IN SEARCH OF RESPONSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE LOCAL GOVERNANCE

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Responsibility and responsiveness are at the heart of effective and accountable governance. Unless government acts responsibly (i.e. in accordance with its mandate and within resource and capacity constraints) and is responsive to local conditions and demands, constitutional rights remain unrealised, and trust in government and the political system is eroded. While it would be incorrect to pretend that no progress has been made since 1994, of deep concern is the fact that a large proportion of the population continues to experience socio-economic exclusion and spatial poverty, without reasonable opportunities to transform their reality.
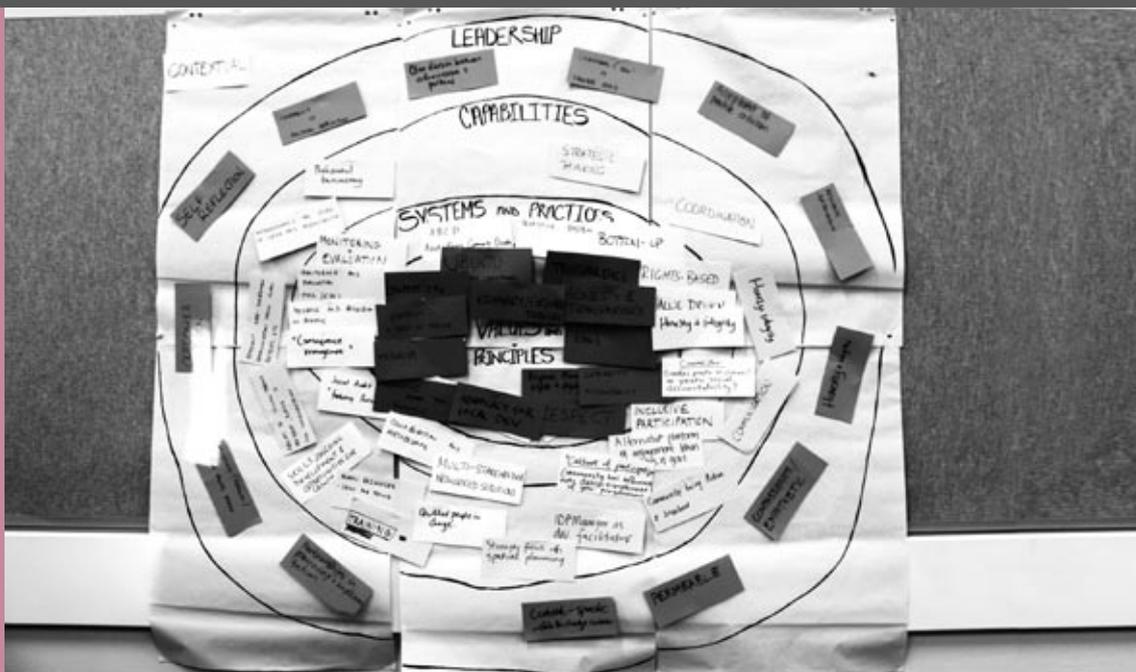

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IT STILL MANIFESTS itself in the articulation of unrealistic targets, a deep-seated intolerance in government to different ways of seeing and doing things, an unwillingness to relinquish power, and an inability and/or aversion to communicate with integrity about real possibilities and limitations for local development. Instead, examples abound of politicians making promises that cannot be delivered upon.[1] In a context of growing anger and frustration with the pace of development and the quality of governance relations,

populism may be seen as a 'safe' option (and even have the appearance of being responsive) but, in the longer term, is a high risk strategy and profoundly irresponsible.

Responsible and responsive governance is defined in the next section, which is followed by a review of the current state of local government and the extent to which it exemplifies responsible and responsive governance. In deepening the understanding of what responsible and responsive

governance means, we draw on a collective process involving GGLN member organisations to articulate some of its defining features and how it would manifest in practice. We then narrate an example of a municipality that is, in some respects at least, emblematic of responsible and responsive governance in practice. The final section offers a quick overview of subsequent papers in this publication, as a roadmap for further reading.

WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE?

Like other normative concepts, responsible and responsive governance is an appealing notion and almost seems to be self-evident. It is precisely for this reason that some definitional clarity is helpful.

Mair (2009) summarises different interpretations of responsibility within an organisational context. The first is accountability, which includes the act of reporting on activities and financial spending to relevant bodies, such as when political actors or government departments report to Parliament. A second interpretation focuses on consistency, which points to the need to ensure that statements and implementation are in accordance with policy guidelines. A third interpretation emphasises efficiency and effectiveness, which are important for ensuring that objectives are achieved successfully and in a timely manner, and that an institution is able to address the challenges it faces.

