and transport, which raises stress and costs, and reduces productivity' (NCP 2011b: 12). Of course, a spatial perspective cannot address all of the structural barriers to more rapid and inclusive economic growth. However, if the national objective as articulated by the NPC is to simultaneously raise growth, while fostering greater resource efficiency and human development, understanding the importance of spatial dimensions of economic, social and environmental policy is vital.

### PLACE-MAKING, WORK AND SOCIAL CONFIDENCE

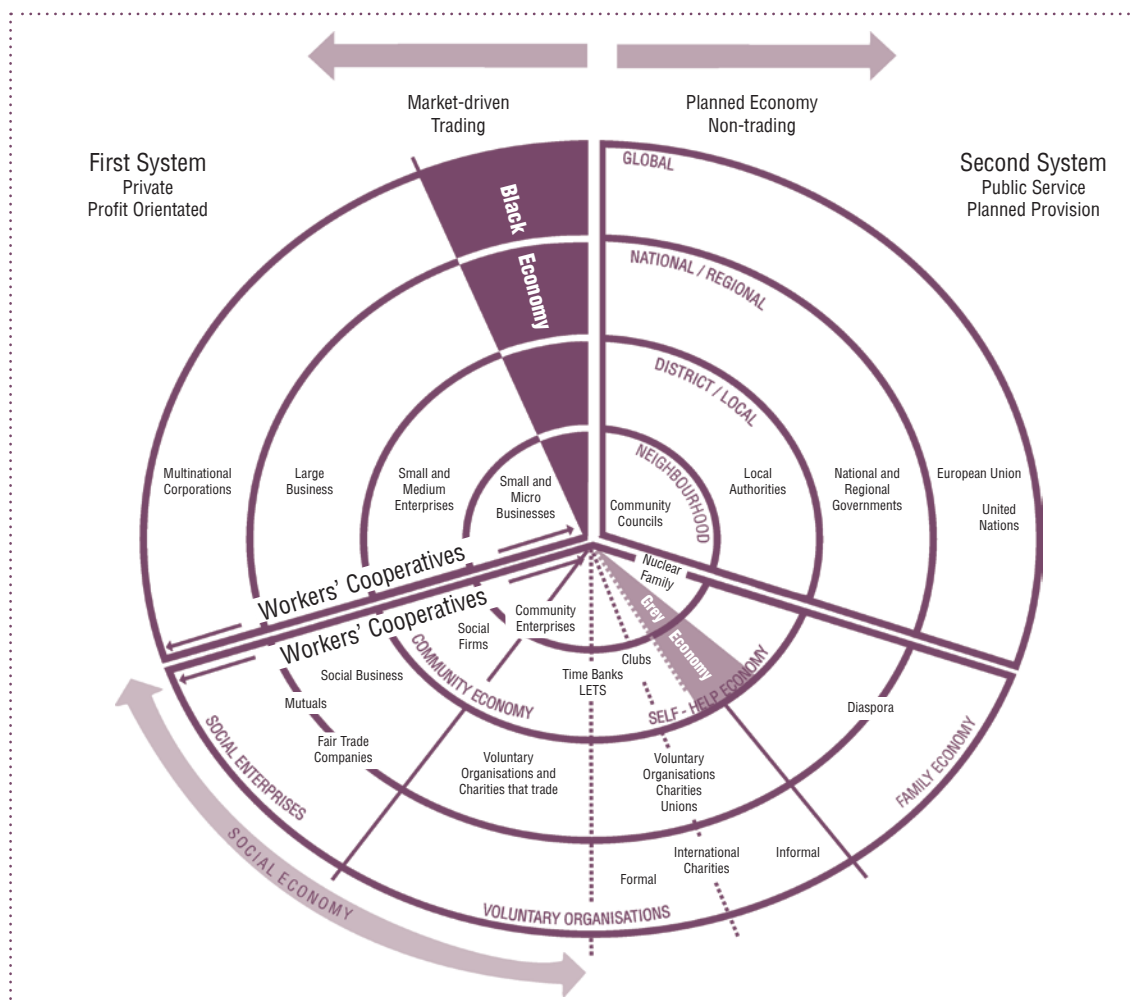
It is clear from the analysis of structural unemployment and economic exclusion that answers to the work crisis are to be found beyond the formal economy. A strange anomaly that besets the South African economy is that, despite the high rate of unemployment, the informal economy is relatively small. Examining the reasons is beyond the scope of this paper, but the informal economy is clearly not an obvious catchment for the unemployed. The emergence of literature on the social economy provides some guidance. Ash Amin builds on the work of John Pearce who regards the social economy as a fundamental element in the third sector, as opposed to the first (profit-oriented) and second (non-trading provision of public services) sectors. The third sector is 'engaged in both trading and non-trading activities, but characterized by community-based or social ownership and a clear commitment to principles of self-help, mutual obligation and social relevance' (Amin 2010: 6).