Mair (2009) further argues that, beyond organisational responsibility, individual dimensions and manifestations of responsibility also warrant attention. This resonates with the idea that organisational culture (such as public service ethos) needs to find expression in the practice and behaviour of representatives of the organisations (e.g. public servants). Concretely, it means that individuals act according to accepted practices and

within formalised procedural and legal frameworks. It finds expression in professionalism and a sense of duty. Finally, Mair (2009) adds that responsibility embeds a sense of prudence and consistency: for leaders and government to act responsibly requires that decision-making and policy implementation adhere to accepted and established procedural norms and practices.

In turn, responsiveness can be defined as 'the degree to which government listens to what people want and acts on it, and to which public policies and institutions respond to the needs of citizens and uphold their rights' (DFID 2006 in Edwards and McGee 2014: 3). The authors distinguish between shallow and deep responsiveness. Shallow responsiveness refers to established, functioning and transparent communication loops. This correlates with internal reporting and accountability systems within government and external communication to communities and citizens. In contrast, deep responsiveness refers to the development, by both the state and citizens, of deliberative democracy (simply put, a democratic practice that places deliberation and negotiation at the heart of civic engagement). Its aim is for transparency that results in accountability and has outcomes that empower citizens (Edwards and McGee 2014).

While internal accountability systems and external communication systems are clearly important, responsible and responsive governance (and indeed, the system of local government, as per the White Paper on Local Government and subsequent public policy) aspires to embed this notion of deep responsiveness. Thus, to give real meaning to responsiveness, local government needs to create suitable and adequate processes for citizen engagement in local affairs. According to Vincent-Jones (1998), democratic control serves to strengthen responsiveness in local governance. This can take

the form of community forums, citizen panels and citizen charters, among others.

Whereas local government needs to be responsive to local realities and demands, by putting in place appropriate systems to institutionalise deep responsiveness, it also needs to act responsibly, i.e. in accordance with set norms, expressed policy commitments, a sense of prudence, integrity and accountability. Thus, responsiveness and responsibility can be seen as two sides of the same coin – you can't have the one without the other.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY

The preceding section suggests that a responsible and responsive government institution reports regularly and openly on its activities and financial matters to relevant stakeholders, including local communities and residents. It implements programmes and conducts itself according to the guiding policy framework, in a manner that is efficient, effective and responsive to emerging challenges. It has an effective two-way communication system, which is designed to communicate not only to communities, but also with communities through established communication channels and feedback mechanisms. It has regular and institutionalised processes of engagement and deliberation that include all stakeholders, and guide and influence decision-making, programme initiation, implementation and monitoring. Its mandate is directed by an accountable leadership and executed by a dedicated cadre of professionals who use their expertise and skills in the interest of the public good.

These aspiring features are not novel to local government in South Africa; in fact, they resonate strongly with the objectives of local government set out in the Constitution (Box 1), the White Paper on Local Government and subsequent local government legislation.

BOX 1

Constitutional objectives and guiding principles for local government

The objectives for local government are set out in section 152 of the Constitution (1996), which include the provision of democratic and accountable government, community involvement and promotion of social and economic development, all within its financial and administrative capacity. The developmental mandate calls for local government to prioritise the basic needs of the community. In Section 195, the Constitution sets clear values and principles for public administration, which include professional ethics, development-orientation, responsive to people's needs, and encouraging people to participate in policy-making. Transparency, accountability and good human resources management are also included as some of the guiding principles for local government.

Yet the challenges besetting municipalities demonstrate that local government is far from being a responsible and responsive institution. These challenges are well documented in a variety of official documents[2] and, more recently, in the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2014–2019 and the 'Back to Basics' approach of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA 2014). Issues highlighted in the National Development Plan (NDP) include the tension in the political–administrative interface, unstable administrative leadership, skills deficits, a lack of accountability and authority, poor organisational design and low staff morale (NPC 2012). The NDP recognises that these problems

do not affect municipalities equally (resulting in uneven performance across local government) and that these challenges are more pronounced in historically disadvantaged communities. The MTSF 2014–2019 notes with concern that corruption and maladministration have become deeply entrenched in some municipalities. This state of affairs is promoted by a lack of accountability and transparency in service delivery (The Presidency 2014). Communities that lack awareness and knowledge of their rights will be unable to take action and tackle the municipality over poor service delivery. As a result, a culture of ambivalence (if not impunity) in municipalities deepens, as they know they will not be challenged, since citizens are not aware of their rights and do not know which steps to take when their rights remain unmet or are abused (Mdlongwa 2014).

The MTSF 2014–2019 refers explicitly to the decline in public trust in local government, as a result of poor governance and accountability (The Presidency 2014). Previous 'The State of Local Governance' publications produced by the GGLN have also picked up on the themes of trust, disillusionment, frustration and anger on the part of communities, who feel that their rights are not recognised, their experiences are not acknowledged and their voices are not heard (see, for example, GGLN 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014). In some instances, government spheres other than local government may be denying communities their rights. But, as the sphere of government that is the closest to communities, local government is often expected to engage and address these challenges and is most often placed under pressure by citizens (Pieterse 2014).

In Chapter 13, the NDP notes that 'South Africa needs to focus on building a capable and developmental state' (NPC 2014: 410). More specifically, the NDP identifies the need for optimally functioning, coordinated institutions and skilled employees who consistently provide good services and are committed to the public good. It also specifies the need to mainstream citizen participation. The aim is to improve confidence in the state from all sectors, including communities. The notion of capability reflected in the NDP is not restricted to skills and capacity, but also includes values and a commitment to public service. One of the key actions for strengthening local government is to: 'Take a more long-term approach to developing skills together with a professional ethos and commitment to public service' (NPC 2014: 410). This is a particularly important shift, from the earlier concern that capacity and resources (including finances) are the key factors hindering the effective functioning of local government, to a broader focus that encompasses matters related to ethos and orientation. Without an explicit public service ethos, which informs organisational practices and the individual behaviour, there is little hope that the required shift to responsible and responsive governance will take root.

DEEPENING THE THEME: FEATURES AND PRACTICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF RESPONSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE

This section presents a deeper understanding of what responsible and responsive local governance means and what it may look like in South Africa, drawing on a process facilitated with GGLN member organisations.[3] A conceptual model was developed that differentiates four dimensions of a governance system: values and principles; systems, procedures and practices; capability; and, leadership (Figure 1). Each dimension is briefly explained, before summarising how GGLN member organisations interpreted them from the perspective of responsive and responsible governance.

Figure 1. Dimensions of a governance system

Leadership

Capability

Systems,
procedures & practices
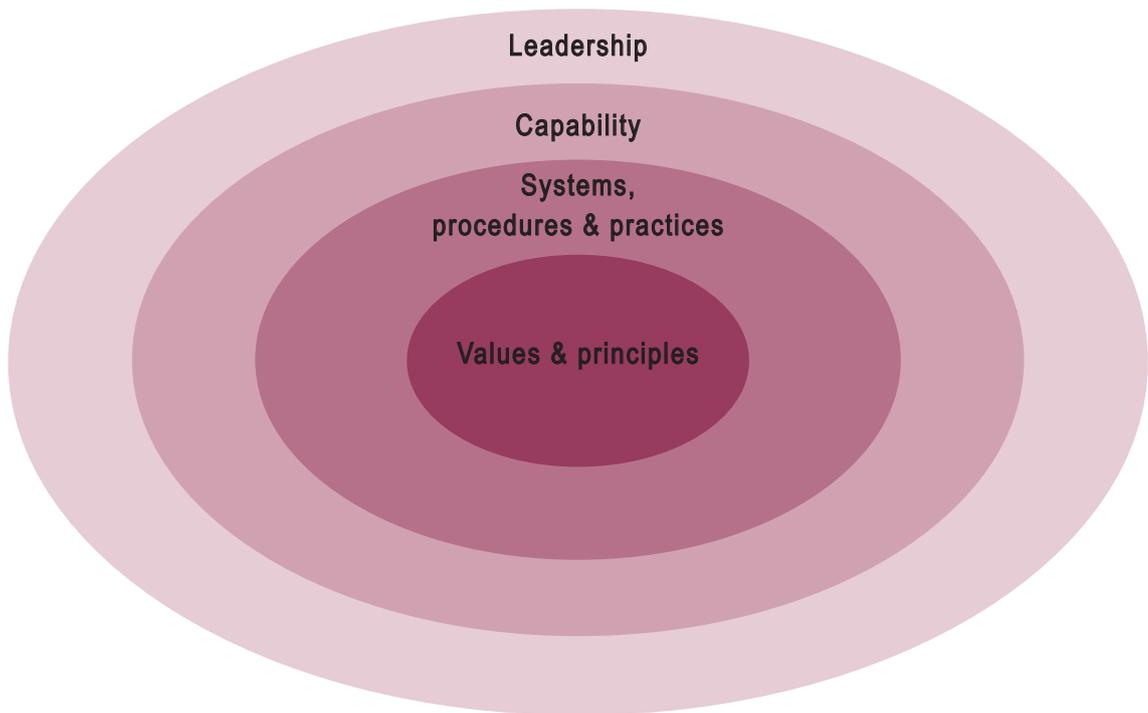
Values & principles