Pearce has contributed to a fine-grained understanding of the social economy in relation to market-driven and public economic activities, stressing that these three systems are distinct but also inter-

connected and hybrid at the edges. Figure 2 provides a schematic of the numerous economic moments of contemporary life, even though the nomenclature applies mainly to developed economy contexts. In contrast to the fundamental intent of the private sector (concerned with efficiency to achieve maximum profits) and the public sector (concerned with equality), '[i]n terms of intent, social economists are working towards the reinsertion of social goals, reciprocity and solidarity into economic thinking and decision making' (BALTA nd).

According to Pearce, the social economy encompasses social enterprises of various sorts in the community economy space, as well as voluntary associations in the self-help arena that deal with public interest concerns but marked by entrepreneurial energy and efficiency. A key difference in culture and practice between social enterprises and traditional community-based organisations is that the former is happy to use traditional business operating principles to ensure focus and efficiency for public purposes. This may even extend to generating a nominal profit, which is always

**Figure 2: Social economy in relation to the private and public sectors**



Source: Pearce J (2010: 26)

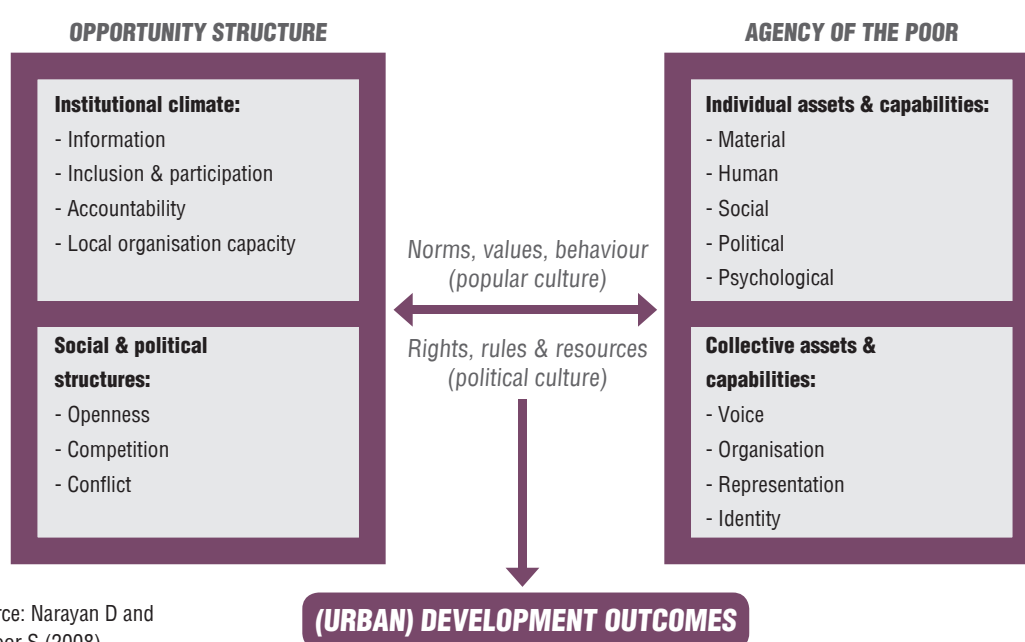
reused for the core work of the organisation. Adopting a social economy lens and understanding the role of social entrepreneurial activity can potentially break the moribund and sluggish character of social mobilisation in poor areas.

However, the idea of the social economy must be understood in relation to the broader development literature on livelihoods and social capital; a literature that emerged as a reaction to the narrow income-based definitions of poverty and deprivation. Thus, in a critique of income-based poverty measures, Carole Rakodi argued for poverty policies to be ‘informed by an understanding of the ways in which households cope, adapt and manage in deteriorating economic situations, in circumstances of personal adversity and in response to opportunities to improve their well-being so that it supports rather than damages the efforts of the poor to help themselves’ (Rakodi 2004: 100). Against this imperative for a more rounded understanding of the living conditions and coping mechanisms of the urban

poor, the “livelihoods” literature emerged, adapted from rural development contexts and reworked to better define and understand practices of the urban poor (Moser 2008).