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

According to Brooks (2014), values are both personal and organisational. For individuals, values and principles reflect what is important to us and what motivates us. Values drive our behaviour and our interactions with others, as well as our decision-making processes. Organisationally, values and principles refer to the standards of behaviour. The importance of a value-driven system of governance cannot be emphasised enough, as it gives birth to an organisational culture that finds expression in how municipal representatives relate to each other, their work and to external stakeholders. This interaction informs the experience of the municipality and, in turn, builds its public image and expectations. As values and principles determine people's conduct, performance and relationships, they are positioned at the heart of the governance model.

In addition to accountability, consistency, efficiency and effectiveness as identified by Mair (2009), GGLN member organisations highlighted the following core values and principles that direct responsible and responsive local governance: integrity, dignity, respect, Ubuntu, empathy, compassion, honesty and respect for human rights. Mention was also made of the importance of being proactive, rather than reactive, and reflecting forward thinking. Many emphasised the importance of transparency and accountability, at both an organisational level and individual level. Accountability needs to be internal as well as outward, to the communities that local government serves. Without accountability, it was suggested, governance would be neither responsible nor responsive, in the way Edwards and McGee (2014) interpret deep responsiveness.

SYSTEMS, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

The second dimension refers to how the municipality organises itself to give effect to its core values and principles. This includes how roles and responsibilities are defined (systems), what methods are adopted to give effect to its core values and mandate (procedures), and how policies and plans are implemented (practices). Adopted methods and actions determine whether a value such as responsiveness corresponds to 'shallow' or 'deep' responsiveness, for example. At this point, a disjuncture may occur between discourse and practice (where the discourse may suggest deep responsiveness, but the practice is shallow responsiveness at best), which could point to one of two things: either the intent is getting 'lost in translation', or there is a level of disingenuousness in the discourse and how intent is expressed.

GGLN member organisations strongly emphasised the need for rights-based practices to realise socio-economic rights and for bottom-up initiatives, with a focus on asset-based community development. Particular emphasis was given to the need for communication and for inclusive platforms for citizen engagement. In addition, participants highlighted the importance of collaboration, partnerships and creating multi-stakeholder networked solutions. In this context, reference was made to the need for a 'lived' culture of participation, whereby communities can influence the design and implementation of government programmes. Furthermore, practices need to be contextual and suited to local realities. In light of the emphasis on accountability, as a core value driving responsible and responsive governance, it is not surprising that key aspects highlighted were monitoring and evaluation, ongoing reflection on practice and even consequence management (a term first mooted by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA)[4]

and subsequently adopted in CoGTA's 2014 'Back to Basics' programme).

CAPABILITY

The concept of capability has become more commonplace since the National Planning Commission released the NDP. Although the NDP does not explain the term clearly from the outset, a useful definition can be found in Chapter 8 on human settlements: 'Capability is a broad concept. It includes the institutional architecture, processes and resources needed for effective … governance, as well as the required knowledge sets, skills, learning networks, innovation capacity and leadership' (NPC 2012: 289–290). For the purpose of this paper, the conceptualisation is less broad, excluding 'institutional architecture' (understood as systems, procedures and practices, outlined above) and leadership (discussed below).

For GGLN member organisations, capability for responsive and responsible local governance includes skilled municipal representatives who understand the scope of work and their responsibilities, and who are able to follow through with implementation of plans and projects. Reference was made to a professional bureaucracy, implying an organisation that consists of employees with the correct qualifications and appropriate knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. Key to responsive and responsible local governance is an appropriate combination of technical, financial, administrative, operational, strategic and public relations skills. Particular emphasis was placed on facilitation, communication and coordination competencies, to ensure that communities are better informed and meaningful processes for citizen engagement are put in place. These are skills and competencies that are by and large undervalued in local government currently. Strategic thinking was also valued as a

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critical ability, particularly in light of the dynamic environment in which local government operates.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership is presented as the final dimension of governance in Figure 1. Quoting the Oxford English Dictionary, Brooks (2014: 200) notes that public leadership essentially is to lead the public interest, which is defined as 'the benefit or advantage of the community as a whole; the public good'. Visser (2013) states that effective leadership is the foundation of good institutional governance, specifically leadership that encompasses accountability, transparency, fairness and ethical values of responsibility – in other words, the values and principles at the core of the governance system.

Leadership could have been presented as the second circle in Figure 1 because of its proximity to values and principles and because leadership produces policy direction, which in turns determines how the municipality organises itself and what capabilities are required. However, leadership is instead presented as something that holds and envelops the governance system.

Not surprisingly, GGLN member organisations identified value-driven leadership as of critical importance for responsible and responsive local governance. Particular reference was made to values such as honesty, integrity, accountability and commitment. At a personal level, value-driven leadership manifests in personal responsibility and discipline, in self-reflection and resilience, and in an ability/willingness to accept constructive criticism.

It also finds expression in one's commitment to the public good, rather than personal gain, and being transparent and accessible. At a collective level, value-driven leadership is able to direct the organisation in accordance with stated values and principles, give policy guidance and facilitate the successful achievement of organisational objectives (i.e. being outcome driven), navigate technical knowledge and popular sentiment, and embrace a commitment to partnerships in planning and implementation. Equally important is an appreciation of the distinct roles and responsibilities of the political and administrative functions of the municipality. Leadership for responsible and responsive local governance will demonstrate support for competency and a public service orientation.

In conclusion, responsible and responsive local governance needs to find expression at all four dimensions identified: in values and principles; systems, procedures and practices; capability; and in leadership. Responsibility and responsiveness need to be embedded in a manner that is meaningful and effective in achieving both organisational sustainability and development outcomes that are in line with community needs.

In the imaginary of GGLN member organisations, responsible and responsive local governance would manifest in effective processes for citizen engagement, improved service delivery and innovation. Municipalities would have a thorough understanding of local realities, in part mediated through structured engagements and relationships with communities and citizens. The current compliance orientation pertaining to public participation would be replaced by deep democratic practices, where local government, civil society actors and the private sector would be equal partners in processes of deliberation, negotiation, implementation and evaluation. Leadership (both political and

administrative) would be exemplary, humble and accountable to the communities it serves. The public interest would take precedence over party-political and personal interests, and competency would be valued over ideology and political affiliation. The role of intermediary organisations, such as non-governmental organisations, would be valued and, in turn, they would act to support the agency and influence of poor and marginalised communities, rather than speak on their behalf. Ultimately, while development challenges would continue to present themselves and difficult choices would still have to be made, the relationship between stakeholders in the local governance realm would have improved dramatically and public trust in local government would be restored.

This imaginary far surpasses the emphasis on communication, citizen feedback (through community satisfaction surveys) and ward-based planning (through functional ward committees) in CoGTA's 'Back to Basics' programme. While these are important measures to improve the performance of local government and its relationship with local communities, the inherent danger is that the relationship between local government and citizens is cast as primarily a client- or customer-centred one, which is by and large one-directional: either by viewing citizens as passive clients of public services or as customers who interact with government when they want to raise an issue or concern (Callahan and Yang 2005).

MOSSEL BAY MUNICIPALITY: AN EXAMPLE OF RESPONSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE LOCAL GOVERNANCE[5]

Mossel Bay Municipality is presented as an example of what responsible and responsive local governance could look like. Upfront, it should be noted that this is based on a review of municipal policies and plans, complemented by various communication with the municipality, rather than an analysis of its functioning, its relationship with stakeholders (including local

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communities) or the extent to which its policies and plans are being implemented. Nonetheless, the approach pursued by Mossel Bay Municipality is revealing and can provide useful insights in institutionalising responsible and responsive governance. Furthermore, the intention is not to suggest that Mossel Bay Municipality is the only municipality in South Africa striving to institutionalise responsible and responsive local governance. There are undoubtedly other municipalities pursuing this goal, to a greater or lesser degree of success. Their stories also deserve to be told, in the interest of inspiring other municipalities to follow suit.

In 2011 Mossel Bay Municipality embarked on a renewed approach to the way it does its business through improved planning and feedback from engagements. Through the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process and ward committee engagements, the municipality conducted a situation analysis and an analysis of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to its overall functioning. These findings were used to review and revise the municipal vision and mission (Box 2). The municipality subsequently developed a Marketing Plan, a Communication Policy, a Communication Plan and a Ward Committee Policy to guide the realisation of the stated vision, mission and values. In the process of realigning the municipality to the renewed vision, mission and values, the Mossel Bay Municipality has given attention to all four dimensions of the governance system described earlier.