At the core of the livelihoods and asset-based models of understanding poverty is the idea that all poor households have a portfolio of assets – physical, financial, human, social and natural capital. They continuously manage these assets to simultaneously mitigate risks (to reduce vulnerability) and improve or enlarge their assets. Furthermore, these frameworks locate the relative capacity of poor households to access and deploy their asset endowments within a larger set of structural and institutional factors, e.g. exposure to unforeseen shocks and disasters, the nature and functioning of various levels of government, the impacts of laws, policies, cultural norms and institutions. The argument thus follows that, until understood in all of these dimensions, poverty fails to engage with the structural and subjective dimensions of the problem (Beall 2004; Pieterse 2008).

**Figure 3: Economic empowerment of the poor**



Source: Narayan D and Kapoor S (2008)



Narayan and Kapoor (2008) argue for an integrated conceptual model that connects the assets of poor households with more collective endowments of the communities within which they live (Figure 3). They also highlight that the opportunity structure for effective participation of (poor) households and communities in various policy processes affects the viability of pro-poor interventions. In the first instance, the opportunity structure is contingent on various institutional factors such as: the availability of information, the possibility and opportunity for effective participation, effective accountability systems, and the capacity of local organisations to utilise these systems. In the second instance, they suggest that the nature and features of political and social organisations matter a great deal in shaping the opportunity structure available to the poor. Specifically, how do these structures deal with conflict, competition and the need for openness? In understanding the relative efficacy and impact of actions by the poor, it is vital to understand how both popular and political cultures shape interactions and outcomes. This rich conceptual framework is important to keep in mind when examining the elements of an integrated community development model.

## HOW COULD INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORK IN PRACTICE?

In poor settlements (informal settlements, townships and backyard areas), where most households do not have a sufficient and regular source of income, it is critical that government service delivery assists these communities to enhance their access to livelihood opportunities in the broader sense discussed above (see Figure 3). Counter-intuitively, municipalities (in conjunction with other spheres) could potentially make a bigger impact by focusing first on the *public realm* between households and secondarily on the household itself. Put plainly, instead of ensuring all households

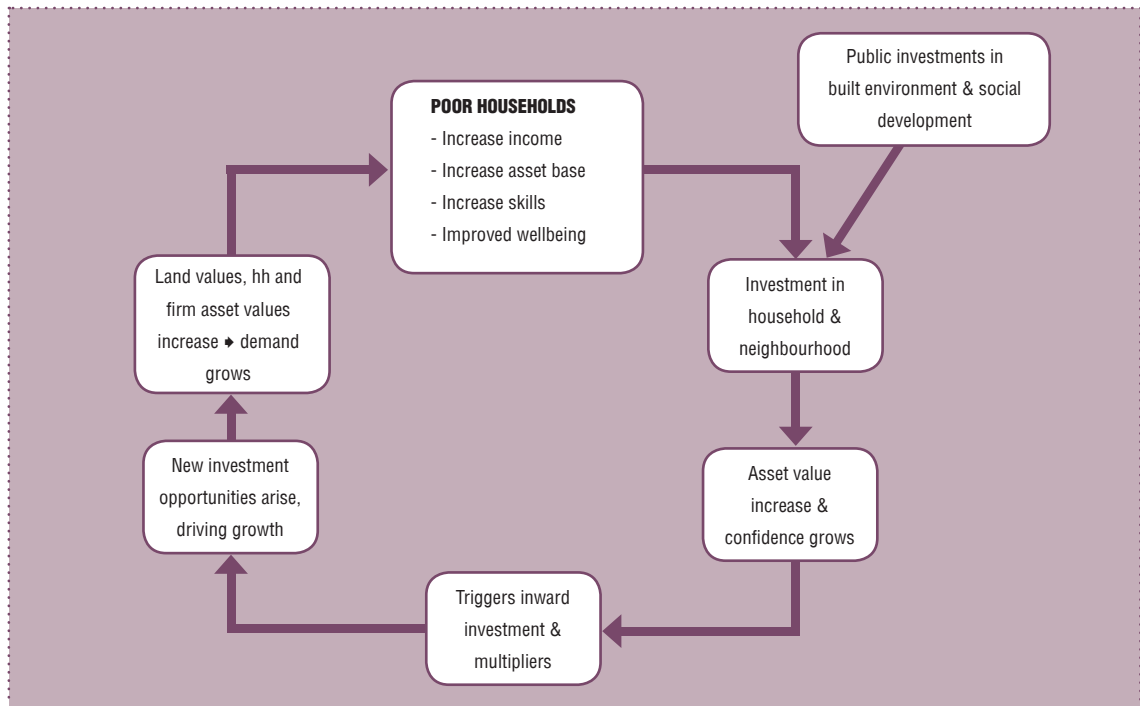
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have access to basic services, with an eye on either providing an RDP house or full-scale upgrading, it may be more important first to enhance the spaces that can make everyday life easier and cheaper, especially collective action such as trading, production and exchange.