BOX 2

Vision, mission and values adopted by Mossel Bay Municipality

Vision

We strive to be a trend-setting, dynamic Municipality delivering quality services responsive to the demands and challenges of the community and our constitutional mandate, in which all stakeholders can participate in harmony and dignity.

Mission

- To render cost-effective and sustainable services to the entire community with diligence and empathy.
- To create mutual trust and understanding between the municipality and the community.
- To have a motivated and representative municipal workforce with high ethical standards, which is empowered to render optimal services to the community.
- To apply good and transparent corporate governance in order to promote community prosperity.

Values

The community is our inspiration and our workforce is our strength in the quest for community development and service delivery. We therefore value:

- Work pride.
- Service excellence.
- Integrity.
- Loyalty.
- Accountability.

Taken from Mossel Bay Municipality Communication Plan

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Mossel Bay Municipality made a conscious choice to make its core values explicit. These values (work pride, service excellence, integrity, loyalty and accountability) drive the municipality's interaction with all stakeholders, including citizens, in an effort to achieve its goals and objectives and instil a positive image in the public realm. The municipality values consensus-based decision-making and accountability (through regular report backs) and supports the Batho Pele principles. Furthermore, it strives for loyalty through promoting the municipality and communities of Mossel Bay at all times.

The Mossel Bay Municipality views the ward committee as the key link between the municipality and the community. Underpinning the ward committee system are good governance principles, which the municipality defines as including fundamentally the interest of the community, fostering participation and having regular and structured meetings. Specific principles that guide the functioning of the ward committee are having a sense of integrity, striving to be objective and transparent, and displaying a level of leadership toward the communities.

Most of the values articulated by the Mossel Bay Municipality resonate with the values mentioned previously. The municipality is clear that the core values need to be reflected in consistent behaviour, as well as in appropriate systems, mechanisms and processes, which are discussed next.

SYSTEMS, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

The municipality is committed to ensuring that its core values are translated into systems, procedures and practices, which are in turn designed to enhance responsible and responsive local governance. The Communication Policy and Plan, the Marketing Plan and the Ward Committee Policy are the main municipal documents intended to facilitate and guide this.

The Communication Policy and Plan outlines the role of communications and related information-sharing processes. It clarifies how the communication function will be executed and coordinated, and the

different roles and responsibilities for developing content, disseminating information and processing feedback. In addition to clarifying the communication channels, the plan clearly spells out the key messages that need to inform and accompany any form of communication. The municipality is committed to communicating proactively to communities on service-related issues and municipal matters that are important to the public, and in a timeous manner. The municipality intends maintaining and updating the municipal databases for various communication tools to reach citizens directly. The Communication Policy is reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and efficient in operationalising the communication function.

The Mossel Bay Municipality has two mechanisms that allow citizens to communicate with the municipality: written submissions and an official short message system (SMS), which is useful for service delivery-related complaints. All written communications submitted to the municipality are captured on an electronic web-based document administration system. The system provides a reference number for each item submitted and regular feedback until the matter is closed. Municipal officials have to respond to written submissions within 10 days, while the set response time for the SMS system is 48 hours. As part of institutionalising responsiveness, the municipality conducts quarterly customer satisfaction surveys at the Thusong Service Centre to remain abreast of community issues and be proactive in its response.

The Marketing Plan also provides guidance on the communication function, specifically the municipal IDP and the Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan. It enables ongoing communication with standardised communication information items (e.g. water, electricity, roads, local economic development). The Marketing Plan

further addresses how public participation needs to be pursued and sets forward an annual Public Participation Plan for adoption by Council.

The Ward Committee Policy presents the ward committee system as the primary platform for sharing planning, financial and service delivery information with communities. Ward committee meetings have a standardised agenda, to facilitate consistency and to enable information sharing and feedback on specific municipal services. Such an agenda is a simple example of how to institutionalise communication, monitoring and responsiveness. In addition, the municipality has adopted a decision that the Mayoral Committee, Municipal Manager, Executive Directors and relevant municipal officials attend annual ward meetings (unless a risk has been identified that such a meeting may be hijacked or abused to pursue particular interests). This decision demonstrates a commitment at the leadership level to sustained citizen engagement and accountability.

The policies and plans summarised here provide municipal representatives with clear, organised and structured processes, procedures and methods for implementation. It is a systematic approach aimed at driving municipal practice towards responsible and responsive local governance. The policies and plans, if implemented as intended, also provide communities and citizens with better knowledge and opportunities to hold the municipality to account. Clear communication and structured processes for engagement with municipal processes and representatives allow for informed and involved citizens, and for the possibility of faster and more appropriate improvements in their livelihoods and living conditions.

CAPABILITY

The municipality recognises that appropriate skills, resources and other capabilities are essential for

achieving municipal policy goals and objectives. In particular, municipal officials can improve their public participation competencies by attending an accredited public participation course offered by the provincial government.

In Mossel Bay, particular attention has been given to the role and functioning of ward committees, as the central link between local government and communities. To be able to fulfil successfully the expected intermediation role, ward committees need to understand the municipality's objectives and functions, and administrative, planning, financial and implementation processes and related activities. Therefore, to strengthen the capability of ward committees, the municipality adopted a ward committee capacity building plan for 2014/2015. Capacity building of ward committees focuses, among others, on training to assist ward committees in understanding their roles and functions and, in particular, their oversight role in municipal planning, budgeting, performance management and legal reporting. The programme also includes a focus on departmental functions such as tourism, local economic development and regional land claims.

To expand the learning and skills development of ward committees, the municipality facilitated a service delivery tour for ward committee members. The purpose was to provide them with a real sense of how municipal service delivery systems and processes work, so that ward committee members would be better able to communicate these to their communities. The tour included visits to the Water Purification Plant, the Sewerage Purification and Treatment Plants, the Reverse Osmosis Plant and the Thusong Service Centre.

Capacity building is important for the growth and development of staff and improving financial, administrative and operational plans and processes. In the case of ward committee members, it enables them to be better equipped to respond to community concerns and to act as a community resource and source of information.

LEADERSHIP

Mossel Bay Municipality illustrates many instances of leadership for responsible and responsive local governance, starting with the vision, mission and values adopted in 2011. The adoption of the various policies and plans discussed above demonstrates commitment at leadership level to institutionalise positive and collaborative relationships with citizens and communities. The strong emphasis on value-driven governance and service delivery, linking this explicitly to a public service ethos and the Batho Pele principles, is also a sign of committed leadership.

At management level, the municipality has introduced a Functionality and Support Pledge (Box 3), which clarifies and commits members of the management team and Council to ensure that ward committees are institutionalised in a manner that supports and builds effective and functioning ward committees in line with the Batho Pele principles. The management team realises the importance of healthy working relationships, cooperation and communication.

In May 2014, the municipality hosted a pledge day at which ward committee members, senior managers and political leadership (The Speaker, Executive and Deputy Mayor and Council) publicly signed the 'Loyalty and Integrity Pledge' (which recognises, accepts and commits to adopt and display the values and ward committee policy) and the 'Functionality and Support Pledge'.

The political/administrative divide is often characterised as being dysfunctional and as a stumbling block to service delivery and development in local government (NPC 2012). However, Mossel Bay Municipality shows that it is possible to

- Ensure effective management and rendering administrative support for Ward Committee functionality;
- Oversee the implementation of the Ward Committee Policy and enforcement of the Ward Committee Code of Conduct;
- Intellectually and administratively capacitate Ward Committees to enable effective functioning;
- Ensure that good work relations exist between Ward Councillors and Ward Committee Members;
- Promptly, within the specified timeframe, reply to service delivery enquiries lodged by Ward Committee Members.

create a supportive environment and cooperative working relationship aimed at achieving sustainable development.

The example of Mossel Bay Municipality confirms that strong value-driven leadership is at the heart of the change management process required at municipal level to gear local government towards responsibility and responsiveness.

CONCLUSION

Mossel Bay Municipality has been presented as an example of a municipality that is consciously striving towards responsible and responsive local governance. It is by no means the only municipality trying to achieve this, although by and large the system of local government is not perceived (and experienced) as such. The focus has been on the four dimensions of the governance system (values and principles; systems, procedures and practices; capability; and leadership), not on analysing the extent to which the municipality's systematic approach has been implemented and with what

results. However, Mossel Bay Municipality's approach confirms that improving people's quality of life and rebuilding public trust in local government requires more than improved communication and customer satisfaction surveys. It even warrants more than establishing more varied and inclusive citizen engagement systems. Ultimately, responsible and responsive local governance can only become a reality when core values such as accountability and integrity drive the functioning of the municipality and determine what capability the organisation needs to live out these values. Furthermore, it requires leadership that proactively pursues and safeguards these values in all aspects of municipal functioning and in personal actions. A lot of work lies ahead to guide and support the change management process needed to firmly embed responsibility and responsiveness in local governance.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS PUBLICATION

Contributions to this publication reflect on the theme of responsibility and responsiveness in local governance from different perspectives, ranging from xenophobia, informal settlements, rural local governance, the IDP process and community-based monitoring. The papers also highlight different dimensions of the governance system: values and principles; systems, procedures and practices; capability; and, leadership. The papers are described below according to these four dimensions rather than the order in which they appear in the publication.