As household incomes rise, and various forms of capital circulate more intensely at the neighbourhood level, raising household living standards becomes increasingly important. While basic services should still be provided, the overall package of investments into a neighbourhood, district or ward should also be considered, to ensure that household income and assets are raised as quickly as possible (see Figure 4). At the moment, the bulk of municipal investments go into household infrastructure; the public and economic realm is an afterthought and certainly not coherently connected to basic service investments within an overall integrated community development framework. Thus, instead of public housing representing an asset transfer, the investment could actually reduce the overall livelihoods of households by taking them away from vital social networks and imposing a higher maintenance cost than the household can afford, especially if there is no stable income.

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**Figure 4: Virtuous cycle of neighbourhood improvement**



Source: Author

This argument is made more specific by focusing on the imperative of generating work opportunities in poor neighbourhoods. Building on the NPC social development thinking, community public works clearly need to be urgently upscaled. However, from a planning point of view, connections must be drawn between the provision of basic services, community development,

local economic development and environmental sustainability. Community work programmes can be categorised into four themes: care economy, green infrastructure, cultural and arts services, and the construction and maintenance of public infrastructure such as schools, clinics, roads, multi-purpose centres, libraries, etc. (See Table 1).

**Table 1: Categories of community works with illustrative examples**

<p><b>Care economy</b></p>	<p>Considering the disease profile in poor communities, there is a great need for sustained home-based care, which can also provide an entry point for unskilled people to get involved with health and well-being occupations. Furthermore, community-based programmes for mental ill-health and trauma requires urgent attention, given the scope and scale of social violence and related pathologies in these communities, not unrelated to the traumatic history of social relations in South Africa.</p>
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<p><b>Green and public infrastructures</b></p>	<p>One of the characteristics of most South African townships and established informal areas is the existence of significant public infrastructures such as parks, generous pavements, sport fields, community halls, libraries, and public spaces around transport nodes and inter sections, among others. However, these infrastructures are by and large in a terrible state. Much can be done with relatively little money to clean, restore and embellish these spaces through intelligently designed community works programmes. The critical issue though is productive use and <i>maintenance</i>. Municipalities can arguably achieve a rapid improvement in the liveability and well-being of poor settlements if these dormant and eroded assets are restored and appropriately maintained. Such assets could become the source of exuberant community pride and create a favourable climate for increased household, private and public investments, especially if combined with the next category of community works.</p>
<p><b>Cultural, arts and sport services</b></p>	<p>One of the reasons why public buildings and spaces are in such a neglected state is that the South African government remains trapped in a physicalist mindset. In other words, a lot of effort goes into leveraging public money to build stuff without much thought for how the stuff will be maintained and, more pressingly, used. Literacy and numeracy outcomes will dramatically improve if young children, especially in poor communities, can be exposed and equipped with opportunities to master various artistic and cultural skills, which stimulate cognitive faculties and enhance lateral thinking and imagination. In a similar vein, sporting confidence and ability can greatly enhance self-esteem and personal mastery that can spill over into other areas of well-being. Furthermore, cultural identities and democratic pluralism can be substantiated when children and youth have opportunities and skills to define themselves, their communities and concerns in the public domain. These skills and opportunities, along with sport, will most certainly serve as a counter-balance to the ubiquitous pressures to consume drugs, alcohol and other nihilistic cultural artefacts. This rich category of community works can be relatively easily sustained if every community investment is tied to a ring-fenced budget for social process facilitation and content programming to activate community facilities and spaces.</p>
<p><b>Public works</b></p>	<p>This category of community works includes constructing and maintaining public infrastructure such as schools, clinics, roads, multi-purpose centres, libraries, etc. If the need for around-the-clock security and surveillance of such infrastructures is added, many community works hours can be provided for most poor communities. Importantly, this thrust of activity can also provide an opportunity to demolish the walls and barbed wire that surround public infrastructure resources. An important indicator of community well-being is when public resources are kept safe through public usage and passive surveillance.</p>

It takes a particular skill to train and supervise gangs of community works teams, and such teams cannot get too large before they become dysfunctional, as evidenced by lessons emerging from the Community Works Programme and the long-established Extended Public Works Programme

For these programmes to work on an on-going and effective basis, an intermediary layer of community works managers is required. It takes a particular skill to train and supervise gangs of community works teams, and such teams cannot get too large before they become dysfunctional, as evidenced by lessons emerging from the Community Works Programme and the long-established Extended Public Works Programme. Therefore, a cross-cutting category of community works is *community works managers*, who should also play a vital role in connecting the specific interventions with larger community development processes.

### INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

The final point to make is that these discrete community works interventions need to reinforce and strengthen the panoply of community–government partnership and interface bodies, e.g. community-policing forums, health-care forums, parent-teacher associations etc. However, for these formations to function optimally, intersect and reinforce community work streams, the government needs to establish a Citizenship Academy in every municipality. Such an academy can be outsourced to coalitions of NGOs and educational institutions but

needs to equip each community activist and community works manager with a range of hard skills in community organisation, management and planning.<sup>4</sup>

In turn, the planning skills must be used to build expertise to operationalise and sustain neighbourhood planning and management premised on a particular form of spatial literacy. *Spatial literacy* refers to the sound understanding of how a series of movement, flow and use systems optimally hang together at the local level. Specifically, understanding how public transport routes and nodes interface with the green spaces and water spaces, the pedestrian flow and accessibility pathways, networks of streets and route-ways, and come together in a pattern of land-use and density. Various simple and accessible techniques are available for use by local leaders and activists through relatively simple transmission processes. Moreover, such skills can dramatically enhance, focus and energise various community-level democratic participation processes, including ward committees.

Only if it is fed and engaged from the perspective of these neighbourhood community visions will the larger municipal planning system become sufficiently responsive to community needs and opportunities. Furthermore, having this institutional piece in place will make it easier to channel community works that achieve broader development objectives rather than simply absorbing unemployed youth. As with any type of spatial plan, if it is not underpinned by a robust knowledge management system it tends to veer off into wishful thinking. At the community level, this can be addressed by instituting community-based enumeration of local areas, driven by grassroots organisations and linked into more formal municipal data systems that may include GIS and other datasets.

In summary, this sketch of integrated community development is premised on the belief that citizen empowerment in poor neighbourhoods must prioritise

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job creation, even if it is outside the formal economy and squarely embedded in the social economy. Numerous opportunities exist for community-level work opportunities that can directly contribute to the enhancement of liveability. This approach is also more likely to foster a more pragmatic and ambitious democratic vision of neighbourhood-scale incremental

improvements and medium- to long-term systemic change. Economic, social and environmental agendas can be honed in a mutually reinforcing manner. And, finally, such an approach may also provide the kind of political connectedness to everyday dynamics that can fuel a more intelligent and resonant democratic commons.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This is a complicated and contentious issue because of the highly skewed salary structure in South Africa. The executive class earns substantially more than the working classes manifest in alarmingly high income inequality. In such a context, it appears patently unjust to suggest that entry-level wages are too high. However, this would be to miss an important point. Relative to competitor nations and economies, South Africa's entry-level wages are high, which is a separate issue to the fact that this also applies at the top end of the income spectrum. There is no contradiction in both suggesting entry-level wages are too high and criticising top-end wage levels. This position also does not preclude a broader critique of the structural dimensions of wage inequalities in the global economy as a whole.
- <sup>2</sup> At this point it is relevant to also point out that 'South Africa's hourly manufacturing wage is about five times that of Sri Lanka, India, Philippines and China; about thrice that of Mexico and Malaysia; and higher than those of Russia, Brazil, Turkey and Hungary' (NPC 2011a: 9). Surprisingly, according to the NPC diagnostic, South Africa's teachers are also among the highest paid in the world.
- <sup>3</sup> The *Material conditions diagnostic* report of the National Planning Commission (pp. 21–22) points out that: 'Between 1976 and 2002, annual public sector infrastructure investment fell from 8.1 percent of GDP to 2.6 percent of GDP, leaving a legacy of old, outdated and unreliable infrastructure [...] The accepted norm for infrastructure investment, as a ratio of gross fixed capital formation to GDP, is 25 percent, with recent infrastructure investments shifting the South African ratio from 16 percent in 2006 to 19.3 percent in 2010' (NPC 2011c: 21-22).
- <sup>4</sup> It is beyond this chapter to explore this in detail but here I have in mind the well-established tradition of community development capability as promoted in the four volume *Transformation for Hope* series by Sally Timmel and Anne Hope. See url: <http://www.grailprogrammes.org.za/>. A more recent and equally valuable resource is: The Barefoot Collective (2009).