The SERI paper illustrates that where communities have a long history of failed engagements with the state, frustration and mistrust lead them to adopt more confrontational strategies and tactics of holding the state to account. Noting the state's tendency to resort to dismissive and repressive responses, the paper makes a strong

case for recognising contestation and dissent as core values of responsible and responsive governance.

The paper by Afesis-corplan echoes the importance of valuing dissent as a central tenet of local democratic practice. By focusing on the IDP and associated processes and practices for citizen engagement, the paper primarily deals with the dimension of systems, procedures and practices. Afesis-corplan calls for the IDP process to be more responsive, suggesting that this can be achieved through improved communication and the establishment of well-functioning forums and processes of citizen engagement, and for the implementation of the IDP to be more responsible.

The *In Profile* contribution by PCRD hones in on audit committees and municipal public account committees, as appropriate structures to enhance accountability to citizens. It argues that fiscal and financial accountability is critical for fostering mutual trust and transparency between municipalities and local communities.

The CORC paper brings insights to bear on the first (values and principles) and third (capability) dimensions of the governance system. Like the SERI paper, this paper focuses on informal settlements. It reveals the disjuncture between expressed values in national policy (more especially pertaining to citizen engagement) and the uptake and implementation at local level. This disjuncture stems from an entrenched orientation towards state-centric development, the weak value ascribed to social facilitation (evident in the lack of adequate resource allocation) and weak capability in local government to connect with deep-rooted community knowledge.

The *In Profile* contribution by BESG makes a compelling case for multi-stakeholder partnerships that include the public and private sectors and civil society organisations to bring about sustainable development. Partnerships are also mooted as a means to enhance the individual and collective capabilities of the organisations involved.

The DDP paper makes a strong case for local government to provide value-driven leadership in a context characterised by deep-seated animosity and division. Local government has a responsibility to safeguard the rights and livelihoods of migrants, while simultaneously addressing the socio-economic factors that fuel xenophobic (Afrophobic) violence. Local government also has a leadership role to play in coordinating an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach, not only when the crisis erupts, but also in a pre-emptive manner. In this instance, the municipality was found wanting.

The TCOE paper reflects on the dual local governance system that exists in rural areas. The resulting confusion, tension and contestation limit the scope for rural communities to demand their rights to services and hold local government to account. The roles and responsibilities of traditional leadership in local governance require urgent review, to bring about a governance system that is more responsible and responsive to rural residents.

The paper by Isandla Institute focuses on emerging practice related to community-based monitoring in South Africa. As a practice to instil routine accountability, community-based monitoring is more than just adopting new tools and techniques. To use these tools and techniques effectively may require certain skills, capacities, values and relationships. As such, community-based monitoring can be understood as a change management process.

Finally, the *In Profile* contribution by DDP reminds us that responsible and responsive governance is not the exclusive responsibility of local government, but requires community organisations that embody the core values of responsibility, accountability and public service. It also highlights the important role supporting organisations can play in strengthen local governance.

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NOTES

[1] See, among others: Promises cost municipality, *City Press*, 22 June 2014. http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/Politics/Promises-cost-municipality-20140622; RDP housing promise false: government, *IOL News*, 31 January 2010. http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/rdp-housing-promises-false-government-1.472041#.VW7VdWDlfFl; Land-grab calls expose South Africa's broken promises, Reuters, 14 November 2014. http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/11/14/us-safrica-land-idUSKCN0IY0VV20141114.

[2] These include CoGTA (2009), the Local Government Budget and Expenditure reviews of National Treasury, the annual reports Local Government Audit Outcomes of the Auditor-General of South Africa, and the National Development Plan (NPC 2012), among others.

[3] GGLN Members Meeting, 23 April 2015, University of the Western Cape, Bellville (Cape Town).

[4] See SALGA's Municipal Audit Support Programme (MASP), launched in July 2014.

[5] This section is informed by the Mossel Bay Municipality's Marketing Plan, Communication Policy, Communication Plan, Ward Committee Policy, Questionnaire to Mr Janties (Director: Corporate Services) and personal communication.